

# **SURVEY OF POST-WAR BUILT HERITAGE IN VICTORIA**

## **STAGE TWO:**

### **Assessment of Community & Administrative Facilities**

**Funeral Parlours, Kindergartens, Exhibition Building,  
Masonic Centre, Municipal Libraries and Council Offices**

prepared for

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this survey was to consider 27 places previously identified in the *Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria*, completed by Heritage Alliance in 2008, and to undertake further research, fieldwork and assessment to establish which of these places were worthy of inclusion on the *Victorian Heritage Register*.

The following fourteen places, which may or may not currently be included in local planning schemes, are considered to be of heritage significance at the state level, and thus worthy of inclusion on the *Victorian Heritage Register*.

- Former W G Apps & Sons Funeral parlour, 88 Carlisle Street, St Kilda (001-001)
- Nelson Brothers Funeral Parlour, 51 Devonshire Road, Sunshine (001-002)
- Robert Cochrane Kindergarten, 2a Minona Street, Auburn (002-001)
- Eltham South Pre-School Centre, 35 Fordham Road, Eltham South (002-004)
- Melbourne Exhibition Centre, 2 Clarendon Street, South Bank (002-006)
- Masonic Centre of Victoria, 300 Albert Street, East Melbourne (002-007)
- St Kilda Public Library, 150 Carlisle Street, St Kilda (002-010)
- Toorak/South Yarra Public Library, 332-344 Toorak Road, South Yarra (002-011)
- City of Hobsons Bay Civic Centre, 115 Civic Parade, Altona (council chamber only) (008-002)
- City of Sale Municipal Offices, Hall & Gallery, 80-88 Macallister Street, Sale (008-003)
- City of Brimbank Municipal Offices, 6-18 Alexandra Avenue, Sunshine (008-005)
- Shire of Alpine Public Library, 14 O'Donnell Avenue, Myrtleford (008-006)
- City of Boroondara Municipal Offices, 340 Camberwell Road, Camberwell (008-007)
- City of Monash Civic Centre, 293 Springvale Road, Glen Waverley (008-012)

The following three places, currently included on the heritage overlay schedules to the planning schemes of their respective councils, were confirmed as being of local significance. It is recommended that this listing be maintained:

- Mount Eliza Pre-School Centre, 95-97 Wimbledon Avenue, Mount Eliza (002-002)
- City of Kew City Hall (former), Cotham Road, Kew (008-001)
- City of Manningham Municipal Offices, 699 Doncaster Road, Doncaster (008-008)

The following eight places, not currently included on the heritage overlay schedules to planning schemes of their respective councils, were newly identified as being of local significance. It is recommended that these places be considered for inclusion on their local heritage overlay schedules.

- Burwood Pre-School Centre, 48a Alfred Road, Glen Iris (002-003)
- Olive Phillips Free Kindergarten, 28 Bodley Street, Beaumaris (002-005)
- Ivanhoe Library, 255 Upper Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe (002-009)
- Springvale Library, 411 Springvale Road, Springvale (002-012)
- Eltham Library, 4-10 Panther Place, Eltham (002-014)
- Shire of Mornington Peninsula Municipal offices, 90 Besgrove Street, Rosebud (008-009)
- City of Casey Municipal Offices, Magid Drive, Berwick (008-010)
- City of Wangaratta Municipal offices/Wangaratta Government Centre, 62-68 Ovens Street (008-011)

The following two places were found to have either been demolished or otherwise altered to the point that any potential significance has been diminished. They are not recommended for inclusion on either the *Victorian Heritage Register* or the heritage overlay schedule to the planning scheme.

- Recreation Centre (Aboriginal Advancement League), 56-58 Cunningham Street, Northcote (002-015)
- City of Shepparton Civic Centre, 90 Welsford Street, Shepparton (008-004)



# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

In April 2008, Heritage Victoria commissioned a statewide desktop survey of places from the post-Second World War era (ie covering the period 1945-2000) that were considered to be of potential significance at the state level. The State One report, undertaken by Heritage Alliance and completed in October of that year, nominated more than five hundred individual places and precincts for further investigation. Each of these was documented in the report by a basic half-page datasheet that listed pertinent details (address, date, architect) along with a brief comment on why it was considered for inclusion. The current project, conceived as Stage Two of the survey, was commissioned in February 2010 to consider a relatively small number of places identified in the Heritage Alliance report and to carry out more detailed assessment – including fieldwork, historical research and comparative analysis – to establish which places were actually worthy of inclusion on the *Victorian Heritage Register*.

A total of 27 places were to be considered in Stage Two, representing what were broadly considered as public buildings. These places fell into two categories, defined as Heritage Act Groups 002 (Community Facilities) and 008 (Administration). The former encapsulated kindergartens (5 examples), an exhibition centre (1 example), masonic headquarters (1 example), libraries (7 examples) and a social club hall (1 example), while the latter comprises council chambers (12 examples). At an early stage of the project, the brief was revised by the elimination of two library buildings that formed part of the State Library of Victoria complex, which was already included on the *Victorian Heritage Register* as a complete entity. It was considered that, as a Conservation Management Plan for the complex had recently been reviewed, it was not necessary to provide further assessment of those two buildings at this time. In their place, two additional buildings were selected for consideration in this project: two funeral parlours, representing Heritage Act Group 001 – Cemeteries/Burial Sites.

The final list of 27 places for consideration thus comprised the following:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| W G Apps & Sons Funeral Parlour, 88 Carlisle Street, St Kilda | AAT Recreation Centre, 56-58 Cunningham Street, Northcote    |
| Nelson Brothers funeral parlour, 51 Devonshire Road, Sunshine | Kew City Hall, Cotham Road, Kew                              |
| Robert Cochrane Kindergarten, 2a Minona Street, Auburn        | Hobsons Bay Civic Centre, 115 Civic Parade, Altona           |
| Mt Eliza Pre-school Centre, 95-97 Wimbeldon Avenue, Mt Eliza  | Sale Municipal offices/hall, 80-88 Macallister Street, Sale  |
| Burwood Pre-school Centre, 48a Alfred Road, Glen Iris         | Shepparton Civic Centre, 90 Welsford Street, Shepparton      |
| Eltham South Pre-school Centre, 35 Fordham Road, Eltham Sth   | Brimbank Municipal Offices, 6-18 Alexandra Ave, Sunshine     |
| Olive Phillips Kindergarten, 28 Bodley Street, Beaumaris      | Myrtleford Municipal Offices, 14 O'Donnell Ave, Myrtleford   |
| Melbourne Exhibition Centre, 2 Clarendon Street, South Bank   | Camberwell Civic Centre, 340 Camberwell Road, Camberwell     |
| Masonic Centre of Victoria, 300 Albert Street, East Melbourne | Manningham Municipal Offices, 699 Doncaster Road, Doncaster  |
| Ivanhoe Library, 255 Upper Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe           | Mornington Peninsula Municipal Offices, Besgrove St, Rosebud |
| St Kilda Public Library, 150 Carlisle Street, St Kilda        | Casey Municipal Offices, Magid Drive, Narre Warren           |
| Toorak/South Yarra Library, 332-344 Toorak Road, South Yarra  | Wangaratta Municipal offices, 62-68 Ovens Street, Wangaratta |
| Springvale Library, 411 Springvale Road, Springvale           | Monash Civic Centre, 293 Springvale Road, Glen Waverley      |
| Eltham Library, 4-10 Panther Place, Eltham                    |  |

Stage Two of the *Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria*, which commenced in February 2010, was undertaken by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, whose director, Simon Reeves, had previously worked in the office of Heritage Alliance and had been a key contributor to the original Stage One survey undertaken in 2008.

## 1.2 PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The project was broken down into the following components:

### Contact with Building Custodians

As a priority, the first step was to make contact with the owners or custodians of each of the nominated places, in order to make them aware of the purpose and possible outcomes of the project (including the implications of inclusion on the *Victorian Heritage Register*), to elicit any archival or other background information that might be available, and to facilitate the consultant's access to the buildings themselves.

Initial contact was made either by direct email, or by a telephone call with a follow-up email. This approach allowed information about the project to be made available in writing, including the attachment of a introductory letter that had been specially composed for the purpose by the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria. In most cases, this was found to be an entirely satisfactory approach; virtually all of the individuals contacted in this way were not only co-operative but also often genuinely interested in the project. There were only two or three cases where individuals either did not respond at all to the initial contact, or responded initially but then failed to respond to follow-up requests.

### Fieldwork

The physical investigation of each nominated place would play a major part in the assessment of its condition and intactness and, consequently, its level of cultural significance. The importance of site inspections was emphasised when making contact with building custodians. Although virtually all of the places considered for this study were public buildings in a broad sense, it was considered preferable to make formal appointments to meet with each of the building custodians on site, rather than simply arrive unannounced. This approach would not only facilitate the consultant's access to parts of the building (eg the council chamber in a municipal office, or the staff workrooms in a library) that might not be open to the public, but also provide an opportunity to discuss recent refurbishments, maintenance problems, proposed redevelopments or other issues relating to the project, its outcomes, and their implications. During site visits, numerous digital photographs were taken to document the exterior, key interiors and any original furniture, integrated artwork, foundation stones or memorial plaques. Notes were made on the condition and intactness of the building; in anticipation of the possibility that the place might be recommended for the *Victorian Heritage Register*, some notes were also made pertaining to a proposed extent of registration, policy guidelines and permit exemptions. The latter was often informed by discussion with the building custodian.

Most of the site inspections were undertaken satisfactorily, with the co-operation of building custodians or their representatives. In cases where custodians had failed to respond to requests for access, the fieldwork component for that building was necessarily limited. Where a place was considered to fall within the formal definition of a public building (such as a council office, library or kindergarten), a site inspection was conducted from the exterior only, with some attempt to appraise interior spaces by looking through the windows. In cases where buildings were privately owned (ie the two funeral parlours), an exterior site inspection was undertaken solely from the street, without entering the property at all. In cases where interior access was not available, some reliance had to be made on other sources, including recent interior photographs (often included on company websites), as well as historical photographs, journal articles and other archival material.

Site visits were not undertaken for two places: the former AAT Recreation Centre at Northcote (which had been demolished) and the Shepparton Civic Centre (which had been substantially altered, extended and refurbished to the point that its original form was no longer evident).

### Research

Preliminary research into the history of individual places actually commenced prior to fieldwork, in the hope that this might identify certain aspects (eg the existence of original furniture, light fittings or integrated artwork) that could then be verified during a site inspection. Key sources consulted during this project included articles in contemporary journals and newspapers, and Public Building files (ex-Department of Health) now held by the Public Record Office. Wherever possible, original architect's plans were sourced and copied in order to provide both a valuable reference and to inform assessment of each building's current intactness during the fieldwork phase.

More intensive research was carried out following the fieldwork phase, so that the history and significance of the place could be adequately documented as a citation. This often required more extensive investigation into specific building types and the work of individual architects through published monograph, unpublished theses and newspaper and journal articles. In a few cases where it was difficult to locate readily-available primary sources relating to a particular building, contact was made with original architects, and brief interviews were undertaken.

Given the limited time and budget available for this project, it was not possible to undertake exhaustive research into any single place. Much reliance was necessarily made on those readily-accessible primary and secondary sources held by the State Library of Victoria, such as on-site books and journals, and archival newspapers available on microfilm or online. Other potentially illuminating sources, such as hard-copy local newspapers and off-site journals held by the State Library, and manuscript material held by the Public Record Office, local libraries or local historical societies, were rarely consulted unless they became available serendipitously.

### **Contextual Framework**

An outcome of the research phase was the preparation of brief thematic essays covering the four major building types represented in the study. These essays sought to provide a concise historical and architectural framework for the development of post-war funeral parlours, kindergartens, public libraries and council offices in Victoria. Typological essays of this nature were not prepared for either exhibition centres or state masonic headquarters, as it was considered that both building types (each represented in this report by a single example) are unique on a statewide basis.

### **Citations**

Detailed citations were prepared for each of the 27 places. These were based on the datasheet format established by Heritage Alliance in the Stage One *Survey of Post War Built Heritage in Victoria*, and were arranged according to the same sequence: each place identified by a six-digit number that was generated by its Heritage Act Group and Heritage Act Category.

In cases where a building was found to have been demolished, or otherwise altered to the point that further assessment was not required, citations were limited to two pages, with a cover datasheet and some brief historical and descriptive notes. Remaining places were subject to a four-page citation, comprising a cover datasheet (one page), a full history and description (one page) and a comparative analysis with assessment of condition and intactness, and list of references (one page). The purpose of the comparative analysis was to establish a case for significance at the state level. Where a place was considered to meet that threshold, a full Statement of Significance was prepared, along with recommendations for extent of registration, policy guidelines and permit exemptions.

Except for the two aforementioned buildings that were not assessed because of demolition or fundamental alteration, all of the places that were not recommended for inclusion on the Victorian heritage Register were considered to be of significance at the local level, and were recommended for inclusion on the local heritage overlay schedules of their respective municipalities.

The preparation of new citations for this project also allowed the correction of a number of errors that had been made in the abbreviated datasheets contained in the original State One survey. This typically included such things as inaccurate building names or addresses, minor mis-dating of buildings (or additions), and incorrect architect attribution. In a few cases (notably the former municipal offices at Doncaster and Wangaratta), the identification and correction of errors in previous studies played a significant part in the subsequent re-assessment of the building's heritage significance.

### **Architect Biographies**

The present report has also included, as an appendix, a series of short biographical profiles that document the lives and careers of some of the individual architects and firms whose buildings are represented in this study. These profiles, largely drawn from the private research files of Simon Reeves, concentrate on those practitioners whose work is not otherwise adequately documented in existing and readily-accessible secondary sources such as theses, monographs, exhibition catalogues, websites and conference papers.

### **1.3 STUDY TEAM**

This report was completed by Simon Reeves, principal of Built Heritage Pty Ltd.

### **1.4 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The authors of this report would like to thank the members of the Steering Committee:

Ms Megan McDougall *Heritage Victoria*

Ms Frances O'Neill *Heritage Victoria*

In addition, acknowledgement is made to the numerous members of council staff and other individuals who supplied background and historical information, provided useful contacts, facilitated building access or otherwise assisted in the assembling of information used in this study. Specific thanks are offered to the following (in alphabetical order):

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Ms Natalie Brown     | <i>Library Services Co-ordinator, City of Greater Dandenong</i>         |
| Mr Ray Brown         | <i>Facilities Management Team Leader, City of Hobsons Bay</i>           |
| Mr Andrew Chuck      | <i>Communications &amp; Marketing Manager, Rural City of Wangaratta</i> |
| Mr Chris Connelly    | <i>Event Operations Manager, Melbourne Exhibition Convention Centre</i> |
| Ms Wendy Costigan    | <i>Yarra Plenty Regional Library Service</i>                            |
| Mr Adrian Cully      | <i>Manager of Social and Cultural Development, Shire of Nillumbik</i>   |
| Mr Jarrod Doake      | <i>Manager of Corporate Administration, City of Monash</i>              |
| Ms Bianca Franklin   | <i>President, Mt Eliza Pre-School</i>                                   |
| Mr Don Fulton        | <i>Architect, Don Hendry Fulton Pty Ltd</i>                             |
| Mr Leigh Harry       | <i>Chief Executive, Melbourne Exhibition Convention Centre</i>          |
| Mr Jim Houlahan      | <i>Property (Strategy) Team Leader, Shire of Mornington Peninsula</i>   |
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| Ms Fae Ingledew      | <i>Heritage Planner, City of Banyule</i>                                |
| Mr Phil Josipovic    | <i>Property Manager, Brimbank City Council</i>                          |
| Mr Mike Lotrean      | <i>Team Leader, Springvale Library</i>                                  |
| Mr Simon Lloyd       | <i>Heritage Planner, Shire of Mornington Peninsula</i>                  |
| Ms Anne Rasmussen    | <i>Co-ordinator, Stonnington Library &amp; Information Service</i>      |
| Ms Katie Tremschnig  | <i>Gallery Technician, Monash Gallery of Art</i>                        |
| Mr Damian Tyquin     | <i>Co-ordinator, Port Phillip Library Service</i>                       |
| Mr Stuart Warmington | <i>Architect, G Stuart Warmington Pty Ltd</i>                           |
| Mr Glenn Wilson      | <i>Civic Centre Manager, City of Casey</i>                              |

## 2.0 HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXTS

### 2.1 FUNERAL PARLOURS

For much of the twentieth century, the funeral business in Victoria was dominated by a relatively small number of long-standing family-operated firms, virtually all of which had been established in the second half of the nineteenth century. Most of these, notably John Sleight (1851), Herbert King & Sons (1853), W G Apps (1857), Nelson Brothers (1858) and John Allison (1860), dated back as far as the Gold Rush era, while others, such as Joseph Le Pine (1891) represented relative newcomers. By the early twentieth century, these (and other) firms had expanded to the point that there was little opportunity for any competitors to break into the market. Consequently, very few new funeral companies emerged in Victoria during the inter-war period – the notable exceptions being Ern Jenson & Sons (1928) and Tobin Brothers (1934), both of whom went on to become major industry players (and continue as such to the present day).

Prior to the Second World War, the funeral business was a relatively straightforward one. Many of the aforementioned industry pioneers had actually commenced business as cabinet makers or carpenters before expanding into the field of “undertaking”, as it was then known. The premises that they maintained were simple: typically, a narrow-fronted double-storey building, not unlike any other ubiquitous Victorian residential shop. Coffins were assembled on site, in a rear workshop, while the hearse and carriage were accommodated in a shed.<sup>1</sup> As the actual funerals were almost always conducted in churches (or sometimes in the residence of the deceased), there was no need for undertakers to provide a chapel with their own premises. Externally, the buildings themselves were often utilitarian in form, or otherwise expressed in the conventional Italianate style of any other commercial or retail establishment of the day. Sometimes, purpose-built funeral parlours were designed in the Gothic Revival style, which, with its sombre ecclesiastical overtones, was considered appropriate for the purpose. This was typified by such examples as the original single-storey premises of Joseph Allison in Mount Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds, or the two-storey premises of Herbert King in Lennox Street, Richmond. During the inter-war period, new funeral facilities also occasionally adopted a Free Classical style, with an Egyptian or Grecian flavour that was likewise considered appropriately serene, timeless and monumental. This contrasting approach can be seen in the new premises of Mulqueen & Sons at 162 Sydney Road, Brunswick (1931).

As late as the mid-1930s, such conservative historicism remained the preferred approach for new funeral parlours in Victoria – typified by the Gothic-style building erected by Joseph Allison in Carlisle Street, St Kilda East (Harry Winbush, 1935). In that case, however, the quaintly old-fashioned clinker-brick exterior belied an internal layout that demonstrated how the traditional programme of the building type had already begun to be transformed. Winbush’s building included its own chapel, a viewing room, a waiting room and a residential flat for a live-in manager – all of which represented a significant departure from the much more straightforward buildings that constituted funeral parlours in the Victorian and Edwardian era. Indeed, those companies that still maintained such premises found themselves obliged to upgrade them – as when, also during 1935, Herbert King & Sons added a new chapel (again of Gothic character) to the rear of the firm’s existing premises in Lennox Street, Richmond.

Only a couple of years later, up-to-date funeral parlour architecture in Victoria was encapsulated even more thoroughly by two slick new facilities, both designed in a fashionable and progressive modernist idiom: the respective premises of Tobin Brothers in Flemington Road, North Melbourne and A A Sleight in St Kilda Road. In the case of the latter, designed by J F Richardson, the ubiquitous historicist exterior had entirely given way to “the severely pleasing lines of a modern maisonette block”. Internally, the building provided “a spacious flush-panelled entrance hall”, a reception room (“furnished with a view to substantial comfort”), a repose room, a showroom for the display of funeral furnishings, two chapels (with electric organs, stained glass windows and an overall character that evoked “a quiet dignity without sombreness”) and an upstairs residential flat for the manager.<sup>2</sup> Such innovations – reportedly inspired by (unnamed) overseas counterparts in England and the United States – set the scene for new funeral parlours that would be erected in Victoria in the post-war period.

<sup>1</sup> Douglas Matthews, “Funeral parlours”, Diploma of Town & Regional Planning thesis (University of Melbourne, 1967), p 14.

<sup>2</sup> “Beauty and Utility”, *Age*, 15 June 1937, p 4.

In any case, the Second World War itself was to have a profound influence on the local funeral industry. By its very nature, the funeral business has never really been subject to the ups and downs of market demand that can affect so many other commercial ventures; funerals, ultimately, are inevitable. During the wartime years, however, funeral directors in Victoria (and indeed elsewhere in Australia) found their businesses severely curtailed by the reduced workforce, fuel rationing and shortages of materials (namely timber, metals and fabric) essential for coffin manufacture.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, government-imposed restrictions on non-essential construction works effectively prevented existing funeral parlours from being substantially refurbished, or any new ones being built. Although these restrictions were not relaxed until the early 1950s, one funeral company, Le Pine & Sons, did succeed in gaining special permission, in 1948, to update its existing premises in Hawthorn, which included the installation of modern refrigeration equipment.

The mid-twentieth century coincided with a period of changeover for several of Victoria's oldest family-operated funeral parlours, as their long-time custodians retired (or died) and the baton of management subsequently passed onto the next generation. This period, for example, saw the deaths of such industry stalwarts as Arthur Apps (W G Apps & Sons) in 1945, Roy V Allison (John Allison) in 1957, and James A Nelson (Nelson Brothers) in 1958. A not dissimilar change took place in 1947, when Joseph Le Pine's son, Stephen, sold 80% of his interest in the family firm to a consortium of businessmen from Box Hill. After Stephen Le Pine's death in 1953, the firm was further reconstituted and, as noted in the firm's official history, "the business that had been largely shaped by Stephen Le Pine over half a century would experience considerable expansion and change under its new leadership".<sup>4</sup> The same could well have been said of many of Victoria's other family-operated funeral businesses at that time.

Interestingly, statistics reveal that the number of funeral parlours in metropolitan Melbourne actually decreased, rather than increased, in the immediate post-war era. The total had grown steadily during the early twentieth century, rising from 80 facilities in 1918 to 105 by 1939. However, this number subsequently dropped to 100 by 1947, and thence to 92 (1954), 85 (1958) and 65 (1961).<sup>5</sup> This was clearly not a result of decreasing demand for funeral services, but, rather, a reflection of the fact that many smaller funeral parlours – particularly those in the inner suburbs – were forced to close because of decreasing populations, and because their premises no longer satisfied modern requirements (eg the provision of chapels, and new town planning requirements for off-street parking). New funeral facilities thus began to appear in the intermediate suburbs, which, together with the fact that they were being fitted out to provide all modern requirements, allowed for a much larger catchment area than their pre-war counterparts.

Indeed, the relaxation of wartime building restrictions in the early 1950s brought about a minor boom in the establishment of new funeral parlours in Melbourne. What is significant, however, is that very few of these were actually purpose-built; rather, the overwhelming tendency was for facilities to be established within existing buildings. Examples included the new premises of Nelson-Elsun in Centre Road, Bentleigh (converted shop, 1951), Calder & Sons in Hoddle Street, Collingwood (converted doctor's clinic, 1955), John & Roy Allison in Playne Street, Frankston (converted dwelling, 1955) and Glenhuntly Road, Caulfield (converted dairy, 1957), A W Padbury in Whitehorse Road, Ringwood (converted dwelling, 1956), Le Pine & Sons in Burke Road, Camberwell (converted dwelling, 1957) and Raybolds Pty Ltd in Chapel Street, St Kilda (converted mansion, 1961).<sup>6</sup> Purpose-built architect-designed funeral parlours very much represented the minority, with only four examples erected in the Melbourne metropolitan area in the decade between 1952 and 1962. The first of these, built by W G Apps & Sons in Carlisle Street, St Kilda, in 1953, was – somewhat belatedly – followed by those of Herbert King in Warrigal Road, Ashburton (1958), Drayton & Garson in High Street, Glen Iris (1960) and Le Pine & Sons in Whitehorse Road, Box Hill (1961).

Architecturally, the first post-war purpose-built funeral parlours in Victoria tended to follow a tradition of funerary architecture that had been well established in the United States and Europe (although not in Australia) before the Second World War – that is, a sombre building that attempts to evoke an appropriate sense of dignity, grandeur and timelessness through the use of stark wall surfaces and abstracted historical references. Overseas, this was typified by such examples as the celebrated Woodland Crematorium outside Stockholm (Gunnar Asplund, 1935-40), the mortuary chapel at Stuttgart Cemetery in Germany (Hans Peter Schmohl, c.1930) or the J P Finley & Son mortuary in Portland, Oregon (Pietro Belluschi, 1935), all expressed in a similarly austere block-like form with multi-paned windows, stripped classical loggias and abstracted tower elements.

<sup>3</sup> Donald Chambers, *One Hundred Years of Le Pine*, p 75.

<sup>4</sup> Chambers, *One Hundred Years of Le Pine*, p 85.

<sup>5</sup> Matthews, "Funeral parlours", p 34.

<sup>6</sup> Matthews, "Funeral parlours".

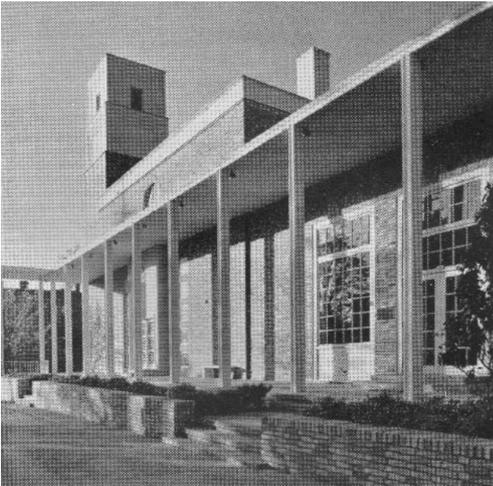


Figure 1: The J P Finley & Son mortuary in Portland, Oregon (Pietro Belluschi, 1935)

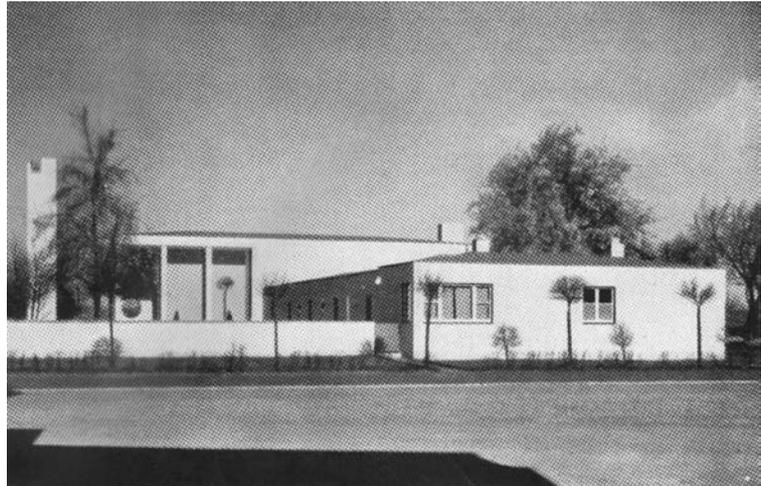


Figure 2: Mortuary chapel at Stuttgart Cemetery in Germany (Hans Peter Schmohl, c.1930)

(source for both images: Roberto Aloj, *Architettura Funeraria Moderna*, 1951)

Victoria's first purpose-built post-war funeral parlour, the new premises of WG Apps & Sons in St Kilda (Muir & Shepherd, 1953) follows this tradition closely, right down to the well-placed cypress trees – an ancient symbol of death frequently planted in cemeteries and, in the twentieth century, often used as a compositional device in funerary buildings, such as the crematorium at Halsingborg, Sweden (Ragnar Ostberg, 1926). A similarly monumental expression, albeit in a more overtly modernist vein, is evident in the Le Pine & Sons premises at Box Hill (Bates, Smart & McCutcheon, 1961). This was as a typical brick-clad International Style box with full-height window, but softened by an overscaled and off-centre entrance portico. Internally, a portal-framed chapel with one fully glazed wall (not entirely unlike a miniature version of the same firm's Wilson Hall at the University of Melbourne, completed a few years before) that opens onto a landscape courtyard. The contemporaneous premises of Drayton & Garson at 1646 High Street, Glen Iris (architect unknown, 1960) was somewhat similar – a flat-roofed modernist brick box with *porte-cochere* – but made even more concession to the prevailing architectural tastes of the day, with a lively feature wall of random courses slate and concrete breeze block screen. This memorable building – a unusual example of a funeral parlour designed in an arguably inappropriate Featurist style – was destroyed in the 1980s for the construction of the South Eastern Freeway.

In any case, Victoria's initial boom of initial boom of new funeral parlours in the 1950s and early 1960s was followed by several years of relative inactivity, and it was not until the later 1960s that the industry underwent a second boom. In stark contrast to 1950s, architect-designed purpose-built facilities now represented the majority of new funeral parlours in Victoria, with such examples as Nelson Brothers in Devonshire Road, Sunshine (1967), Mulqueen & Sons in Burwood Road, Burwood (1968), Joseph Allison in Mount Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds (1972) and Giannarelli & Sons in Lygon Street, Brunswick (1973). The last of these represented a particular innovation in Victoria's funeral industry, for the eponymous Almo Giannarelli – formerly a stonemason and supplier of cemetery monuments for thirty years – had (together with his four sons) only recently branched into the funeral business. In doing so, Giannarelli & Sons had become the first new funeral company to break into the tightly-held Melbourne market since before the Second World War. One of the sons, Giuseppe, had trained as an embalmer in the United States and brought back the influence of American funeral practices.<sup>7</sup> Giannarelli & Sons thereafter transformed the local market with the introduction of many innovations – not all of which were popular with the firm's long-established competitors – including 24-hour service, package deals for funerals and monuments, low-cost funerals and cremations, imported zinc-lined coffins, American limousine hearses and modern air-conditioned funeral parlours. Changes of this sort soon became more widespread, and marked a decisive move in the local funeral industry, away from the old-style ritual funeral and towards the more personalised service that continues to the present day.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> "Launching a funeral parlour: A monumental undertaking", *Age*, 10 December 1974, p 2.

<sup>8</sup> "Death industry gets new life", *Age*, 5 December 1978, p 44.



Figures 3 and 4: Exterior (left) and interior (right) of new Le Pine & Sons funeral parlour in Whitehorse Road, Box Hill (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1962); photographs by Wolfgang Sievers (National Library of Australia)



Figures 5 and 6: Exterior (left) and interior (right) of new Le Pine & Sons funeral parlour in Kew (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1967); photographs by Wolfgang Sievers (National Library of Australia)

Architecturally, new funeral parlours erected in Victoria since the mid-1960s have been markedly different to their counterparts of the previous decade. These more recent manifestations have moved beyond both the stripped classicism of the early 1950s and the classicised modernism of the early 1960s, towards an expression that is more stylistically ambiguous while still evoking an appropriate sense of awe. This transformation, which was no doubt brought about by an increasingly multi-cultural and non-denominational society, is ably demonstrated by the Le Pine & Sons premises at Kew (Bates, Smart McCutcheon, 1967). In contrast to the firm's smartly modernist Box Hill premises, designed by the same architects only six years earlier, the building at Kew is dominated by a chunky concrete-framed loggia with overhanging concrete beams that support a floating roof to the *porte-cochere*, with a hip-roofed chapel behind. The contemporaneous Nelson Brothers funeral parlour at Sunshine (G Stuart Warmington, 1967) exudes a sense of austerity by breaking its facades into alternating vertical bays of solid (face brickwork) and void (glazing), while a very similar (albeit rather less striking) expression was used several subsequent examples, including the premises of Mulqueen & Sons at 128-130 Burwood Road, Burwood (Bernard Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1968) and Joseph Allison at Mount Alexander Road, Essendon (Hudson & Wardrop, 1972). Proving that the design of a funeral parlour can indeed be timeless, a comparable expression of solid-and-void was used by architect Craig Rosetti in the fine example that he designed at Sale, completed as recently as 1997.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> "Funeral home, Sale", *Architect Victoria*, March 1998, pp 12-13, 18.

## 2.2 KINDERGARTENS

The modern system of pre-school education in Victoria is essentially a twentieth century phenomenon, which traces its origins back to the Free Kindergarten movement of the early 1900s. This was informed by overseas developments, particularly in the United States, Japan and Germany, where, the words of one local champion:

The object of the kindergarten, of child-garden, is to bring them under wholesome and elevating influences at what is recognised as the most impressionable period of their lives; to inculcate the principles of right conduct; to form the habits of cleanliness, truthfulness, order and obedience; to awaken moral sentiment and inspire a reverence for all that is great and good, and generally to guide and train all the natural activities of the child in the right direction.<sup>10</sup>

In Australia, the first Free Kindergarten movement initially took hold in New South Wales from the early 1890s, which culminated in the establishment of kindergartens at Woolloomooloo (1897) and Newtown (1898). The opening of another at Adelaide (1905) moved the editor of the *Argus* to point out that “Melbourne lags behind”.<sup>11</sup> This lag, however, did not last long, with Victoria's first Free Kindergarten established at Burnley in September 1906.<sup>12</sup> Another promptly opened at Collingwood (1907), and residents of many other suburbs expressed similar interest. Following the formation of the Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria in 1909, facilities began to proliferate throughout the Melbourne metropolitan area; during 1910 alone, new kindergartens opened at Fitzroy, central Melbourne, South Melbourne and Prahran.

At this early stage, the priority was to quickly establish a modern kindergarten service throughout Victoria; consequently, the first free kindergartens were set up in existing premises rather than purpose-built centres. The pioneering facility at Burnley, for example, was housed in the City Mission Hall in Crown Street, while its counterpart in central Melbourne in the former Wesleyan church at the corner of Exhibition and Little Lonsdale Streets. Victoria's first purpose-built kindergarten, the Lady Northcote Free Kindergarten in Montague, was opened in February 1912. Erected at a cost of £800 with space for 80 children, the new building was “arranged on the newest lines, with a large hall for the general routine work, a room for the babies, a rest room and a well-equipped bathroom”.<sup>13</sup> This, however, remained something of an anomaly; few kindergartens could afford to erect their own premises at that time, and the tradition of “temporary” accommodation in church halls and other existing buildings continued. It was not until the 1920s that a minor boom of purpose-built kindergarten premises commenced in Melbourne, with new buildings erected at Bouverie Street, Carlton (1922), Cremorne Street, Richmond (1923), Cliff Street, South Yarra (1923), Keele Street, Collingwood (1924), Nelson Street, St Kilda (1925) and elsewhere. By the mid-1920s, the Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria could claim more than twenty kindergartens across the metropolitan area, plus two in Geelong and one in Ballarat.<sup>14</sup> The total had increased to thirty by 1939 – almost twice the number of free kindergartens then existing in New South Wales, three times the number in South Australia and Western Australia, and five times the number in Tasmania and Western Australia.<sup>15</sup>

The late 1930s otherwise coincided with significant changes that would have a profound impact on the development of Australian kindergartens in the post-war period. Following the creation of the National Health & Medical Research Council in 1936, there was renewed push to upgrade facilities associated with all aspects of maternal health and child welfare, which included kindergartens.<sup>16</sup> Guidelines were sought from prominent Melbourne paediatrician Dr Vera Scantlebury-Brown, who recommended, amongst other things, that a model kindergarten be established in each state capital. The following year, the Prime Minister, Joseph Lyons, allocated £100,000 for “public health projects, especially in relation to the health of women and children”. In 1939, at the suggestion of Lady Zara Gowrie (1879-1965), wife of the Governor-General and a long-time champion of pre-school education in Australia, the Free Kindergarten Unions across the six states were federated to form a new national body, the Australian Association of Pre-School Child Development. Each state then appointed a Lady Gowrie Child Centre Committee, not only to establish a central model kindergarten in each capital city, but also to promote further public interest in the burgeoning kindergarten movement.

<sup>10</sup> “Free Kindergartens: An appeal to the public”, *Argus*, 1 June 1906, p 7.

<sup>11</sup> “Free Kindergartens: An appeal to the public”, *Argus*, 1 June 1906, p 7.

<sup>12</sup> “Free Kindergarten: The Richmond School”, *Argus*, 15 September 1906, p 17.

<sup>13</sup> “Free Kindergarten”, *Argus*, 10 February 1912, p 20.

<sup>14</sup> “Kindergarten Union”, *Argus*, 11 December 1925, p 22.

<sup>15</sup> J H L Cumpston, *Pre-School Centres in Australia*, p 197.

<sup>16</sup> J H L Cumpston, *Pre-School Centres in Australia*, pp 1-4.



Figure 7: Victoria's first "model kindergarten": the Lady Gowrie Child Care Centre at Carlton (Marcus Martin, 1939); (source: Cumpston, *Pre-School Centres in Australia*, p 32)



Figure 8: The original Olive Phillips Free Kindergarten in Bodley Street, Beaumaris (Seabrook & Fildes, 1949); photograph by Peter Wille (State Library of Victoria)

Given that Victoria had more free kindergartens than any other state, it is not surprising that the first of the Lady Gowrie Child Care Centres was the one in Melbourne, which, located in Newry Street, Carlton, was officially opened in December 1939.<sup>17</sup> Described as a "delightful building, fresh and airy", it comprised three nurseries (for children aged two, three and four years) each with its own toilets and cloakrooms, plus a communal dining room with kitchen, laundry, staff rooms, medical suite and caretaker's flat. A well-appointed playground included swing sets, sand pit, wading pool, "climbing mound" and a small landscaped area, with winding pathways and steps, referred to as a "mystery corner". Barely six months later, the Melbourne City Council followed suit with their own self-styled "model kindergarten" – the Lady Huntingfield Free Kindergarten in Lothian Street, North Melbourne – which, at the time, was described as the first in Australia to be erected by a municipal council.<sup>18</sup> Such was its success that the MCC went on to build a second model pre-school centre, the Hopetoun Free Kindergarten in Racecourse Road, Flemington, which opened in March 1945.<sup>19</sup> By that time, the design, planning, fitout and furnishing of a modern kindergarten had been codified via the publication of a slim government-sponsored volume entitled *Pre-School Centres in Australia: Building, Equipment & Programme*. This book included a preface by architect Marcus Martin, designer of the original Lady Gowrie Child Care Centre in Carlton, who had since accepted several other commissions from the Free Kindergarten Union and become (along with his partner, Horace Tribe) something of a specialist in the emerging field of modern pre-school design.

Notwithstanding this enthusiasm for architect-designed "model kindergartens", ordinary suburban pre-school committees – established and managed by local parents themselves – were hardly in a position to erect such grand structures. Although some committees managed to have plans drawn up for more modest premises, the increasing gravity of the Second World War effectively delay the realisation of these plans for some time. While new kindergartens continued to be established during the 1940s, these were obliged – not unlike their Edwardian counterparts – to make their homes in existing buildings such as church halls. By the end of the decade, a small number of local groups had managed to erect kindergartens, although this invariably represented the culmination of many years of planning and fund-raising. Examples such as the Olive Phillips Free Kindergarten in Bodley Street, Beaumaris (1949) and the Robert Cochrane Free Kindergarten in Minona Avenue, Auburn (1950) acknowledged, by their very nomenclature, the significant contribution of a long-standing local champion or benefactor.

Architecturally, these early post-war kindergartens were characterised by the use of basic timber construction and simple forms – low-pitched gabled or skillion roofs, timber or cement sheet cladding, with large windows to provide the natural and ventilation that was thought to contribute to the general well-being of the children within. The original Olive Phillips Free Kindergarten at Beaumaris, designed by Seabrook & Fildes, even incorporated something described on the working drawings as an "outdoor summer classroom" – an elongated north-facing alcove, roofed only by an open pergola – that was no doubt inspired by a progressive overseas counterpart (most likely the famous open-air school at Amsterdam, designed by Jan Duiker in 1929-30).

<sup>17</sup> "Lady Gowrie Child Centre open", *Argus*, 9 December 1939, p 15.

<sup>18</sup> "Free kindergarten opens today", *Argus*, 11 July 1940, p 8.

<sup>19</sup> "City council's second kindergarten", *Argus*, 23 March 1945, p 8.

In the early 1950s, Victoria's leading exponent of progressive kindergarten architecture was Horace Tribe – erstwhile partner of Marcus Martin – who, after developing a prototypical modern pre-school at Auburn (1950), subsequently adapted the design into a string of other facilities across the state, including those at Swan Hill (1953), Korumburra (1954), Hughesdale (1954) and Ringwood (1955).

By that time, wartime restrictions on building materials had been relaxed, and this, coupled with the emergence of the new generation of locally-trained post-war modernist architects, brought about a significant change in pre-school architecture in Victoria. While the so-called Melbourne Regional style of the 1950s – characterised by brave structural expression, playful forms and bright colours – is most widely associated with modern dwellings, some of its exponents saw the relevance of its application to kindergartens, where bold forms and colours were considered to be entirely appropriate for a building occupied by small children. The germs of this can be traced back as far as 1953, when architects Mussen, Mackay & Potter designed a pre-school (or “occupational play centre”) at the Oakleigh Retarded Children's Centre on Warrigal Road. Here, the building's street facade was enlivened by a highly distinctive blue-and-yellow chequerboard pattern, incorporating child-like drawings of animals, people and other everyday objects. An even more striking example was the so-called Bendigo Creche in Rosalind Park, Bendigo (Eggleston, McDonald & Secombe, 1955), which had a pure triangular plan that boldly straddled a creek bed, with exposed portal frames and structural cross-bracing that doubled as decorative window mullions.

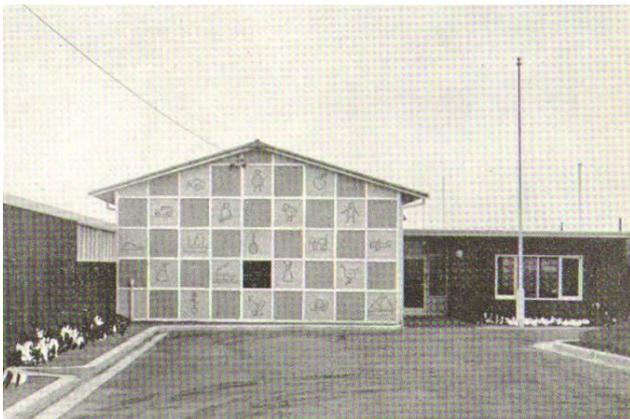


Figure 9: The “Occupational Play Centre” at the Oakleigh Retarded Children's Home (Mussen, McKay & Potter, 1953) (source: Architecture Australia, Apr/Jun 1954, p 101)

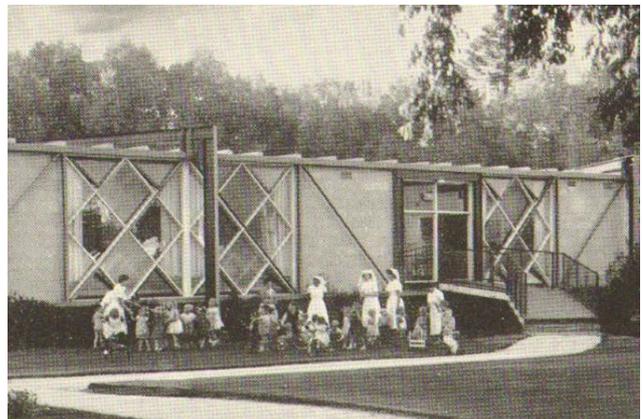


Figure 10: The triangular-planned Bendigo Creche at Rosalind Park (Eggleston, McDonald & Secombe, 1955) (source: Golden Bendigo: The City with a Future)



Figure 11: The Jack & Jill Kindergarten at Beaumaris (Douglas Alexandra, 1956) as it appears today; photograph by Simon Reeves (Built Heritage Pty Ltd)

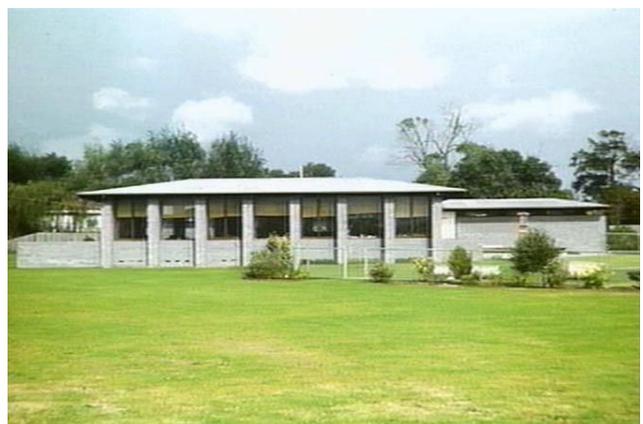


Figure 12: Pre-school centre at Joy Street, Frankston (Chancellor & Patrick, 1964) in the Wrightian style; photograph by Peter Wille (State Library of Victoria)

Other kindergartens in a similar whimsical vein included the Children's Play Centre at South Melbourne (Horace Tribe, 1955), with a bold A-framed roof and quirky dormer windows, and the Caulfield North Pre-school in Birch Street, Caulfield North (Edgar Gurney, 1956), enlivened by a fashionable butterfly roof. Around the same time, architect Douglas Alexandra designed a least two kindergartens of similar character: the Jack & Jill Kindergarten in Beaumaris (1956) and the Alfred Road Pre-School in Auburn (1957). Both incorporated diagonal geometry to striking effect: the former with cross-braced window mullions, and the latter with a zig-zag roof and diamond-shaped spandrel panels. In each case, Alexandra also proposed an elaborate playground design, with oddly-shaped sandpits and garden beds, interlocking diagonal pathways and, in one corner, a self-styled "mystery garden" that harked back some fifteen years to a precedent set by Marcus Martin and Horace Tribe at the Lady Gowrie Centre.

By the late 1950s, as enthusiasm for the Melbourne Regional style abated, designers of new kindergartens in Victoria invariably turned to a more conventional strain of International Modernism. This gave rise to a spate of pre-school centres designed as ubiquitous flat-roofed boxes with repetitive fenestration, typified by such examples as the Sunnyside Kindergarten at Coinda Place, Malvern East (Stewart Handasyde, 1958), the North Blackburn Kindergarten at Surrey Road (Hank Romyn, 1960) and the Methodist Kindergarten at High Street Road, Syndal (Alexander Harris, 1964).

The parallel development of the organic style – informed by the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and independent experiments by local designers such as Alistair Knox – inevitably spread to kindergarten design. This was exemplified by a series of pre-school centres designed in the mid 1960s by Chancellor & Patrick – Melbourne's leading exponents of the organic style – for the City of Frankston, where the firm's office was based. Examples at Joy Street, Frankston, and Barmah Road, Mount Eliza (both 1964), exhibit a decidedly Wrightian flavour with their low-pitched floating hipped roofs and windows defined with concrete block piers. As this organic style lent itself to the use of decorative encrustations and non-orthogonal geometry, the later 1960s also saw a resurgence of kindergartens being designed in a more whimsical style to appeal to the sensibilities of a young child. A key example was the Eltham South Pre-School (Charles Duncan, 1965), which not only revived the triangular plan used by Robert Eggleston at Bendigo over a decade earlier, but added a bell-cast slate-clad roof with huge metal spire. Internally, the architect used low pelmets in a deliberate attempt to scale the playroom to a child's proportion; this interesting (and, at the time, controversial) approach was echoed in the bathroom area, where miniature timber partitions defined the toilet stalls.

A similar technique was used in the contemporaneous Pine Mont Pre-School at Ringwood (Graeme Gunn, 1965), where "the height of internal spaces was visibly reduced by averaging out the main playroom space from high roof light to door height at the perimeter, and also by extending the sloping roof beyond the wall lines".<sup>20</sup> Otherwise, the building moved away from Charles Duncan's overtly Wrightian style towards a less specific naturalist approach, with simple trabeated timber construction, vertical timber plank cladding and naturally finished hardboard linings. This change of direction is also evident in two kindergartens designed by Kevin Borland in the late 1960s. His Boroondara Free Kindergarten at Richmond North (1968) used eye-catching zig-zag brick walls integrated with upward-sloping eaves and broad timber fascias, while the Lady Forster Kindergarten at Port Melbourne (also 1968) introduced a distinctive jagged roofline with triangular clerestory windows and exposed roof framing within.<sup>21</sup>

The number of kindergartens in Victoria burgeoned during the 1970s when the passing of the federal legislation – the *Child Care Act 1972* – provided generous capital funding and other assistance.<sup>22</sup> Architecturally, new pre-school centres erected in Victoria during this period continued in the same gentle naturalistic style that had emerged in the mid-1960s – typified by the new Olive Phillips Free Kindergarten at Beaumaris (David Godsell, 1974) and the Woodridge Pre-School at Eltham (Whitford & Peck, 1974). During the second half of the decade, the local emergence of Post-Modernism saw a welcome return to the tradition of playful kindergarten architecture, which is evident in such early examples as the E M Dauber Child Minding Centre in Fitzroy (Bates, Smart & McCutcheon, 1976) and the North St Kilda Day Nursery (Young Lehman & Company, 1976). Few examples in Victoria, however, reached the bewilderingly Venturi-esque extreme of the Bungawitta Children's Centre in Tasmania (Robert Morris-Nunn, 1985), which was described in a recent international survey of pre-school buildings as "an extreme form of children's architecture, which takes the imaginative needs of children's play very literally, creating a Lilliputian distortion as a major part of its architectural representation".<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Harry Sowden, *Towards an Australian Architecture* (1968), p 126.

<sup>21</sup> Doug Evans et al, *Kevin Borland: Architecture from the Heart* (2006), pp 50-53

<sup>22</sup> "All Gough's Children", *Architecture Australia*, Aug/Sept 1977, pp 67-68.

<sup>23</sup> Mark Dudek, *Kindergarten Architecture: Space for the Imagination* (2000), p 161.

## 2.3 MUNICIPAL LIBRARIES

In Victoria, public library services ultimately date back to the establishment of the Melbourne Public Library (now State Library of Victoria), established in 1856. Three years later, it instigated a travelling library service to circulate books amongst mechanics institutes or other local institutions – initially within ten miles of Melbourne, although this limit was abolished in 1867.<sup>24</sup> In 1892, a separate lending library was established for residents within the metropolitan area, and this service was subsequently extended to regional areas in 1920. A parallel (and occasionally overlapping) development were the “free libraries” provided by mechanics' institutes or similar local organisations for the use of their members. The first of these was established in Melbourne by the Athenaeum Club as early as 1839, and countless others appeared throughout the metropolitan area, and in regional centres, over the next six decades. These libraries were sometimes housed in a room (or rooms) within a mechanic's institute or hall, or sometimes in a purpose-built edifice of its own. However, they were never public libraries in the strictest sense, as usage was restricted by subscription.

During this period, only a handful of libraries were actually established by municipal councils for public use, including those at Collingwood (1869), Fitzroy (1889), South Melbourne (1904), Mildura (1906) and Northcote (1909). The last two are of especial interest in that they were both Carnegie Libraries – that is, amongst over 2,500 public libraries around the world funded by American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie between 1883 and 1929. His bequest was to have an even more profound effect on local library development in when, in 1932, the Carnegie Corporation funded a survey of Australian libraries. Released in 1935, the Munn-Pitt report (as it was known) highlighted many shortcomings, including limited public access and poor levels of service for children. This prompted the formation of the Library Service Board in 1940, and, six years later, legislation was passed to allow for the establishment of a discrete body, the Free Library Service Board, to promote and organise public library service in Victoria.<sup>25</sup> The *Free Library Service Board Act 1946* also introduced a new system of government funding for local libraries, with pound-for-pound grants to subsidise running costs, and annual capital grants for children's libraries and libraries in regional areas. To ensure that new public libraries would be adequately staffed, the State Library of Victoria also established its Library Training School in 1948.

Needless to say, subsequent expansion of Victoria's municipal library system was phenomenal. Following a typical pattern, local councils negotiated to take over existing free libraries; amongst the first to do so, during 1948-49, were the larger regional centres of Geelong, Bendigo and Ballarat. This pattern is ably illustrated by a table of statistics published in 1953, which reported that, over the previous six years, the number of municipal libraries in Victoria had increased from 12 to 56, while the number of old-style mechanics' institute libraries had dropped from 202 to 69.<sup>26</sup> During that same brief period, the annual subsidy of the Free Library Service Board increased from £16,000 to £100,000. But while such funding was available, the fact remained that capitol grants were not provided to metropolitan municipalities, which effectively discouraged suburban councils from erecting purpose-built libraries until they could raise the money themselves. Consequently, most early post-war public libraries in Victoria were set up in existing mechanics' institute or free library buildings – as was the case at Brighton (1951), Rosebud (1954) and elsewhere – or in refurbished rooms within their respective town halls – as seen at Box Hill (1951), Coburg (1953), North Melbourne (1956) and elsewhere. Even Melbourne's most well-appointed local library of the period, maintained by the City of South Melbourne, was accommodated in the Town Hall. In this way, when the council secured a sizeable grant of £4,850 in 1952, the money could be devoted entirely to upgrading the facilities, which, in the words of the Chief Librarian, transformed it into the most modern library in Melbourne and “a model for Australian libraries for the next twenty years”.<sup>27</sup>

With capitol funding for library construction restricted to those municipalities outside Melbourne, it is not at all surprising that Victoria's first purpose-built library premises in the post-war era sprung up in regional centres. One of the first of these was the modest cream brick building at Sale, which was designed as early as 1952 but not actually constructed until 1954-55. Around the same time, the City of Geelong was obliged to reconsider the future of its library after the building that it had long occupied – the former Chamber of Commerce, dating back to 1858 – was condemned. The library service was temporarily accommodated in the Town Hall while a new purpose-built facility was erected alongside, overlooking Johnstone Park.

<sup>24</sup> V H Arnold (ed), *Victorian Year Book 1973: Centenary Edition*, pp 502-503.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, pp 503-504.

<sup>26</sup> “Free Libraries prove their Value”, *Age*, 28 May 1953, p 2.

<sup>27</sup> “Modern features in new library”, *Age*, 12 November 1954, p 4.

However, it was not until the late 1950s that the first counterparts finally began to appear in the Melbourne metropolitan area. One of the first was built by the City of Malvern, which established a library service after a referendum in 1955, then spent several years accumulating grants and other funding. Completed at a cost of £44,000, the new library opened at 1257 High Street in June 1959. Designed by architect Stewart Handasyde, the two storey building comprised separate libraries for adults and children, a 103-seat auditorium, and an upstairs stack.<sup>28</sup> Many other suburban municipalities followed suit, with new purpose-built libraries opening at Sandringham (1959), Moorabbin (1960), Croydon (1961), Prahran (1962), Ivanhoe (1964), Altona (1965), Essendon (1967) and elsewhere. During this same period, a number of other metropolitan councils – still as yet unable to build their own libraries – followed the tradition of setting up facilities in town halls or other council-owned buildings, as was the case at Camberwell (1961) and Carlton (1966).

By 1967, public libraries had been established by no fewer than 36 local councils in Melbourne, with another 107 facilities throughout regional Victoria.<sup>29</sup> During this period, libraries services had been impacted by the recommendations of yet another government-sponsored assessment – the so-called Jungwith Report, which was released in August 1964 and, amongst other things, endorsed a more co-ordinated and co-operative approach. The following year, legislation was passed to allow the creation of a new body – the Library Council of Victoria – to consolidate the functions of the existing Free Library Services Board and the State Library Trustees. Another outcome of this was the formation of regional library networks, where services within contiguous municipalities were consolidated.

Architecturally, Victoria's purpose-built local libraries of the 1960s tended to be distinguished by their internal planning rather than by their external appearance. Local architects went to considerable lengths to research and resolve the highly complex programme inherent in the modern public library. Harry Winbush, who designed one for the City of Essendon in 1967, is known to have drawn inspiration from a monograph, Anthony Thompson's *Library Buildings of Britain and Europe*, which was published in London a few years earlier.<sup>30</sup> The interior layout of the City of Altona's new library (Howden & McLean, 1965), was typical, incorporating such innovations as an outdoor reading courtyard, a study areas with individual desks, and an informal lounge area "furnished with easy chairs for casual reading".<sup>31</sup> By the end of the decade, features such as these had become standard. But for all their planning innovations, many of these libraries were externally unremarkable: invariably, a single-storey flat-roofed building with stark face brick walls and bays of full-height glazing – typified by those at Cheltenham (C Ian Turner, 1960), Prahran (Leslie M Perrott, 1962) and Essendon (Harry Winbush, 1967). Some were certainly a little more sophisticated in their expression, such as the slick modernist box at Sandringham (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1959) and the atypical three-storey library at Ivanhoe (Leith & Bartlett, 1964-65), with its double-height glazed walls and open-planned reading room with mezzanine balcony.

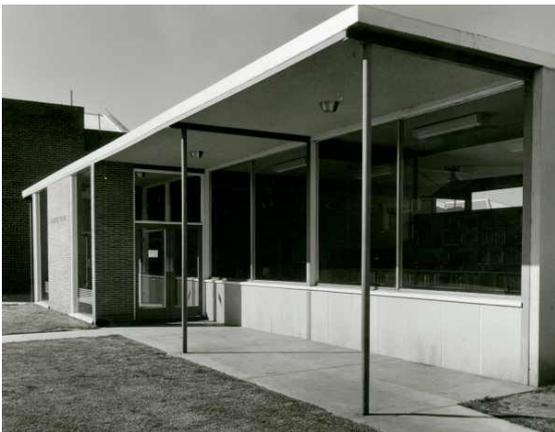


Figure 13: The new City of Sandringham Library (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1959); photo by Wolfgang Sievers (National Library)



Figure 14: The new City of Moorabbin Central Library at 161 Jasper Road, Bentleigh (1961); photograph from the Age, 16 August 1961, p 11.

<sup>28</sup> *Cross Section*, No 84 (1 October 1959), p 3.

<sup>29</sup> "The Information Explosion, and what our libraries are doing", *Age*, 18 September 1967, p 3.

<sup>30</sup> A copy of this book, inscribed with Winbush's name and office address, is in the possession of Simon Reeves.

<sup>31</sup> "Altona gets off to early start", *Age*, 7 June 1965, p 7.



Figure 15: The new City of Prahran branch library at Orrong Road, Armadale (Leslie M Perrott & Partners, 1962); photograph by Peter Wille (State Library of Victoria)



Figure 16: The new City of Essendon library at Mount Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds (Harry Winbush, 1967-68); photograph by Peter Wille (State Library of Victoria)

Indeed, such was the generic appearance of public libraries in Victoria that, from the late 1950s to the late 1960s, individual specimens rarely attracted the attention of the architectural press. This was not the case further north, where new public libraries, sometimes of quite striking form, were often published – notably the Brisbane City Libraries at Annerley (1956), Chermshire (1957) and Toowong (1959) by James Birrell, the Sydney City Council's Florence Bartley Library at Kings Cross (Arthur Collins, 1958), the Dickson Library in Canberra (Dr Enrico Taglietti, 1964) and the Warringah Shire Library at Dee Why (Edwards, Madigan, Torzillo & Partners, 1967). One of these – the Florence Bartley Library in New South Wales – even received the state's highest architectural accolade, the Sulman Medal, in 1958.

In Victoria, it was only in the late 1960s that the design of municipal libraries began to become comparably adventurous. Not at all surprisingly, a significant catalyst for this change came from interstate. In the late 1960s, when the City of St Kilda finally decided to go proceed with the construction of a new library, the committee – suitably impressed by Enrico Taglietti's Dickson Library at Canberra – duly commissioned the same architect for their own building. The new City of St Kilda Library library, opened in 1973, attracted considerable attention across the country, being published in journals as varied as *Constructional Review*, the *Australian Builder*, the *Australian Municipal Journal*, and the *Australian Library Journal*. Moreover, its completion coincided with that of another architect-designed municipal library of striking form: the new South Yarra branch of the Prahran Public Library, by Yuncken Freeman Pty Ltd. The two buildings were profiled in successive issues of *Architect* magazine, which drew attention to the sharp contrast between Taglietti's idiosyncratic monumentality and Yuncken Freeman's pragmatic minimalism. It was duly concluded that “Both were expensive buildings.. You pay your money, you make your choice, but if it's urban sculpture you're after, you pay a little more”.<sup>32</sup>

A valid point had been made, and a new era of bold architect-designed libraries had begun in Victoria. Amongst those subsequently lauded in the local architectural press was the City of Camberwell's new branch library on Whitehorse Road, Balwyn (Daryl Jackson/Evan Walker, 1978). An open-planned and split-level building with radial bookshelves, landscaped courtyard and a stepped “reading pit” for children, the new facility was described as “a sensitive and successful solution to a familiar design problem – the community library – without seeming ‘forbidding and bookish’ in the way of more traditional libraries”.<sup>33</sup> Other notable examples built at this time included the Mordialloc-Chelsea Regional Library (Young, Lehmann & Company, 1977) and the Stawell Regional Library (Earle Greenway Taylor, 1980).<sup>34</sup> This trend for human-scaled and community-friendly public libraries culminated in the mid-1990s, when, for the first time in Victoria, a municipal library was the recipient of a state-level architectural award – not once, but twice: the Eltham Library (Gregory Burgess, 1993-94) and the Ringwood Library (Edmund & Corrigan, 1996).

<sup>32</sup> “Toorak/South Yarra Branch Library”, *Architect* (Victorian Chapter of the RAlA), No 27 (Sep/Oct 1973), p 15.

<sup>33</sup> “Jackson/Walker: Balwyn Branch Library”, *Architect*, August 1978, pp 8-9.

<sup>34</sup> “Stawell Regional Library”, *Architect*, August 1980, p 12.

## 2.4 COUNCIL OFFICES

A historical overview of municipal development in post-war Victoria had been adequately recorded in both Andrew Ward's *Typological Study of Local Government Offices in Victoria* (vol 1, pp 43-45), and Heritage Alliance's *Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria: Stage One* (vol 1, pp 23-24) and will only be summarised here. Suffice to say, the Second World War and its consequent restrictions on non-essential building activity, limited the amount of construction work that could be undertaken by municipal councils. Indeed, no new local government offices were erected in Victoria between 1941 (when the Eltham Shire Offices were completed, just before restrictions were imposed) and 1952 (when the Borough of Echuca proposed new headquarters, soon after restrictions were eased). But the same period saw a population boom that placed much pressure on local councils to expand community facilities, roads and so on. This was most true of those municipalities on the edge of the metropolitan area, and in regional centres throughout Victoria. For two decades, from the late 1940s to the late 1960s, a large number of these fringe or regional municipalities were elevated from the status of shires or boroughs to that of a city. The provision of larger administrative offices, to replace modest pre-war counterparts, became a high priority for these councils. The same was true within the Melbourne metropolitan area, where even councils that had been proclaimed as cities well before the War realised that their existing town halls – often a grand nineteenth century edifice – was no longer adequate for modern administrative needs. Moreover, more than a few inner-city councils were approaching their centenaries in the 1950s (and into the '60s), and saw the erection of a new and modern civic centre as an appropriate marker.

Architecturally, early post-war municipal offices in Victoria had an understandably austere expression, evoking pre-war Moderne counterparts through the use of block-like forms, flats (or at least parapeted) roofs, stark face brickwork and window bays with projecting concrete frames. A few especially old-fashioned examples even displayed wall-mounted flagstaves, curved corners, ceramic tiled spandrels, or corner windows. This retrogressive approach was typified not only be the aforementioned example at Echuca (1952) but also by others at Ballarat (1955), Nathalia (1957), Mildura (1958), Springvale (1959), Sebastopol (1960) and Mentone (1962). The new strain of progressive modernist, as exhibited in contemporaneous houses by the emerging generation of young architects, was relatively slow to find expression in municipal offices. The first example was the new Benalla Shire offices, completed in 1958 for a regional council that had been upgraded from a borough only ten years earlier. Shortly afterward, it began to appear within the Melbourne metropolitan area, with such examples as the new City of Brighton municipal office (Oakley & Parkes, 1958-61) and the Kew Civic Centre (Leith & Bartlett, 1959-60)

This new municipal building at Kew, which had been mooted as far back as 1945, was intended as the first phase in a much grander scheme to develop an entire civic precinct. This, in itself, was indicative of a new but increasingly widely-held attitude, emerging in the immediate post-war era, that a district's civic centre should be precisely that – not just a single grand building for official use, but a dedicated precinct providing a range of community facilities (library, health centre, public hall, clubrooms for youth, elderly citizens, RSL and so on) as well as an administrative function. Many of the more progressive (and urban-scaled) municipalities in Victoria – both in suburban Melbourne and in regional centres – proposed such civic centres. These were invariably intended to be realised in several stages, although relatively few were fully implemented, and fewer still implemented within a short space of time as a cohesive development by a single architect. One rare (and early) example was the City of Sale Civic Centre, which began with a public hall (1951), then a library/RSL club (1952) and municipal office (1959), all to the design of Buchan Laird & Buchan, followed by an art gallery and library addition (1962-64) by a local architect. In other cases, such as Kew, the original civic masterplan was later abandoned, with its first building standing alone until another was built, many years later, by another architect.

An interesting sub-theme in the erection of post-war municipal offices in Victoria is that a considerable proportion were designed by the same three or four Melbourne-based architectural firms, who established themselves as the leading specialists in this type of work. The two most prolific firms in this regard were A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall, and A C Leith & Bartlett; both, in fact, had made names for themselves as designers of local government offices prior to the Second World War. Lines' office, for example had designed the Eltham Shire Offices in 1941, while Leith's firm had been responsible for the celebrated Heidelberg Town Hall in 1937). Both practices parleyed this early experience into a lucrative post-war career, designing numerous municipals offices well into the 1970s. Honourable mention might also be made of the firm of Berg & Alexandra, which was responsible for several notable civic centres in regional Victoria (at Hamilton, Shepparton, Traralgon, Cohuna and elsewhere) during the 1960s.



Figure 17: The new Springvale City Hall (Alsop & Duncan, 1959-60), expressed in a traditional monumental style; photograph by Simon Reeves (Built Heritage Pty Ltd)



Figure 18: The new City of Sandringham municipal offices (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965) in the modernist style; photograph by Peter Wille (State Library of Victoria)

Although the market for new municipal offices was cornered, to some extent, by the offices of A K Lines and A C Leith, numerous other architects made (generally brief) forays into the building type. In some cases, a municipality engaged the services of a particular architect or firm, who would be retained, over several years, to design whatever council buildings were required – kindergartens, libraries, public toilet blocks and so on – which might lead to a commission for new municipal office. In this way, noted modernists Bates Smart & McCutcheon became associated with the City of Sandringham, and designed a striking council administration building in Royal Avenue (1965) after previously being engaged to design a library (1959), a public hall (1962) and a beachside change room. For more than two decades, Oakley & Parkes maintained a similar relationship with the adjacent City of Bayside, designing the municipal offices (1961), a kindergarten and other projects. Other architects who worked regularly on this basis included Harry Winbush (City of Essendon), G Stuart Warrington (City of Sunshine) and Alsop & Duncan (City of Dandenong).

For much of the 1960s, municipal offices in an especially fine modernist style – of the type designed by Bates Smart McCutcheon or Berg & Alexandra – very much remained the exception in Victoria. More commonly, they were realised as utilitarian or even unremarkable gable-roofed brick buildings, typified by modest single-storey examples at Maldon (1964), Foster (1966), Tatura (1967) and Newstead (1968), or the two-storey ones at Wannan (1960) and Eltham (1964). Some of these, particularly in regional Victoria, were almost domestic in both scale and character. Others made minor concessions to the prevailing architectural taste of the day, such as feature walls of slate or breeze block, or porch canopies on metal pipe columns. As the decade wore on, many designers of new municipal offices in Victoria began to embrace a unremarkable International Style, so that the buildings resembled ubiquitous city or suburban office blocks with little or no civic presence. These buildings, with their simple block-like forms and repetitive fenestration, are typified by examples at Drysdale (1967), Ararat (1967) and Chelsea (1970). The reality was that the municipal office, as a building type, seldom attracted the interest of first-class city architects – save for the the aforementioned Berg & Alexandra, Bates Smart McCutcheon, and a few other firms (eg R S Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton; Godfrey Spowers Hughes Mewton & Lobb) that made one-off forays.

This tendency, however, changed after 1964, when the City of Nunawading (proclaimed 1945) held a limited architectural competition for the design of its new civic centre on Whitehorse Road. Entries were submitted by such high-profile city firms as Chancellor & Patrick, Berg & Alexandra, Howlett & Bailey and Holgar & Holgar, and the results were subject to a two-page spread in *Architecture in Australia*.<sup>35</sup> The jury, headed by Professor Brian Lewis from the University of Melbourne, awarded first prize to German-born husband-and-wife architects Gerd & Renate Block. Such was the publicity generated by this project that the couple were promptly engaged to design another municipal office, this time for the nearby City of Doncaster & Templestowe.

<sup>35</sup> "Competition: Nunawading Civic Centre", *Architecture Australia*, June 1965, pp 100-103.

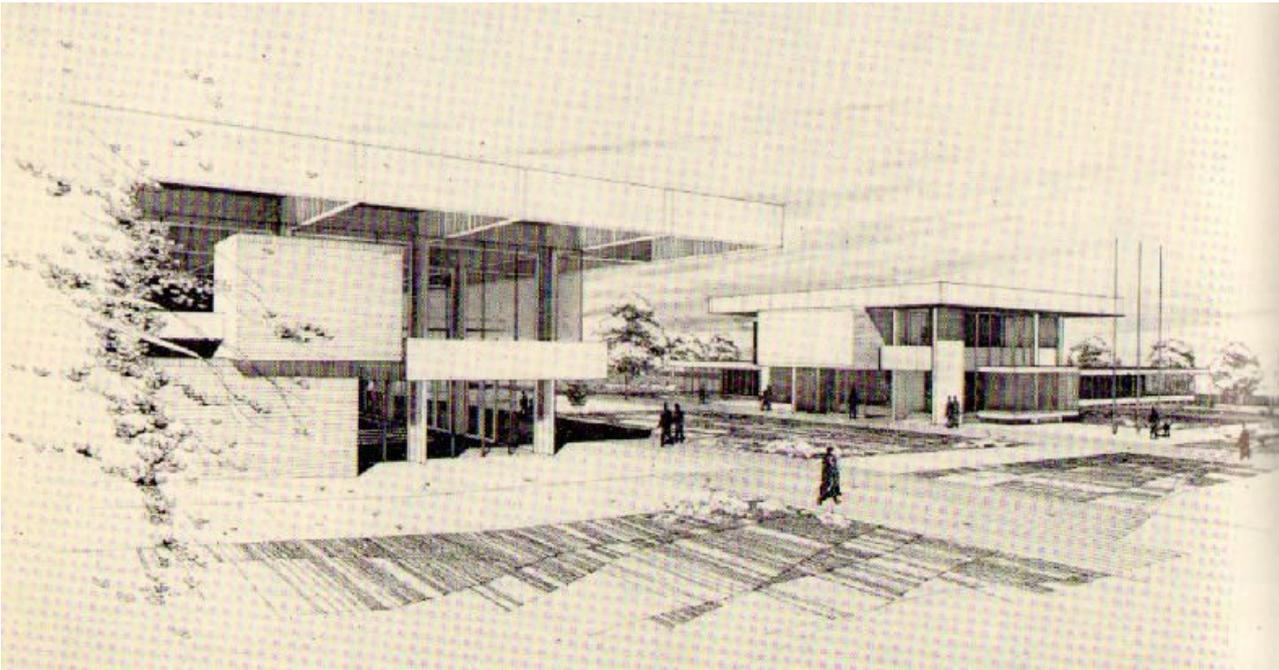


Figure 19: Chancellor & Patrick's unsuccessful entry in the competition for the new City of Nunawading Civic Centre (1964); (source: "Competition: Nunawading Civic Centre", *Architecture Australia*, June 1965, p 102)

The more enduring impact of the design competition, however, was that it made the humble municipal office appealing to Melbourne's leading architects. From the late 1960s into the 1970s, more and more of them tried their hand at designing local government offices – even if only as a one-off foray – including Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell (City of Camberwell, 1967-70), Eggleston, McDonald & Secombe (Shire of Violet Town, 1968), Don Hendry Fulton (Shire of Flinders, 1973-76), Kevin Borland (City of Warrnambool, 1976), Yuncken Freeman Pty Ltd (Shire of Gisborne, 1978) and Whitford & Peck (City of Traralgon, 1979). This renewed professional interest in the municipal office as building type culminated in 1982, when none other than Harry Seidler was engaged to design the new civic centre for the City of Waverley.

From the 1970s, new municipal offices in Victoria have been designed in an eclectic range of styles that, in contrast to the International Modernism of the preceding decade, have allowed for a sense of civic presence and grandeur to be expressed in the built form. Examples include appropriately monumental or Brutalist-style civic centres at Benalla (1972), Werribee (1975), Wodonga (1976) and Wangaratta (1980), and more recent Post-Modern ones at Moorabbin (1988), Marong (1990) and Bairnsdale (1991). From the mid-1990s, municipal offices in Victoria underwent their single most significant change as a result of council amalgamations. As municipalities merged, administrative functions were consolidated, and entire buildings became surplus. In some cases, former council offices (as at Brighton, Myrtleford and elsewhere) were converted to local libraries. Where existing offices retained an administrative function, they were invariably extended, altered and refurbished to suit their new corporate image – an outcome, regrettably, that resulted in the defacement of some particularly fine post-war council office buildings (eg Sandringham, Shepparton) that might otherwise have been considered worthy for inclusion on the *Victorian Heritage Register*.

## **3.0 INDIVIDUAL CITATIONS**



|                    |  |                   |   |
|--------------------|--|-------------------|---|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | Le Pine & Sons Funeral Home / Mark Carey Funerals      |                   | <b>001-001</b>                                  |
| <b>Other name</b>  | W G Apps & Sons Funeral Parlour                        |                   |   |
| <b>Address</b>     | 88 Carlisle Street<br>ST KILDA                         | <b>Group</b>      | 001 Cemeteries & Burial Sites                   |
|                    |  | <b>Category</b>   | 008 Morgue/mortuary                             |
| <b>LGA</b>         | City of Port Phillip                                   | <b>Style</b>      | Late Twentieth Century Stripped Classical       |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1952-53<br>1962 (entrance canopy)                      | <b>Theme</b>      | 9.0 Building a community life                   |
|                    |  | <b>Sub-theme</b>  | 8.1 Marking the phases of life                  |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | Muir & Shepherd<br>George Campbell & Associates (1962) | <b>Builder/s</b>  | W C Byrne & Sons<br>De Pellegrin Pty Ltd (1962) |
| <b>Artist/s</b>    | Norma Redpath (1962 sculpture)                         | <b>Engineer/s</b> | -   |



*Principal facade, showing clerestory windows*



*Oblique view, showing cypress trees and setting*



*Detail of main entrance; note former site of sculpture plinth*



*Sculpture by Norma Redpath, 1962 (National Library of Australia)*

#### Existing Heritage Listings

AHC  - NT  - HO  Yes Study  Yes

**Level of Significance** Local

#### Proposed Heritage Listings

VHR  Yes AHC  Yes HO  Yes

**Level of Significance** STATE

## History

This building was erected in 1952-53 as the new headquarters for long-established Melbourne funeral directors W G Apps & Sons. The eponymous William George Apps (1832-1918) trained as a cabinet-maker and upholster before leaving England in 1853, bound for the Victorian goldfields. Early records are ambiguous, but Apps had evidently opened his own business in Collingwood by 1857, initially working as a cabinet-maker. By 1860, he had not only begun to make coffins, but also to conduct funerals, although a few more years passed before Apps listed himself in directories as an undertaker, with new premises on the corner of Fitzroy and Moors streets, Fitzroy. Apps, who married in 1857, had twelve children, several of whom would play significant roles in the family business. One of the sons, Arthur Apps (1866-1945), became manager of the firm's new St Kilda branch, which opened in Robe Street in 1884. Four years later, a second St Kilda branch opened at 393 High Street (now St Kilda Road); by the turn of the century, the company had further expanded with premises at Horne Street, Elsternwick and Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. A few years later, yet another branch was established at Burgundy Street, Heidelberg.

At the time of William Apps' death in 1918, he not only owned the five-roomed residential shop at 393 High Street but also a four-roomed timber cottage around the corner at 88 Carlisle Street, and a much larger piece of land to the rear, formerly occupied by a sawmill. The company's custom in the St Kilda area burgeoned during the inter-war period via the local Jewish community, with W G Apps & Sons becoming one of Melbourne's two leading Jewish funeral specialists (one professional highlight being the 1931 State Funeral for Sir John Monash). So successful was this change of clientele that, after the Second World War, the firm's headquarters was transferred from Fitzroy to St Kilda. It continued to occupy the existing premises at 395 High Street until a new modern chapel and manager's flat was completed on the nearby Carlisle Street site. The houses at Nos 88 and 90 (the former occupied, since 1935, by nephew Lewis Apps) were razed, and the new building, designed by architects Muir & Shepherd in a suitably non-denominational Stripped Classical style, opened in 1953. Almost a decade later, it was updated with a new entry canopy (by architects George Campbell & Associates), which incorporated, at ground level, an abstract sculpture by prominent artist Norma Redpath. The premises remained occupied by W G Apps & Sons until the firm was absorbed by long-time rivals Le Pine & Sons in 1984. Nevertheless, its original signage, and the Redpath sculpture, remained *in situ* into the 1990s. The facility currently remains in operation as a funeral home, now under the corporate label of Le Pine/Mark Carey Funerals.

## Description

The former W G Apps & Sons Funeral Parlour is a flat-roofed cream brick building in a stark and monumental Stripped Classical style. It presents a substantial double-storey frontage to the street, comprising a funeral chapel and associated spaces on the ground floor, with a manager's flat upstairs. At the rear, the building drops down to single-storey, with its flat roof forming an open terrace to the manager's flat. The Carlisle Street facade is dominated by a tall and full-width white-painted portico, with a flat roof supported on twelve plain columns, laid out in a three by four grid. The canopy has a broad fascia, and its underside is lined with corrugated metal sheeting. Above the roof (and barely visible from the street) is a horizontal strip window to the manager's flat. Below the canopy, the front wall is windowless, which draws attention to the main entry: a centrally-placed and overscaled double doorway, flanked by wall-mounted coach lamps, with white-painted moulded architraves and a pair of timber-framed glazed doors. On the west elevation, just around the corner, a short flight of concrete steps (with simple black-painted metal railing) leads up to a secondary entry, sheltered by a cantilevered slab canopy roof. Further back, towards the rear of the building, is a *porte cochere*, with a flat roof on plain columns, in the same manner (but at a more modest scale) to that on the Carlisle Street facade. At the rear of the site is a detached gable-roofed structure of apparent pre-war vintage, which is presumably a remnant of the original W G Apps & Son premises that fronted St Kilda Road.

The building's setting contributes greatly to its appropriately sombre character. A wide area of concrete paving extends from the street to the main entry, incorporating a central walkway that leads up to the door, and two flanking driveways that divert around the sides of the building. This paving two areas of lawn near the front of the block, each of which is edged with a narrow garden bed containing standard roses. In front of the canopy, flanking the central pathway, are two other garden beds, which are defined by low walls of stacked slate and contain spike-leaved plants and, at the outer extremities, two well-placed pencil conifer trees that echo the verticality of the portico. This verticality is further emphasised by two long rows of mature Italian cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) trees, which run along virtually the entire length of the site's east and west boundaries and form a particularly striking setting.

## Condition and Intactness

When photographed in 1992 for the *City of St Kilda Twentieth Century Architectural Study*, this building retained its original signage (in the form of a strip sign above the canopy fascia), the Norma Redpath sculpture on a plinth in front of the main entrance, and its original wrought iron gates to the front fence. However, the photograph subsequently taken in 1998 for the *City of Port Phillip Heritage Review* indicates that these elements had all been removed in the interim. It has not been established if they have merely been placed in storage (and could thus be reinstated) or if they have been discarded. The removal and possible loss of the the Norma Redpath sculpture, in particular, is a source of concern.

Nevertheless, when viewed from the street, the building appears to remain substantially intact, and in fine condition. The integrity of the external finishes, including unpainted brickwork and the white colour scheme, has been maintained, while the retention and maintenance of the striking landscaped setting, and most notably the twin rows of cypress trees, is especially remarkable. Recent changes include the replacement of the original front gates, the erection of a new metal palisade fence behind the brick front wall, and a new illuminated pedestal sign.

## Comparative Analysis

Although a complete typological study of twentieth century funeral parlours in Victoria has not yet been undertaken, research to date suggests that the former premises of W G Apps & Sons in Carlisle Street is a highly significant example of this unusual building type. It has been confirmed as the first purpose-built funeral parlour to be erected in Melbourne after the Second World War. Its slick modernist design, and more specifically its attempt to evoke a wholly non-denominational sense of awe and monumentality, contrasts markedly with the historicist (eg Gothic Revival or Grecian) funeral parlours that were built here before the War. In this respect, it also demonstrates the emerging local influence of modern funerary architecture examples in Europe and the United States.

The distinctive quasi-Classical appearance of the building, with its stark brick facade and overscaled canopy on metal pipes, has no direct comparator amongst other funeral parlours in Victoria. However, there are certainly several buildings around Melbourne of similar style, albeit representing building types more traditionally associated with monumental form, such as civic offices and churches. Notable examples include St Benedict's RC Church at 299 Warrigal Road, Burwood (D D Alexandra and Stuart McIntosh, c.1960), with a similar front canopy on metal pipes, and the former Shire of Springvale offices off Springvale Road (Alsop & Duncan, 1960). The latter, with a stark red brick facade and recessed portico with stone-clad piers *in antis*, is particularly comparable to the Apps & Sons funeral parlour for its incorporation of a pair of flanking Italian cypress trees as part of the composition. A comparable stripped-back Classical formality, with stark brick facades and pipe column porticoes, is exhibited by some stylish Toorak houses of the same era, notably the Pierce House in Trawalla Avenue (Yuncken Freeman Brothers, Griffiths & Simpson, 1953) and the Dixon House at 3 Buddle Drive (Grounds, Romberg & Boyd, 1955). It is also evident, albeit to a somewhat less sophisticated degree, in some blocks of flats erected in the late 1960s for the War Widows' Guild (Vasey Housing Auxiliary), typified by examples in Lisson Grove, Hawthorn and 18 Cochrane Street, Brighton.

As an example of the work of architects Muir & Shepherd, the Apps & Sons funeral parlour in Carlisle Street stands out as a significant large (and unusual) non-residential commission for a firm that was primarily associated with smaller-scaled domestic buildings.

## References

D C Ward, *Guide to Victorian Architecture* (1956), p 35.

"The Firm of W G Apps & Sons, Fitzroy, St Kilda and Heidelberg", in pp 97-112

Robert Peck von Hartel Trethowan. *St Kilda Twentieth Century Architectural Study* (1992) – Volume 3

Andrew Ward & Associates. *City of Port Phillip Heritage Review* (1998)

## Statement of Significance

### *What is Significant?*

The former W G Apps & Sons (now Le Pine/Mark Carey) funeral parlour at 88 Carlisle Street, St Kilda, is a flat-roofed cream brick double-storey Stripped Classical building with a stark facade that is dominated by a tall white-painted portico with a grid of twelve metal pipe columns. The building is enhanced by a formal landscaped setting, with a bifurcated concrete paved driveway that defines garden beds (variously edged with concrete kerbing or slate walls) and some well-placed Italian cypress trees (*Cupressus sempervirens*), most notably in the form of two long avenues along the east and west site boundaries. The building was designed in 1952-53 by architects Muir & Shepherd for a funeral company that dated back to the late 1850s, with a presence in St Kilda from 1884. Altered in 1962 (including the addition of a modern abstract sculpture by noted artist Norma Redpath, since removed), the building remained occupied by its original owners until 1984, when the company was absorbed by rivals Le Pine & Sons.

### *How is it Significant?*

The funeral parlour is of historic, architectural and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria

### *Why is it Significant?*

Historically and architecturally, the building is significant as the first truly modern funeral parlour to be erected in Melbourne after the Second World War. As the expansion of the local funeral industry was hampered during the 1940s by fuel rationing, labour shortages and (particularly) restrictions on building activity, the construction of the present building in 1952 (shortly after these restrictions were relaxed) marked the start of a boom of up-to-date funeral parlours throughout the developing metropolitan area. Its monumental but stylistically non-specific (and non-denominational) expression, with a stark cream brick facade and quasi-classical portico, represented a highly significant departure from the more overtly historicist funeral parlours of the pre-war era.

Aesthetically, the building is significant as an outstanding example of the post-war Stripped Classical style. With its block-like form and its stark and essentially windowless facade, the building expresses monumentality without being intimidating in scale. Its tall and prominent portico, with flat canopy roof supported on a grid of twelve slender columns (all devoid of extraneous historical detailing) is a particularly striking feature, evoking a sense of awe that befits the solemnity of this unusual building type. This character is further enhanced by the building's unique setting, with a central driveway providing a ceremonial approach, flanking formal garden beds, and, most notably of all, two long rows of Italian cypress trees (a traditional symbol of death, often found in cemetery landscapes) along the site boundaries, which frame the building to remarkable effect.

## Suggested Extant of Registration

The original building (including portico), the driveway, paving and formal garden beds between the building and the street, brick front fence, all of the Italian cypress trees, the chapel interior (as yet unsighted) and the Norma Redpath sculpture (current status unknown).

The utilitarian gable-roofed building at the rear, which represents the former W G Apps premises fronting St Kilda Road, is not considered to be of state significance and is thus not recommended for inclusion within this extent of registration.

## Suggested Policy Guidelines

Retain original unpainted finish to external brickwork;

Retain cypress trees and original hard landscaping elements (pathways, concrete-edged flower beds);

Re-instatement of sculpture by Norma Redpath (or reproduction thereof) and plinth.

## Suggested Permit Exemptions

Interior alterations to the mortuary rooms and first floor manager's flat.

|                    |   |                   |                                      |
|--------------------|---|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | Nelson Brothers Funeral Home              | <b>001-002</b>    |                                      |
| <b>Other name</b>  | -   |                   |                                      |
| <b>Address</b>     | 51 Devonshire Road<br>SUNSHINE            | <b>Group</b>      | 001 Cemeteries & Burial Sites        |
|                    |   | <b>Category</b>   | 008 Morgue/mortuary                  |
| <b>LGA</b>         | City of Brimbank                          | <b>Style</b>      | Late Twentieth Century International |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1966                                      | <b>Theme</b>      | 9.0 Building a community life        |
|                    |   | <b>Sub-theme</b>  | 8.1 Marking the phases of life       |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | G Stuart Warmington Pty Ltd               | <b>Builder/s</b>  | J C Meehan Ltd                       |
| <b>Artist/s</b>    | Edgard Pirotta (fountain and glass mural) |                   |                                      |
| <b>Designer/s</b>  | J M Haskett & Co Pty Ltd (landscape)      | <b>Engineer/s</b> | -                                    |



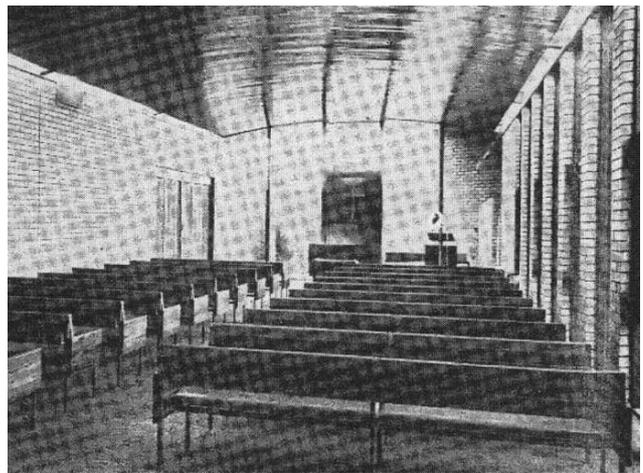
Main (Devonshire Road) frontage, showing original signage



Detail of main facade, showing wing wall and porte cochere



Side wall of chapel, with (former) fountain in foreground



View of chapel interior (Architecture Today, Nov 1967)

|                                   |   |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b> |   | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b> |  |
| AHC                               | <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> NT <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> HO <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> Study <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> | VHR                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> AHC <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> HO <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Level of Significance</b>      | Not previously assessed   | <b>Level of Significance</b>      | STATE  |

## History

The firm of Nelson Brothers, funeral directors, dates back to 1858, when second-generation undertaker Robert Simeon Nelson (1833-1893) started business (initially as a carpenter and cabinetmaker) in the small town of Linton, south-west of Ballarat. After his death, the business was carried on by his son James (1866-1914) and then by James' three sons, James Adolphus Nelson (1891-1958), Theophilus (Theo) William Nelson (1892-1980) and Clarence Eugene Norman Nelson (1897-1929), who renamed it "Nelson Brothers". In 1921, Theo moved to Melbourne to establish a branch in Williamstown, while his brothers continued in Linton. Further expansion followed in 1928, with branches at Footscray (managed by eldest brother James A Nelson) and Coburg. Following the deaths of Norman and James, control of the family business was vested in Theo, and then in the next generation – led by the latter's son, Theo J Nelson.

By that time, Nelson Brothers Pty Ltd was not just one of Australia's oldest operating funeral directors and also one of the best equipped, with an extensive hearse fleet and its own modern coffin factory. However, it had not erected a new purpose-built funeral parlour since the Williamstown one opened in 1921. Four decades later, development in Melbourne's west centred on the industrial suburb of Sunshine. In his thesis on funeral parlours, Douglas Matthews noted that, in the mid-1960s, Sunshine had the second highest population in the west – after Footscray – but, while the latter had four funeral parlours, the former had none. Nelson Brothers obtained land in Devonshire Road and engaged architect G Stuart Warmington to design the building. Although Warmington had done much work for the City of Sunshine at the time, his involvement in this private commission in the same area was coincidental – a result of a recommendation from another client. His working drawings, dated October 1966, proposed a brick building of stark form, with chapel and an upstairs manger's flat, in a landscaped setting. A noted contribution was made by Edgard Pirota, a young member of Warmington's office (and later a well-known architect in his own right), who designed a foyer mural and a fountain in the garden. The former, an abstract design rendered in backlit "dog glass" (a waste material from glass manufacture), was fifteen feet (4.5 metres) long and eight feet (2.4 metres) high, and weighed three tons.

Completed at a cost of \$84,000, the building was opened on 30 August 1967 by A W Knight, MLC, who observed that "I feel it is a singularly unusual task to be asked to officially open a funeral chapel", and added that he considered it "as much a part of the community as a new home, a church or a factory". The ceremony, attended by 200 invited guests, included a chapel dedication by local clergy from five denominations: Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Church of Christ and Greek Orthodox. The building was lauded by the local press both as "Australia's' most modern funeral chapel" and "one of the most tasteful modern funeral chapels in the Southern Hemisphere". In these and other published accounts, there was much praise for Pirota's distinctive glass mural, the "striking solid granite altar" in the chapel, and a series of large acrylic skylights that were reported to be "the largest plastic domes of this type in Victoria".

## Description

Occupying a large wedge-chapel corner site, the funeral parlour is a stark block-like building with beige-coloured Selkirk brick walls, chocolate-coloured mortar and deeply raked joints. It has a squat rectangular plan, comprising an elongated chapel to the east, a central spine containing workrooms and entry foyer, and offices and a manager's flat (which pops up to form a second storey) to the west. The main street frontage is asymmetrical, with a recessed off-centre entrance flanked by the two parapeted and windowless wings. The chapel wing, to the left has wall-mounted white plastic lettering spelling NELSON BROTHERS PTY LTD, FUNERAL DIRECTORS. A flat-roofed *porte-cochere* extends to the street, supported on square posts with a wide timber fascia. A second *porte-cochere*, facing the opposite direction, extends from the east side. This distinctive facade otherwise comprises a row of tall fin-like projecting brick piers that alternate with narrow vertical window bays, containing tinted glazing and timber spandrels. The west elevation is similarly treated: the single-storey portion has a matching timber fascia with horizontal strip window below, while the double-storey portion (mostly concealed by a tall fence that enclose a private garden for the manager's flat) is articulated by more fin-like brick piers. A wider brick pier, to the left side, is actually a fireplace breast and chimney.

The property retains a low brick perimeter wall, and a tall fence of horizontal timber planks to the private garden. There are narrow concrete-edged garden beds along the street front, containing white pebbles and spike-leaved plants that, even if not original, are evocative of the 1960s. There is also an original lamp standard, with tall cylindrical white glass fitting. Driveways and carpark are asphalt, and there a lawn in the south-west corner. The remnants of Edgar Pirota's fountain, in the form of two interlocking square ponds, remain (albeit infilled to form a raised flower bed).

## Condition and Intactness

When viewed from the street, the building appears to remain in excellent condition and in an exceptionally intact state. The exterior is virtually unchanged, retaining its original face brickwork with chocolate-coloured mortar and deeply raked joints, and stained timber fascias and joinery. These bold finishes and details remain highly evocative of the late 1960s and, given that such boldness can be considered (by some) to be dated, it is indeed remarkable that this building has not (unlike many similar buildings of that era, including a number of funeral parlours) been refurbished by rendering and overpainting to create a more up-to-date corporate image. This extraordinary intactness is evidenced also by the retention of the wall-mounted plastic signage, a standard lamp, perimeter walling and timber fences, and even elements of original landscaping. Indeed, one of the few evident alterations is that the fountain in the south-west corner of the block has been infilled to create a raised garden bed; this, however, is a minor and readily reversible change.

As permission to undertake an interior inspection has not been granted, it is difficult to assess the integrity of the internal spaces. However, given that the exterior of the building remains in such a remarkably intact state, it can be reasonably concluded that the most significant spaces within (namely the lobby, waiting room and chapel) are likely to be similarly so. A current interior photograph of the chapel, freely available on the company's website, certainly confirms that the space has changed little since 1967. It retains its curved timber-lined ceiling, glazed end wall (opening onto a landscaped courtyard), polished granite altar, timber lectern and even the original Aristoc pew seating.

## Comparative Analysis

Opened in 1967, the Nelson Brothers funeral parlour at Sunshine was the first purpose-built funeral parlour to have been erected in the Melbourne metropolitan area since 1961, and marked the beginning of a minor boom in the construction of comparably modern facilities, which continued into the early 1970s. Many of these new centres followed the lead established by Stuart Warmington at Sunshine: a bold block-like building of face brick construction, with parapeted roof and repetitive fenestration to evoke an appropriate (but non-denominational) sense of serenity. A considerable number of these later funeral parlours, however, have since been refurbished in recent years – typically by rendering and overpainting – as has been the case with the Joseph Allison premises at Mt Alexander Road Moonee Ponds (1972) or the Giannarelli & Sons premises at 22 Lygon Street, Brunswick (1973). Others, such as the Mulqueen & Sons premises in Burwood Road, Burwood (1968) have recently been demolished. The Nelson Brothers funeral parlour in Sunshine thus stands not, not only as a significant marker of the new direction of modern funeral parlour architecture in Victoria from the late 1960s, but also as an extraordinary intact example that has (at least externally) been virtually unaltered since its completion.

The glass mural in the foyer is significant as an early project by Edgard Pirotta, who was then a young assistant in Stuart Warmington's office but, only a few years later, would achieve fame as the designer of the Brutalist-style Fletcher House in Brighton, which one the 1971 RIAA Bronze Medal for House of the Year. He subsequently went on to receive other awards, including an RIAA citation for the Bartrounni House in North Balwyn (1975). Little, however, is currently known of Pirotta's pre-fame career as an artist/sculptor; only one other comparable project – the *dalle de verre* window at the Sunshine Municipal Offices (1967) – has been identified to date. Both are of considerable interest; the funeral parlour mural, however, may well stand out as a unique example in Victoria of a piece of integrated artwork that was created using the so-called “dog glass”, leftover from the manufacture of glass bottles.

## References

“Glass mural in funeral chapel”, *Sunshine Advocate*, 20 July 1967, p 11.

“New funeral chapel”, *Sunshine Advocate*, 17 August 1967, p 5.

“Ceremonial opening of new funeral centre”, *Sunshine Advocate*, 7 September 1967, p 4.

“Funeral Chapel and Residence”, *Architecture Today*, November 1967, p 24.

PB File No 14,808. Unit 1786, VPRS 7882/P1 (Department of Health Public Building files), Public Record Office.

Interview with G Stuart Warmington, April 2010.

## Statement of Significance

### *What is Significant?*

The Nelson Brothers Pty Ltd funeral parlour at 51 Devonshire Road, Sunshine, is a predominantly single-storey brown-brick building of stark block-like form, with an asymmetrical street facade comprising two parapeted and windowless wings (containing offices/workrooms and a chapel) flanking a recessed entry foyer with a wide flat-roofed *porte-cochere*. The side elevations of the chapel (east) and the double-storey manager's flat (west) are delineated by tall fin-like brick piers, alternating with vertical strip windows. Internally, the semi-public areas include a foyer with a large backlit mural made of "dog glass" (ie scraps left over from bottle manufacturing) and a chapel with a curving timber-lined ceiling, glazed end wall (opening into a private landscaped lightwell), and polished granite altar. Opened in 1967, the building was erected for one of Australia's oldest firms of funeral directors, which had maintained presence in Melbourne's western suburbs since 1921. It was designed by architect (and Sunshine native) G Stuart Warmington, assisted by a young Edgard Pirotta (who designed the glass mural and garden fountain)

### *How is it Significant?*

The funeral parlour is of architectural and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria.

### *Why is it Significant?*

Architecturally, the funeral parlour is significant as one of the state's most well-preserved and striking examples of modern funeral parlour architecture from the late 1960s and early 1970s – a period when the industry experienced considerable expansion. Completed in 1967, the building marked the start of a minor boom of such facilities in Victoria, and its distinctively stark block-like expression, with fin-like piers and repetitive fenestration, spawned many imitators. Four decades later, this seminal building remains extraordinarily intact (right down to the retention of original signage, furniture and hard landscaping) when many of its counterparts have been altered beyond recognition or even demolished. The building is also significant for the contribution of a young and pre-fame Edgard Pirotta, who was then a member of Stuart Warmington's office and, in that capacity, designed the garden fountain and the extraordinary glass mural in the foyer.

## Suggested Extent of Registration

The entire site, including not only the building by the original perimeter fencing, lamp-posts, signage, landscaping and former fountain. Inside the building, any original finishes, furniture and artworks in public and semi-public areas should be also included in the registration: specifically, the glass mural in the foyer, and the polished granite altar, timber lectern and Aristoc pew seating in the chapel.

## Suggested Policy Guidelines

Retention of original finishes, furniture and artwork to the exterior and to the public/semi-public interior spaces;

Reinstatement of original colour scheme to external timberwork (ie a stained finish, rather than painted);

Restoration of the garden fountain to Edgard Pirotta's original design.

## Suggested Permit Exemptions

Minor internal works within non-public rooms (eg mortuary, workrooms and the manager's flat)

New fitouts in existing kitchen and bathroom spaces.

Asphalting repairs to existing carpark/driveway areas

|                    |  |  |
|--------------------|--|--|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | Robert Cochrane Kindergarten   | <b>002-001</b>                             |
| <b>Other name</b>  | Robert Cochrane Free Kindergarten (former)                               |  |
| <b>Address</b>     | 2a Minona Street<br>AUBURN   | <b>Group</b> 002 Community Facilities      |
|                    |  | <b>Category</b> 010 Childcare Facility     |
| <b>LGA</b>         | City of Boroondara   | <b>Style</b> Post-War Melbourne Regional   |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1948-1950<br>1982 (additions)  | <b>Theme</b> 9.0 Building a community life |
|                    |  | <b>Sub-theme</b> 8.2 Educating people      |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | Martin & Tribe [Horace J Tribe]<br>Bates Smart McCutcheon Pty Ltd (1982) | <b>Builder/s</b> W A O'Donnell             |
|                    |  | <b>Engineer/s</b> -                        |
|                    |  | <b>Artist/s</b> -                          |



*Vintage photograph by Peter Wille (State Library of Victoria)*



*Kindergarten today, viewed from Minona Street frontage*



*The rear classroom, with service wing (toilets etc) at right*



*Classroom interior (photographed through window)*

|  |                            |                                    |                              |
|--|----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b>                    |                            | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b>  |                              |
| AHC  | <input type="checkbox"/> - | NT                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> -   |
| HO   | <input type="checkbox"/> - | Study                              | <input type="checkbox"/> -   |
| <b>Level of Significance</b> Not previously assessed |                            | VHR                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
|  |                            | AHC                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
|  |                            | HO                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <b>Level of Significance</b> Not previously assessed |                            | <b>Level of Significance</b> STATE |                              |

## History

The Robert Cochrane Kindergarten in Minona Street opened in 1950, forty years after the facility was first mooted by the eponymous Robert Cochrane – chairman of directors of Brooks Robinson Pty Ltd, philanthropist, champion of child welfare and (as noted in his obituary) “the Father of Congregationalism in Victoria”. It was in 1911, only three years after the Free Kindergarten Union was established in Victoria, that Cochrane (1842-1935) proposed such a facility in Auburn, modelled on one recently opened at Burnley. After discussion with members of the local Augustine Congregational Church, a committee was formed and, on 27 April 1911, a kindergarten opened in the denominational school hall at the rear of the church. Initially known as the Augustine Free Kindergarten, it was soon renamed as the Auburn Free Kindergarten to emphasise its non-denominational status. In 1934, Cochrane donated land at the rear of the church, fronting Minona Street, “for Free Kindergarten purposes”. Although he initially planned for this to become a children's garden, he became enthused by the idea of a new purpose-built kindergarten after visiting modern facilities elsewhere. He duly resigned as Treasurer, established a Building Fund and devoted his attentions to the project until his death in March 1935 at the age of 92 years. In 1936, his daughter Elizabeth donated more land in Minona Street (then in use as tennis courts), which would allow for an even grander building. Fund-raising continued for more than decade; during the lean wartime years, money was raised by selling fruit and vegetables that had been grown on the vacant site.

Construction was to commence in 1948, but the initial scheme was found to be too costly. A suggestion to use recycled army huts was rejected and, instead, a revised scheme prepared by architect Horace Tribe (of Martin & Tribe). His final plans, dated July 1948, proposed a low-cost skillion-roofed timber building on a stepped plan, with huge windows to admit maximum natural light. The site was cleared in September, with some trees sold and the rest offered for firewood. In May 1949, the Department of Health reported that “work is progressing according to plan. Present stage of construction: walls and roof constructed; roof covered; walls and ceiling linings being fixed”. The following January, it was noted that the project would be completed in about a month. The finished building, officially dubbed the Robert Cochrane Free Kindergarten, was officially opened on 22 April 1950 by Lady Brookes, the Governor's wife. It was lauded in the press for its modern planning, being thus described by the *Age*: “Designed with huge plate glass walls, through which much delightful autumn sunshine should filter in the next few weeks, the kindergarten has two big airy nurseries, complete with individual easel-blackboards, dolls' corner and all of the attractive equipment that goes to make a modern kindergarten”. Even more impressively, the building received international exposure when it was later published in the *Architectural Forum* (USA) as part of a feature on recent modern Australian architecture.

A small extension, designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, was added to the south-west corner of the building in 1982.

## Description

The Robert Cochrane Kindergarten is a single-storey timber-framed building on a stepped plan comprising two rectangular blocks (playrooms) with steep skillion roofs. The front block has a small flat-roofed wing at one end (toilets) and a larger wing, with low-pitched gable roof (entry foyer and offices) at the other. All external walls are clad with vertical ship-lap timber boarding, and all roofs in metal tray decking. The playroom roofs have broad (unlined) eaves with exposed rafters and purlins; on the north frontages, where the eaves are more prominent, the rafters have rounded ends and are paired, with peg-fixed blocks between, creating an almost oriental feel. These north sides also have vast areas of glazing: tall bays of multi-paned timber-framed windows, with rows of tripartite clerestory windows above. Other parts of the building (office and toilet wings, and the rear of the south playroom) have rows of smaller square windows, some with white-painted mesh screens. The rear frontage also has a painted brick chimney breast, with simple capped flue. The side wall of the toilet wing still shows where the original sewage pan openings were located, while the side of the adjacent north playroom retains original metal signage. Each playroom has a glazed sliding door to the north or east side; the main public entry, in the form of a conventional glazed doorway with flanking sidelights and highlight, is recessed behind a narrow timber-posted porch at the far end of the northern block. Alongside, a small four-paned window opens off the former directresses' office within. The herringbone brick paving to the porch is evidently not original; around the corner, to the rear of the building, is some stone crazy paving that is early, if not actually original. Nothing else appears to remain of the original playground or surrounds, with new rubberized matting and fake turf installed throughout.

Playroom interiors have cathedral ceilings (with panelled linings) and exposed timber trusses, and partition walls with glazed sliding doors and windows to provide borrowed light. The fireplace, in the rear nursery, has a wide breast with a low inset mantelpiece and row of three projecting header bricks above. The fireplace opening itself has been infilled.

## Condition and Intactness

The building has been well maintained (consequent, no doubt, to many decades of enthusiastic fund-raising and working bees) and remains in a remarkably intact state considering that it is one of the oldest post-war kindergartens in Victoria. Many changes made over the past five decades have been minor, such as the replacement of the original corrugated cement sheet roofing with conventional metal deck (1966), the installation of polystyrene ceiling lining in the nursery areas (1972), the installation of new ceiling fans (1977) and the erection of a tiled mural on the inside of the entry porch to mark the kindergarten's 70th anniversary (1981). None of these changes has significantly compromised the form or appearance of the original 1950 building. The most significant change to the built fabric has probably been the erection of a small wing in the south-west corner; this, however, was designed to echo the simple forms and finishes of the original building, with low-pitched roof and vertical timber cladding. As such, it is not considered unsympathetic.

The intactness of the overall plan form, fenestration and the internal and external detailing and finishes (timber cladding, raked ceilings with exposed trusses, brick fireplace, metal signage) is notable in a building of this type and vintage. When viewed from the street, the building looks virtually the same as it did in photographs taken in the 1950s by architectural photographer Peter Wille (held by the State Library of Victoria), although the original colour scheme (dark brown walls with light-coloured doors, window frames and signage lettering) has been changed.

## Comparative Analysis

Designed in 1948 and constructed over the following two years, the Robert Cochrane Kindergarten can be considered as one of the first modern architect-designed kindergartens to be erected in Victoria after the Second World War. The firm of Martin & Tribe, who were entrusted with the commission, had considerable prior experience in the design of pre-school facilities. Marcus Martin, senior partner, had designed the Lady Gowrie Child Centre in Carlton (1938), which was intended as a prototype for modern kindergarten design in Victoria; the firm of Martin & Tribe went on to design a "kindergarten cottage" at the Kildonian Children's Home at Burwood (1938-40). The new Robert Cochrane Kindergarten, designed in 1948, was an even more progressive design, being primarily the work of the younger and more experimental Horace Tribe (a former employee of Stephenson & Turner) rather than the more conservative Marcus Martin. Indeed, it was in 1949, while Tribe was still supervising the Auburn project, that he finally resigned from the partnership to open his own office as a sole practitioner. After its completion, the Robert Cochrane Kindergarten was duly acknowledged as the future of modern pre-school architecture in Victoria; this was not only evidenced by its overseas publication in the *Architectural Forum* in 1952, but also by its inclusion, four years later, in Donald Ward's *Guide to Victorian Architecture*, a slim architectural guidebook produced in to coincide with the Olympic Games in Melbourne.

Horace Tribe went on to design a string of other pre-school centres across Victoria that echoed, to varying degrees, the planning, fenestration, forms and finishes that he had developed at the Robert Cochrane Kindergarten. While Donald Ward's *Guide to Victorian Architecture* identified the Auburn building as the prototype, it also listed several other examples around the state at Korumburra (1954) and at Greenwood Park in Ringwood (1955). Research for this project has identified another Tribe-designed kindergarten at Hughesdale (1954); there are presumably others. It was beyond the scope of this study to undertake a physical inspection of these later kindergartens in order to determine their current status, condition and intactness in relation to the one at Auburn. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that the substantially intact Robert Cochrane Kindergarten is highly significant as the prototype for these later developments.

## References

- "Obituary: Mr Robert Cochrane". *The Argus*, 4 March 1935, p 8.
- "Around the Suburbs: New Kindergarten to Open", *The Age*, 21 April 1950, p 3.
- "Robert Cochran [sic] Free Kindergarten, Auburn, Victoria", *Architectural Forum* (USA), August 1952, p 119.
- D C Ward, *Guide to Victorian Architecture* (1956), p 20.
- Robert Cochrane Free Kindergarten, *RCFK 1911-1981: 70 Years of Education and Friendship* (1981).
- PB File No 3,884. Unit 568, VPRS 7882/P1 (Department of Health Public Building files), Public Record Office.

## Statement of Significance

### *What is Significant?*

The Robert Cochrane Kindergarten, at 2a Minona Street, Auburn, is a single-storey building on a stepped rectilinear plan, comprising two parallel but offset skillion-roofed playrooms, a gable-roofed office wing and flat-roofed toilet block. It has metal tray deck roofs with broad unlined eaves and exposed rafters, vertical timber boarding to external walls, and vast areas of north-facing glazing (sliding doors, huge multi-paned window bays and clerestory windows). Erected in 1948-50 to house a local free kindergarten that was founded by Robert Cochrane in 1911, the present building was designed by Horace Tribe (of Martin & Tribe) and built, after 15 years of fund-raising, on land that Cochrane had donated in 1934.

### *How is it Significant?*

The kindergarten is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

### *Why is it Significant?*

Historically, the kindergarten is significant for associations with the earliest years of the Free Kindergarten movement in Victoria. While the present building was erected in 1948-50 (and was thus hardly the first purpose-built Free Kindergarten in the state), it was built to provide a permanent home for a kindergarten that had been founded almost forty years early by the eponymous Robert Cochrane (1842-1935), a prominent Melbourne businessman, philanthropist and Congregationalist. Cochrane's subsequent efforts, including the donation of vacant land in Minona Street and the instigation of fund-raising (which continued for another decade after his death) culminated in the opening the present building in April 1950.

Architecturally, the kindergarten is significant as one of the first modern pre-school centres to be erected in Victoria after the Second World War. Designed by Horace Tribe, the building, with its bold skillion roofs and huge north-facing plate glass windows, represented a significant departure from the stylistically more conservative kindergartens that Martin & Tribe (under the *aegis* of Marcus Martin) had designed in the 1930s and early 1940s. The progressive design of Tribe's new kindergarten at Auburn was not only recognised locally by its inclusion in Donald Ward's *Guide to Victorian Architecture* (1956) but also internationally, in the *American Architectural Forum* (1952). It was acknowledged as a prototype of post-war pre-school architecture in Victoria, which saw Horace Tribe engaged to design a string of other centres across the state during the early and mid-1950s.

## Suggested Extant of Registration

The entire building (including 1982 addition) and sufficient curtilage to all sides; the stone crazy paving to the rear of building, if confirmed as original, should also be included.

## Suggested Policy Guidelines

Retain original fenestration, metal signage and exposed truss ceilings.

Re-instatement of the original external colour scheme, with dark-coloured walls and contrasting light-coloured window frames, fascias, doors, exposed rafters, purlins and metal signage

## Suggested Permit Exemptions

Replacement of metal deck roofing and internal ceiling linings (if replaced with like material)

New fitouts to existing toilet and kitchenette areas;

Alterations to playground (paving, equipment, etc) where this does not impinge on physical fabric of the building;

|                    |  |                   |                               |
|--------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | Mount Eliza Pre-School and Infant Welfare Centre   | <b>002-002</b>    |                               |
| <b>Other name</b>  | -  |                   |                               |
| <b>Address</b>     | 95-97 Wimbledon Avenue (Ranelagh Drive)<br>MOUNT ELIZA   | <b>Group</b>      | 002 Community Facilities      |
|                    |  | <b>Category</b>   | 010 Childcare Facility        |
| <b>LGA</b>         | Shire of Mornington Peninsula  | <b>Style</b>      | Post-War Melbourne Regional   |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1955 (pre-school); 1958 (infant welfare)<br>1962, 1982, 2009-10 (alterations/additions)          | <b>Theme</b>      | 9.0 Building a community life |
|                    |  | <b>Sub-theme</b>  | 8.2 Educating people          |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | Chancellor & Patrick (David Chancellor)<br>Greg McDonald (1982)<br>Hoban Hynes Pty Ltd (2009-10) | <b>Builder/s</b>  | -                             |
|                    |  | <b>Engineer/s</b> | -                             |



*Photograph of the completed building in 1955*



*Present-day view of the same frontage in its extended state*



*View from rear, showing glazed walls and partly infilled porch*



*Classroom interior, looking towards rear wall*

|                                   |                          |    |                          |    |                                   |       |                              |     |                          |     |                          |    |                              |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|----|-----------------------------------|-------|------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|------------------------------|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b> |                          |    |                          |    | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b> |       |                              |     |                          |     |                          |    |                              |
| AHC                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | NT | <input type="checkbox"/> | HO | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes      | Study | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | VHR | <input type="checkbox"/> | AHC | <input type="checkbox"/> | HO | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <b>Level of Significance</b>      |                          |    |                          |    | <b>Level of Significance</b>      |       |                              |     |                          |     |                          |    |                              |
| Local                             |                          |    |                          |    | LOCAL                             |       |                              |     |                          |     |                          |    |                              |

## History

The *Ranelagh Estate* in Mount Eliza, designed in 1923 by Walter & Marion Griffin (with surveyor Saxil Tuxen), was conceived as an ambitious resort-like development of holiday dwellings, with commercial and community facilities (including a private club) for residents. Initial development, however, was slow, and the estate did not fill out until the post-war era, when many young families were attracted to the area as permanent residents. The provision of a local kindergarten was first mooted in 1953 by Mrs J A Wiltshire, daughter of Howard Parker, and a small facility (for 18 children) was opened in the Mount Eliza Hall. A purpose-built pre-school was a high priority, and two blocks (Lots 558 & 559) were donated by former shire president William Leggatt, MLA.

The commission was entrusted to architect David Chancellor, who had just commenced practice in Frankston. His first sketch plan, dated January 1954, bears the initials of WRP – (William) Rex Patrick, an employee of Chancellor who, by the end of the year, would be elevated to partner. His drawing shows a small gable-roofed building with north-facing verandah, in a landscaped setting with tanbark playground, swing-set, sandpit and an 'artificial hill'. Preliminary working drawings showed the building with a playroom for 30 children (with open fireplace), wash-room, kitchen, office and foyer with 'pram park'. The plans were later revised, reducing the playroom to accommodate only 19 children, but with allowance for "future extension" to the east. The final working drawings, under the auspices of "Chancellor & Patrick", were completed in December. Construction began in early March 1955, with completion slated for June. The steel frame was erected in the first week of April, and the building virtually completed within only two months. It was officially opened on Saturday, 18 June 1955, by the Hon William Leggatt, MLA. The following month, the building was published in *Architecture & Arts* journal, with a front cover photo and two-page feature that drew attention to the open fireplace with "two-way aquarium" built into the adjacent wall. The building was subsequently included in Donald Ward's *Guide to Victorian Architecture* (1956), with a full-page photograph captioned: "a typical Victorian pre-school centre".

In August 1958, Chancellor & Patrick prepared sketch plans for an Infant Welfare Centre to be built on adjacent Lot 559, connected by a covered walkway. Working drawings were completed in December, and the new centre officially opened on Sunday, 25 October 1959, by Dr W B Meredith, Director of Maternal Infant & Pre-School Welfare. Just over two years later, Chancellor & Patrick were engaged again, to design the east addition that was nominally indicated as part of their original scheme. Working drawings, dated May 1962, show that the playroom and adjacent storeroom was to be extended, and the entry porch partly enclosed. This marked the end of Chancellor & Patrick's involvement with the building; all subsequent alterations have been done by other architects. Repairs were made after minor fire damage in 1970, and further additions (by Mornington architect Greg McDonald) made in 1982. The latter involved the partial infilling of the north-facing porch (and thus the removal of the open fireplace) and the extension of the office, creating a projecting bay on the street frontage. An extensive phase of internal refurbishment was undertaken in 2009-10.

## Description

The Mount Eliza Pre-School is a single-storey building with a low-pitched metal tray-deck roof. Laid out on a rectangular plan, it comprises a playroom, opening onto a full-width verandah to the north, with a narrow service wing (storeroom, office, toilets, kitchenette) to the south. The 1955 structure has been engulfed on all sides by later additions, which, to varying extents, echo the finishes and detailing of the original. The rear (east) additions, made by the same architects in 1962, remain most evocative of the building's period character. This frontage has a grey concrete brick wall flanked to the left by a projecting bay clad with vertical timber boards, and to the right by a full-height timber-framed window bay. The adjacent side elevations are treated similarly: that is, vertical timber cladding along the south wall (ie service wing) and full-height window bays along the north (verandah). The latter is divided into four equal bays, defined by exposed rafters and square timber verandah posts. The first two bays contain windows with low spandrels, large fixed or sliding sashes, and narrower highlights, while the last two have been altered by bringing the window wall out to the verandah's edge, thus enclosing extra internal space. The gabled street facade has also been altered so that it barely resembles the famous photograph shown overleaf: a central window wall with deep eaves, a projecting timber-clad bay to the right and grey concrete block wing wall to the left. The eaves have been removed, the projecting bay extended further forward, the open porch infilled with a second glazed wall, and the concrete block wing wall (incorporating two white marble foundation stones) hidden by a covered walkway that leads to the adjacent Infant Welfare Centre. The walkway surface, of red-tinted concrete pavers, is evidently original.

Internally, the playroom has a cathedral ceiling with exposed steel beams and plasterboard linings. The rooms in the service wing, along the south side have all been refurbished with new toilet, kitchen and bench/storage fitouts.

## Condition and Intactness

As already mentioned in the history and description sections, this building has been substantially altered, with additions made to all four sides. The original south elevation, for example, was completely rebuilt when the service wing (ie offices/toilets/etc) was extended. It is unfortunate that the original street frontage, as shown in vintage photographs published in *Architecture and Arts* magazine and in Donald Ward's *Guide to Victorian Architecture* in the late 1950s, has been altered to be point that it is now almost unrecognisable. Today, the building is seen to its best advantage from the north-western corner, which north-facing window wall and verandah (albeit in an altered state, with partial glazed infill at one end) and the rear elevation (as extended, by Chancellor & Patrick, in 1962). Even this, however, contrasts with the original aspect evident in vintage photographs taken by Peter Wille, which depict the rear wall clad with varnished hardwood vertical boards, with the grey-concrete brick chimney (with inset aquarium) to the north.

Internally, the smaller rooms have all been modernised, the playroom extended in two directions (which necessitated the removal of the distinctive fireplace), and the floor of the former pram park re-surfaced with a plain concrete slab instead of its original square pavers.

## Comparative Analysis

In the *Survey of Post War Built Heritage in Victoria* undertaken by Heritage Alliance in 2008, this building was described as “probably one of the few small scaled educational/welfare buildings designed by this noted post-war firm at that time”. However, more detailed investigation reveals that Chancellor & Patrick went on to design a number of other kindergartens – of which, moreover, most were located in the Frankston/Mount Eliza area (where architect David Chancellor lived for some years, in a house of his own design in Gulls Way). One such example is the Montague Park Pre-School off Bentley Place, Frankston South (1962), which not only harks back to its earlier counterpart at Ranelagh with its squat rectangular plan, low pitched gable roof and north-facing window wall, but incorporates some of the same forms and materials (eg end elevations with grey concrete brick walls flanked by recessed windows) that were used in the additions made at Ranelagh that same year. Grey concrete brick walls (including a wing wall) were also used in Chancellor & Patrick's Kunyung Pre-School in Barmah Road, Mount Eliza (1964), although this building, with its square plan, shallow pyramid roof with broad eaves and horizontal strip windows, remains far more evocative of the mature Wrightian style for Chancellor & Patrick is known. Yet another local kindergarten designed by the firm, around the same time, still stands in Joy Street, Frankston. Although again realised in grey concrete block, the Wrightian influence is even more more pronounced, with an elongated plan form, low-hipped roof, and rows of plain piers articulating window bays along the side elevation.

The Ranelagh Pre-School is of some interest as a notably early project to emanate from David Chancellor's office, as it appears to have been commissioned in late 1953, a full year before he formally took Rex Patrick into partnership. This key phase of Chancellor's career, however, is probably better demonstrated by the house that he designed for himself in Gulls Way, Frankston, which was completed in early 1954. Research to date suggests that the Ranelagh Pre-School does not otherwise stand out as a specific example of Chancellor & Patrick's kindergarten architecture. This is more only consequent to its low level of physical integrity, but also to the fact that at least four other kindergartens by the same firm are known to exist in the geographical region. Desktop fieldwork (ie through on-line aerial photographs and street views) suggests that these other kindergartens may well be more intact than the one at Ranelagh. Therefore, it is recommended that more detailed assessment of those buildings be undertaken to establish which, if any, might be a more worthy candidate for inclusion on the *Victorian Heritage Register*.

## References

“Around the Suburbs: New Pre-School Centre”, *The Age*, 21 January 1955, p 4.

“Pre-School Centre soon”, *The Age*, 2 March 1955, p 5.

“Mount Eliza Pre-School, Chancellor & Patrick, architects”, *Architecture & Arts*, July 1955, front cover and p 26.

D C Ward, *Guide to Victorian Architecture*, pp 24-25.

PB File No 10,106. Unit 1178, VPRS 7882/P1 (Department of Health Public Building files), Public Record Office.



|                    |                              |                   |                               |
|--------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | Burwood Pre-School Centre    | <b>002-003</b>    |                               |
| <b>Other name</b>  | -                            |                   |                               |
| <b>Address</b>     | 48a Alfred Road<br>GLEN IRIS | <b>Group</b>      | 002 Community Facilities      |
|                    |                              | <b>Category</b>   | 010 Childcare Facility        |
| <b>LGA</b>         | City of Boroondara           | <b>Style</b>      | Post-War Melbourne Regional   |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1957-58                      | <b>Theme</b>      | 9.0 Building a Community Life |
|                    |                              | <b>Sub-theme</b>  | 8.2 Educating people          |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | Douglas D Alexandra          | <b>Builder/s</b>  | -                             |
|                    |                              |                   | -                             |
| <b>Artist/s</b>    | -                            | <b>Engineer/s</b> | -                             |



*Vintage photograph by Peter Wille (State Library of Victoria)*



*Current photograph from approximately the same angle*



*Detail of north facade, showing roof treatment and doors*



*General view of playroom interior, looking north towards porch*

|                                   |                          |    |                          |                                   |                          |       |                          |                              |                          |     |                          |       |                          |     |  |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-------|--------------------------|-----|--|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b> |                          |    |                          | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b> |                          |       |                          |                              |                          |     |                          |       |                          |     |  |
| AHC                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | NT | <input type="checkbox"/> | HO                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | Study | <input type="checkbox"/> | VHR                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | AHC | <input type="checkbox"/> | HO    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes |  |
| <b>Level of Significance</b>      |                          |    |                          | Not previously assessed           |                          |       |                          | <b>Level of Significance</b> |                          |     |                          | Local |                          |     |  |

## History

When the Burwood Pre-School was written up in *Architecture & Arts* in May 1957, it was noted that the project came about by a process typical of post-war kindergartens in Victoria: “the erection of a centre is usually achieved solely by the efforts of parents' groups, aided and guided by the Department of Health (Child & Maternal Welfare Division), who provide assistance to the ration of £2 to every £1 raised by the parents. Through endeavours along these lines, the Burwood group asked Douglas Alexandra to design a building to accommodate 30 children, to be used for both morning and afternoon sessions”. Alexandra, a leading modernist architect and university lecturer, was evidently chosen because he was himself a local resident, living nearby in a smart duplex of his own design at 6 Meyer Road.

The new pre-school was to be built on a narrow lot in Alfred Road, between two inter-war houses at Nos 48 and 50. This was actually a former *cul-de-sac*, known as Lilac Street, created as part of the original 1923 subdivision to access four rear lots. Never built on, these lots were later consolidated into the adjacent recreation reserve (now Hartwell sports ground), to which Lilac Street provided access. The title to the road reserve was transferred to the City of Camberwell in April 1957 for the new pre-school. As described in the above write-up, the site was “a rather uninteresting one, in that it was flat, of small dimensions, tree-less, without aspects of interest and located in a street typical of city suburbia”. This lacklustre context, along with the committee's desire for a building “progressive in nature and incorporating tried principles of good pre-school design” and the architect's own desire to introduce “a fantasy quality in sympathy with the pre-school child's mind”, resulted in a building of especially striking appearance. Alexandra's undated sketch plans showed a rectangular building enlivened by a strong diagonal theme: zig-zagging roof, false-arched doorways, triangle and diamond spandrels and a north-facing window wall with angled glazing bars and glass sun-hoods of faceted form. The quirky geometry extended to the playground, which had diamond-shaped garden beds, angled pathways, sandpit and tanbark areas of polygonal form, and densely landscaped rear corner identified as a “Mystery Garden”. The fantasy theme was further evoked within the building by a bold colour scheme, including spandrels of bright blue, ceilings of bright red, and walls in light grey “with accents of red, white and blue”.

The final working drawings for the project are dated 18 July 1957, and bear the initials of delineator H A O'N – almost certainly Hugh Andrew O'Neill, then a young recent graduate but later to become a leading academic in the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Melbourne. Construction commenced soon after but was still underway in early 1958, when Alexandra informed the Department of Health (which had request a progress report) that work had been delayed due to the difficulty in obtaining structural steel members for the playroom roof.

## Description

The Burwood Pre-School is a single-storey building on a elongated rectangular plan, comprising a large central playroom with a distinctive zig-zag roof, flanked at either end by smaller flat-roofed service wings. Framed up with diagonal steel members in a scissor-like configuration, the zigzag roof technically comprises three contiguous butterfly roofs, forming three small gables with an upward-sloping skillion at each end. On the north facade, the gable ends are expressed as three diamond-shaped panels and two half-diamonds (ie triangles), each enlivened by concentric rows of flat timber mouldings to create an eye-popping optical effect. This classroom facade is otherwise expressed as a metal-framed window wall, divided into four bays that correspond to the ridges and valleys of the roofline. Each bay has a doorway, flanked by louvred windows, with highlights above and panelled spandrels below. The geometry of the glazing bars, sills and lintels echoes the angle of the roof slope and diamond panels (approximately 30°). The east and west walls of the playroom, where they pop up above the flat roofs of the flanking wings, are clad with metal tray decking (not original). The street frontage has a recessed entry porch to the right side, with concrete-paved floor and a single timber post; this porch exposes the playroom's east wall, which is clad with horizontal vertical boards, while the remaining external walls are clad with contrasting vertical timber boards. The porch not only contains the main entrance (a single doorway, set into the side of the front wing) but also two glass-fronted display cases, which are both original. The street facade otherwise has a row of four square windows, just below the eaves line, with fixed sashes and projecting architraves; a second doorway and a recessed storage cupboard, at the left side of the facade, are not original.

Internally, the playroom has a matching zigzag ceiling, clad in Caneite panels with chamfered joints, with a flat ceiling along the south side (where there was originally a full-length corridor). The rooms in the adjacent service wings, which have all been remodelled, have conventional flat ceilings with plasterboard lining, and vinyl or carpet flooring. Toilet and kitchenette fitouts are of relatively recent origin.

## Condition and Intactness

The building has been much altered both internally and externally, although not to the point that its original appearance has been entirely obliterated. The most significant change is the reconfiguration of the plan and entrances, which has impacted both interior and exterior form. The original entrance porch, to the left side of the street frontage, has been infilled to create a store room and a staff toilet; an internal wall, which formerly defined a long corridor along the south side of the playroom, has also been removed. The secondary doorway, off the front porch, has now become the main entry. Inside, the spaces in the two flat-roofed service wings have also been entirely reconfigured, with new toilet and kitchen fitouts. This also necessitated the recladding of external walls, and the insertion of new doors and windows.

Externally, the original roof cladding, of built-up aluminium sheeting (an innovative but notoriously unreliable material of the 1950s), has been replaced by corrugated galvanised steel. The distinctive geometric effect of the north facade has been diminished by the relatively recent (c.1980s) removal of the faceted glass sunshades; these have been replaced by a new steel-framed pergola that attempts, somewhat awkwardly, to follow the angles of the zigzag roofline. Finally, no trace now remains of Alexandra's original playground layout; the polygonal sandpit and tanbark areas shown on his plan have been replaced by more recent counterparts, while the site of the "Mystery Garden" in the south-west corner of the block is now occupied by a shed.

## Comparative Analysis

Boldness – in structure, geometry and/or colour – is perhaps the single quality most associated with Melbourne Regional architecture of the 1950s. The diagonal line, overlapping to form diamond or triangle patterns, was a recurring motif in structural expression, or merely to enliven an otherwise plain wall or window surface. Window walls with zig-zag glazing bars, as seen at the Burwood Pre-School, had previously appeared in some early Robin Boyd houses, namely the Gillison House at Kew (1951) and the Finlay House at Warrandyte (1952; destroyed). The latter, with its scissor-truss roof, has a strong affinity with Doug Alexandra's kindergarten, designed only a few years later. The use of diagonal grids to break up a wall surface, or to create a facade screen, is best evidenced in the contemporaneous residential work of Peter & Dionne McIntyre: their own house in Kew (1954), the Hudson House in North Balwyn (1955) and the McCarthy House in Ivanhoe (1956). Their Brunt House in Kew (1954) incorporated small triangular pergolas as sunshading devices, which anticipates the similarly quirky faceted glass sun-hoods at the Burwood Pre-School.

Although the lively expression of the Melbourne Regional school is mostly associated with houses, Doug Alexandra was not the only architect who considered it appropriate to kindergartens, where bright colours and whimsical geometry would appeal to young children. The occupational play centre (kindergarten for retarded children) at 773 Warrigal Road, Oakleigh (Mussen, Mackay & Potter, 1953-54) incorporated a vivid blue-and-yellow chequerboard facade with child-like drawings of animals, people and other everyday objects. A creche/day nursery in Rosalind Park, Bendigo (Eggleston, McDonald & Secomb, 1955) also used bold geometry – a triangular plan and diagonal glazing bars – to evoke a playfulness entirely appropriate to the function. Both of these noted examples, however, have since been demolished.

To date, only one surviving kindergarten has been identified that is truly comparable to the Burwood Pre-School. Also designed by Doug Alexandra, the Jack & Jill Kindergarten in Beaumaris (1956) lacks a distinctive zig-zag roof, but is otherwise a lively and intact example of the Melbourne Regional style. It similarly comprises a large central playroom (albeit with skillion roof) and flat-roofed service wings; it is clad with vertical timber boards, with continuous bays of small timber-framed windows and a north-facing window that incorporates zig-zag glazing bars and louvred sunshades. Although perhaps less adventurous in design than the original scheme for the Burwood Pre-School, the Jack & Jill Kindergarten considerably more intact today. It is potentially of state significance.

## References

"Pre-School Centre, Burwood, Vic", *Architecture & Arts*, May 1957, p 37.

PB File No 11,233. Unit 1311, VPRS 7882/P1 (Department of Health Public Building files), Public Record Office.



|                    |  |   |
|--------------------|--|---|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | Eltham South Pre-School Centre                       | <b>002-004</b>                              |
| <b>Other name</b>  | Eltham South Kindergarten                            |   |
| <b>Address</b>     | 35 Fordham Road (corner Metery Road)<br>ELTHAM SOUTH | <b>Group</b> 002 Community Facilities       |
| <b>LGA</b>         | Shire of Nillumbik                                   | <b>Category</b> 010 Childcare Facility      |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1965-66  | <b>Style</b> Late Twentieth Century Organic |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | Charles Duncan                                       | <b>Theme</b> 9.0 Building a Community Life  |
| <b>Artist/s</b>    | Matcham Skipper (finial and wall sculpture)          | <b>Sub-theme</b> 8.2 Educating people       |
|                    |  | <b>Builder/s</b> -                          |
|                    |  | -   |
|                    |  | <b>Engineer/s</b> -                         |



General view from north; note finial and wall-mounted sculpture



View from south-west, showing recessed secondary entrance



Interior, showing north-facing window wall and pelmet ceiling



Detail of children's bathroom, showing original timber partitions

|                                   |                            |                                   |                            |                              |                            |       |                            |     |                              |     |                              |    |                              |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------|----------------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|----|------------------------------|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b> |                            | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b> |                            |                              |                            |       |                            |     |                              |     |                              |    |                              |
| AHC                               | <input type="checkbox"/> - | NT                                | <input type="checkbox"/> - | HO                           | <input type="checkbox"/> - | Study | <input type="checkbox"/> - | VHR | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | AHC | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | HO | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <b>Level of Significance</b>      | Not previously assessed    |                                   |                            | <b>Level of Significance</b> | STATE                      |       |                            |     |                              |     |                              |    |                              |

## History

In late 1964, the Department of Health's Maternal & Child Welfare branch considered several sites in Eltham South as possible locations for a new kindergarten. When a site in Mount Pleasant Road was deemed unsuitable, an alternative was considered at the corner of Metery Road and Fordham Road. After an inspection in December, it was noted that "the site has a commanding position, having a fall both ways ... the roads leading to the site have a gravel surface and no footpaths, but the site seems satisfactory". By the following June, sketch plans had been prepared by Charles Duncan, a young architect who had just won a RAIA award for his first major domestic project, the Williams House in Eaglemont. The Eltham South Kindergarten represented an atypical non-residential commission for Duncan, who duly proposed a building "scaled down in sympathy with the size of the children". Triangular in plan, it was to comprise a central hexagonal playroom with a tent ceiling supported on a log post, surrounded by service areas with pelmet ceilings at only 7 feet (2.13 metres) high. Duncan maintained that this "created a visual link to achieve continuity of internal and external space, and forcing the eye to read an apparent height of seven feet from both within and without the building, while still maintaining an average ceiling height in the playroom of almost eleven feet". Duncan's bold ideas initially met with some opposition from the Department of Health; however, the project proceeded with only minor revisions.

The final working drawings, completed in January 1966, depicted Duncan's unusual building in a landscaped setting and playground that echoed his organic and geometric themes: polygonal garden beds and areas of brick paving and tan bark; a hexagonal sandpit, triangular concrete paving slabs, stepped railway sleepers and rockeries. The most striking element in the composition, however, was an ornate sculptured iron finial atop the roof, designed by Matcham Skipper, a noted local sculptor and one of the founding members of the nearby *Montsalvat* artists' colony. Assembled in six weeks from waste metal leftover from drop forging, the sculpture was, at 14 feet (4.26 metres) high, said to be the largest finial in Australia. By Skipper's own admission, its vaguely foliated form was inspired by the music of Dorian Le Gallienne, a noted local composer who had died in 1963. Skipper's finial was installed (by volunteer labour) on 16 August; two weeks later, a champagne supper and fashion show was held to raise funds to cover its costs. The kindergarten was finally completed in October 1966 at a cost of \$17,000. Twelve months thence, it was published in *Architecture in Australia* as part of a feature on the recent work of young Melbourne architects under the age of 35 years.

## Description

The Eltham South Pre-School Centre, occupying a sloping site at the corner of Fordham and Metery roads, is a single-storey hip-roofed brick building on a triangular footprint. Its pyramidal roof (bell-cast above wide eaves) is clad with recycled slates and copper flashings, and crowned by a tall iron filigree finial. Eaves are lined with cement sheet and have sloping timber fascias and custom-made guttering in a wedge-shaped profile. Walls are of clinker brickwork with raked joints and roughly toothed corners. The principal facade (facing Fordham Street) has a continuous bay of desk-height windows, set back on a flat brick sill; a recessed entrance at the left end has a doorway set perpendicular to the facade. Although the roof plan is triangular, the north corner of the floorplan is truncated to provide an open porch; the main entry, comprising a pair of glazed timber-framed doors, is set into this canted face. This full-height window wall continues along the north (Metery Road) facade, with alternating windows and glazed sliding doors, which open onto a terrace paved with triangular concrete slabs. This area is sheltered by a timber-framed pergola with tinted polycarbonate sheet roofing. All of the external (and internal) timberwork – the fascias, window joinery and architraves – is of Western Red Cedar with a brown painted finish. The triangular pier at the north end of the building, supporting the outer edge of the roof over the entry porch, is enlivened by another wall-mounted scrap metal sculpture by Matcham Skipper.

Internally, the building's triangular plan form is reduced to a hexagonal space (the children's playroom) by the truncated north corner, and by the partitioning of the corresponding south-west and south-east corners to create toilets/storeroom and offices/kitchen (respectively). A canted log pole in the centre of the playroom supports a tent ceiling, lined with white-painted Caneite. Around the perimeter of the room (and extending thence into the service areas beyond), the ceiling resumes a conventional flat profile, with the junction delineated by a stained timber pelmet. Internal brick walls retain their exposed finish (albeit with flush joints rather than raked), except where they have been partly concealed by built-in pin-boards, in the form of Caneite panels with a covering of bleached hessian. The children's toilet area have two tiers of wall-mounted hooks (for bags, etc), a ceramic tiled splashback to the stainless steel trough sink, and miniature timber panel partitions between the lavatory pans. A stained timber door provides access to the private adult toilet. Throughout the building, the concrete slab floor is lined with vinyl sheeting.

## Condition and Intactness

While parts of the building have been refurbished in accordance with modern pre-school requirements, it nevertheless remains in a largely intact state. The original plan form, with central hexagonal playroom and surrounding service areas with their pelmet ceilings, is virtually unaltered. The children's toilet area is surprisingly intact, retaining original miniature timber panel partitions between lavatory pans. The kitchen fitout has been replaced by a modern counterpart, and the original built-in cupboards in the office have been removed. Externally, a new timber-framed pergola (of entirely sympathetic form and scale) has been erected across the northern facade. The original wire cable "downpipes"; at the three corners of the roof have also been removed, and some PVC rainwater tanks have been discreetly installed along one side of the building. Little evidence remains of Duncan's original playground/landscaping scheme. The triangular concrete paving remains, but the hexagonal sandpit has been infilled with cement (although its outline is still evident). The treatment of the cut slope, with rockeries, winding steps and railways sleepers, is evidently original, but the remaining playground layout and equipment is otherwise of more recent origin.

## Comparative Analysis

The triangular plan form of the Eltham South Pre-School – one of its most distinctive characteristics – has relatively few counterparts in Victoria. Although Melbourne architects began to experiment with such pure geometry from the late 1940s, few triangular-planned buildings were actually realised. Of these, the Leyser House in Kew (Roy Grounds, 1950) is both the earliest and the best-known; while its remains standing, the similar but slightly later Hall House at the corner of Dandenong and May Roads in Clayton (Ray Berg and H L Waugh, 1954), has since been razed. Non-residential buildings with triangular plans include St John's Presbyterian Church in Warrandyte (Hipwell, Weight & Ross, 1965), which, with its pyramid roof and central spire, is strikingly similar to the Eltham South Kindergarten in its external appearance, although not in plan. The only other triangular kindergarten yet identified in Victoria was the one in Rosalind Park, Bendigo (Eggleston, McDonald & Secomb, 1958), which has since been demolished. Its fragmented planning and cool modernist expression (with exposed steel framework and zig-zag glazing bars) contrasted markedly to the centrally-planned and far more organic expression seen at Eltham South.

The Eltham South Kindergarten is a highly unusual building in the *oeuvre* of Charles Duncan, whose practice concentrated almost exclusively on residential buildings (and, specifically, single detached dwellings). Nevertheless, certain aspects of the kindergarten's design (planning, materials, detailing, etc) are echoed in Duncan's subsequent houses. Although he never designed a pure triangular dwelling, he occasionally used polygonal or triangular modules to generate residential floor-plans: most notably the famous Okalyi House in Lower Plenty (1972). The distinctive low hipped roof with bellcast eaves (and the use of metal cables or chains in lieu of downpipes) can be seen in the Bucknell House in Lower Plenty, the Welsh House in Heidelberg (both 1967) and elsewhere. Exposed pine logs as structural posts were used to great effect in the Sutterby House at Donvale (1972). The incorporation of a sculptured finial, however, is entirely unique amongst Duncan's buildings.

The finial itself also holds a significant place in the career of sculptor Matcham Skipper, who is best known as a jeweller, silversmith and creator of small pieces (eg Monash University's ceremonial mace; the Shire of Nillumbik's mayoral chain). Although he has produced artwork specifically for architectural contexts, these are generally small-scaled, such as the crucifixes at Newman College Chapel and St Margaret's Church, Eltham, and the *Stations of the Cross* at the Church of St. Mary Immaculate, Ivanhoe. Larger public art commissions are rare; examples include the Whittaker Memorial at Port Melbourne (project only), an outdoor sculpture at Eltham College, and a fountain at Hurstbridge High School. The finial at Eltham South Kindergarten stands out amongst these as one of Skipper's largest commissions, and one of the relative few that represent a fundamental element in an architectural composition.

## References

"Triangular Houses", *Architecture & Arts*, April 1954, p 37.

"Kindergarten finial sets off debate", *The Age*, 16 August 1966, p 7.

"To buy a finial", *The Age*, 8 September 1966, p 6.

"Exhibition 35", *Architecture in Australia*, October 1967, p 820

PB File No 14,090. Unit 1672, VPRS 7882/P1 (Department of Health Public Building files), Public Record Office.

## Statement of Significance

### *What is Significant?*

The Eltham South Pre-School Centre at 35 Fordham Road, Eltham South, is an organic-style clinker brick building with a distinctive triangular plan form and a hipped slate roof with broad eaves, surmounted at the apex by a sculptured spire of scrap metal. The building was designed in 1966 by award-winning young architect Charles Duncan, and the spire by noted local sculptor and jewellery maker Matcham Skipper, a member of the nearby *Montsalvat* artists' community.

### *How is it Significant?*

The pre-school centre is of architectural and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria

### *Why is it Significant?*

Architecturally, the pre-school is significant as one of the most distinctive and unusual kindergartens ever designed in Victoria. Its pure triangular plan form, which was specifically adopted by the architect to create a whimsical character to appeal to very young children, is not only extremely unusual in pre-school architecture (cf now demolished example at Bendigo, 1955) but also, more broadly, in post-war architecture in Victoria in general (cf the famous Leyser House by Roy Grounds in Kew, 1950). The architect's bold (and, at the time, somewhat controversial) attempt to design a building specifically scaled for occupation by small children is further demonstrated internally by the low perimeter ceilings and miniature timber partitions in the toilet area. Architecturally, the building is also significant as a rare example of a non-residential commission by an architect who was best known (and indeed, won several awards) for high-class residential commissions in a similar organic style (and, in a few cases, similar geometric plan form)

Aesthetically, the pre-school is significant as an outstanding example of the Wrightian or Organic style of architecture as applied (atypically) to a small-scaled non-residential building. This is not only imbued in its geometric plan form and ground-hugging expression, but also by the extensive use of natural (and in some cases, recycled) building materials: rough clinker brick, salvaged roof slates, stained timber, log posts and scrap metal. It is not only significant in its own right, as an individual specimen of this distinctive style, but in a broader regional context as an expression of the natural/organic architectural tradition that is strongly associated with the Eltham area – demonstrated by the nearby *Montsalvat*, the mud brick and timber buildings of Alistair Knox (whose children and grandchildren attended this kindergarten) and more recent community buildings such as the Eltham Library (Gregory Burgess, 1994). With its unusual form and rooftop spire, the kindergarten remains as a highly distinctive element in a typical Eltham bush landscape.

Aesthetically, the building is also significant for the incorporation of a major work by noted local artist Matcham Skipper, a long-time (and founding) member of the *Montsalvat* artists' community. Fabricated from scrap metal and, by the creators' own admission, inspired by the music of his friend, local composer Dorien Le Gallienne (a leading figure in Eltham's *avant garde* circles and one-time client of Alistair Knox), the kindergarten spire is a striking and unusual element in its own right. As an example of the work of an artist who is best known for his small-scale sculpted pieces and jewellery designs, the spire stands out not only as one of Skipper's largest commissions but also one that was specifically commissioned as an integral part of an architectural composition. Again by Skipper's own account, the spire further represents the largest sculpted "finial" on any building in Australia.

## Suggested Extant of Registration

The entire building, original concrete paving, remnant landscaping (rockeries, etc) and sufficient curtilage to all sides

## Suggested Policy Guidelines

Retain original finishes, built-in shelving and furniture, timber toilet partitions and original pin-boards.

Consider the re-instatement of the original metal chain "downpipes" from the box gutters.

## Suggested Permit Exemptions

Fitout of kitchenette, adult toilets and storerooms.

Installation of new playground equipment, fences and landscaping.

|                    |   |   |
|--------------------|---|---|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | Olive Phillips Kindergarten (and Infant Welfare Centre) | <b>002-005</b>  |
| <b>Other name</b>  | Olive Phillips Free Kindergarten                        |   |
| <b>Address</b>     | 28 Bodley Street<br>BEAUMARIS                           | <b>Group</b> 002 Community Facilities                   |
| <b>LGA</b>         | City of Bayside   | <b>Category</b> 010 Childcare Facility                  |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1973-74   | <b>Style</b> Late Twentieth Century Organic             |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | David Godsell   | <b>Theme</b> 9.0 Building a Community Life              |
| <b>Artist/s</b>    | -   | <b>Sub-theme</b> 8.2 Educating People                   |
|                    |   | <b>Builder/s</b> -                                      |
|                    |   | <b>Engineer/s</b> Irwin Johnson & Partners (structural) |



General view from rear (playground) side



Detail of street frontage, showing pergola eaves



Detail of breezeway between kindergarten and IWC



Detail of interior showing exposed roof truss

|                                   |  |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b> | AHC <input type="checkbox"/> - NT <input type="checkbox"/> - HO <input type="checkbox"/> - Study <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b> | VHR <input type="checkbox"/> - AHC <input type="checkbox"/> - HO <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Level of Significance</b>      | Local  | <b>Level of Significance</b>      | LOCAL  |

## History

The suburb of Beaumaris underwent a significant residential boom during the immediate post-war era when a vast tract of vacant bushland, which had been reserved since the 1930s by the Dunlop Rubber Company as a site for a factory and workers' housing estate, was suddenly released for private development. As one of the last pockets of undeveloped land close to central Melbourne, this part of Beaumaris not only attracted young married couples but also young progressive architects, who were engaged to design smart modern houses for the new residents - which, in some cases, also meant themselves. One of the first modern architects to take up residence in Beaumaris was Alan Fildes, who designed and built his own house on the Esplanade in 1942. Towards the end of that decade, his firm, Seabrook & Fildes, was engaged to design the new kindergarten to be built in Bodley Street. His initial sketch plan, dated 13 August 1948, showed a simple building two playrooms forming an L-shaped footprint. A revised version, prepared a year later, adopted an symmetrical T-shaped plan, which incorporated an "outdoor (summer) classroom" under a pergola, and an Infant Welfare Centre at one end of the building. Working drawings were prepared in August 1950 and revised in April 1951. Alan Fildes died in 1955, only a few years after the building was completed.

The original Olive Phillips Free Kindergarten was destroyed by fire in October 1972. Following the tradition of employing a local architect, the kindergarten committee entrusted the commission to David Godsell, who had lived in Balcombe Road (in an distinctive Wrightian house of his own design) since 1960. The site in Bodley Road was cleared, and Godsell prepared plans for a combined kindergarten and Infant Welfare Centre to be built there. His initial sketch plans (undated) show a simple concrete brick building comprising two discrete hip-roofed square blocks, linked by a central open foyer (used also as a pram park). Each wing was similar in plan: a large open space, bordered on its south and west sides by an L-shaped service block containing toilets, storerooms, kitchens and so on. The final working drawings and specifications had been prepared by March 1974. Construction progressed; work had been completed by May 1975, when the secretary of the kindergarten committee reported to the Department of Health that the finishing touches were being put on the landscaping between playground and the building: a flight of steps, made of railway sleepers, with treated pine handrails.

The building was subjected to minor alteration during 1977, when concerns about insufficient natural lighting in the kindergarten playroom prompted the installation of some skylights.

## Description

The pre-school and infant welfare centre in Bodley Street, Beaumaris, is a single-storey building, with its two separate but related functions contained within a pair of discrete hip-roofed pavilions, with a flat-roofed covered area between that serves as a common foyer. The two pavilions are square in plan, although the one containing the kindergarten (to the east) is slightly larger than that containing the infant welfare centre. Both are of split concrete block construction, which imparts a distinctive ribbed effect to the external elevations. The low-pitched pyramid roofs are clad with metal decking and have prominent eaves to all sides, with unpainted rough-sawn timber lining boards, broad fascias made up of two overlapping planks, and concealed guttering with discreet rain spouts that project from the centre of the fascia. On the north side of the building, the eaves to each wing incorporate pergola-like framed openings to admit additional natural light. Door and window openings along the north, east and west elevations extend the full height of the wall, while south elevation has narrower horizontal strip windows, set just below the eaves line, with sloping sills. On the north side, a row of full-height window bays is defined by flat concrete block piers; these bays contain tall sashless double-hung glass panels with narrow rectangular spandrels below, which incorporate projecting central panels as a distinct decorative motif. The central foyer, originally an open pergola, has since been roofed with translucent corrugated PVC sheeting. It has a concrete paved floor and, at the far (south) end, is enclosed by a framed bay of eight narrow rectangular panels, infilled with textured glazing and timber plank spandrels.

Internally, the infant welfare centre is dominated by a large open space (waiting room), with the clinics and other service spaces (toilets, etc) set along its south and west sides. This waiting room has a cathedral ceiling with exposed timber trusses of complex design (incorporated bolt-fixed joints, angle plates and metal tie rods) and rough-sawn timber plank linings. Toilets retain original plumbing fixtures and fitouts, but are architectural undistinguished. Although access to the adjacent kindergarten building was not permitted, the space appears to be similarly treated, with a large cathedral-ceilinged play area, and service areas along the south and west walls.

## Condition and Intactness

The building appears to remain in a substantially intact state, both internally and externally. Changes made to the exterior have largely been minimal, and these have not severely compromised the original appearance or character of the building. These include the installation of some PVC skylights and packaged air-conditioning units on the roof, the construction of a small metal-framed enclosure on the south wall of the infant welfare centre, and the a modern powder-coated metal palisade fence (with child-proof gates) around the kindergarten and across the communal entry foyer.

## Comparative Analysis

In the original *Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria* (2008), potential state significance was ascribed to this building “as one of the few non-residential commissions undertaken by noted architect David Godsell”. This, in turn, was informed by an earlier assessment of the building included in the *City of Bayside Inter-war & Post-War Heritage Study*, undertaken by Heritage Alliance in 2007. Based on an interview with the architect's widow, Mrs Ursula Godsell, it was stated that Godsell (who died in 1986) was not an especially prolific architect and, moreover, that most of his projects were residential in nature: either new dwellings, or alterations/extensions to existing dwellings. Cited examples of Godsell's non-residential projects included the post offices at Mordialloc (1969-70) and Bentleigh (1972), and a workshop, with flat above, in Auburn (1962). It was further noted that he also designed a number of non-residential buildings that were never realised: the Bentley Manufacturing Company factory in Moorabbin, the Black Rock Yacht Club, and an (unplaced) competition entry for the new state government offices in Perth.

Further research has identified another non-residential commissioned undertaken by David Godsell: a factory for Neil Morris, paper converters, which was erected at 38 Alex Avenue, Moorabbin, in 1967. This building was relatively utilitarian, being a simple gable-roofed factory building with plain concrete block facade enlivened only by a timber-clad feature wall that straddled one corner. Although it still stands, the factory has been much altered, and can no longer be considered a particularly evocative example of Godsell's distinctive Wrightian style, as applied to a non-residential building. The same can also be said of the two post offices cited by Heritage Alliance, which have also been much altered over the years. By contrast, Godsell's “workshop at Auburn” – actually a small factory at 4 Montrose Street, Hawthorn East, erected for optical goods manufacturers G Nissell & Company – not only remains in a substantially intact state, but stands out a striking example of the architect's distinctive style. With a cruciform plan incorporated tri8anguklar balconies with balustraded clad in stained timber, framed in textured concrete block, it is one of Godsell's most overtly Wrightian projects and, thus, a much clearer contender for the title of his most distinguished and interesting non-residential building.

## References

Heritage Alliance. *City of Bayside Interwar and Post-war Heritage Study* (2007).

PB File No 9,294. Unit 1079, VPRS 7882/P1 (Department of Health Public Building files), Public Record Office.



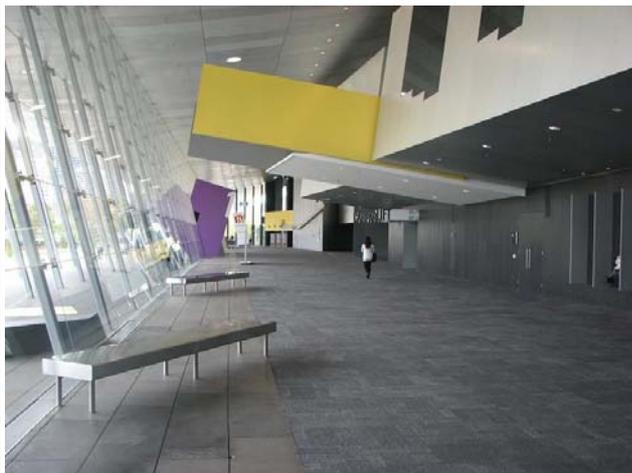
|                    |  |  |
|--------------------|--|--|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | Melbourne Convention Exhibition Centre (MCEC)                    | <b>002-006</b>   |
| <b>Other name</b>  | Melbourne Exhibition Centre; "Jeff's Shed"                       |  |
| <b>Address</b>     | 2 Clarendon Street<br>SOUTH BANK                                 | <b>Group</b> 002 Community Facilities  |
|                    |  | <b>Category</b> 015 Exhibition Building  |
| <b>LGA</b>         | City of Melbourne  | <b>Style</b> Late Twentieth Century Late Modern  |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1992-96  | <b>Theme</b> 9.0 Shaping Cultural and Creative Life  |
|                    |  | <b>Sub-theme</b> 9.1 Participating in Sport and Recreation   |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | Denton Corker Marshall Pty Ltd (1992-96)<br>Daryl Jackson (1992) | <b>Builder/s</b> Boulderstone Hornibrook Pty Ltd   |
| <b>Designer/s</b>  | Emery Vincent Design (signage)                                   | <b>Engineer/s</b> Over Arup & Partners (structural/civil)<br>Connell Wagner (Vic) P/L (mechanical) |



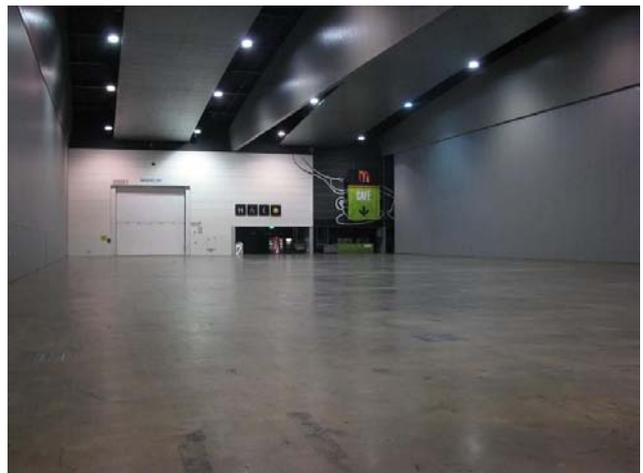
*Principal frontage to Clarendon Street, showing the blade*



*River frontage, looking towards Clarendon Street*



*Main foyer, looking towards front entrance*



*Typical exhibition space; note original and new signage*

|                                   |   |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b> |   | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b> |  |
| AHC                               | <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> | NT                                | <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/>              |
| HO                                | <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> | Study                             | <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/>              |
| <b>Level of Significance</b>      | Not previously assessed                             |                                   |  |
|                                   |   | VHR                               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                   |   | AHC                               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                   |   | HO                                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Level of Significance</b>      |   |                                   | STATE  |

## History

The history of Melbourne's exhibition centre on the Yarra River is intertwined to the that of the new state museum. When the original National Museum and Science Museum merged in 1983 to create the Museum of Victoria, the upgrading of facilities – then housed in the grand Victorian building on Swanston Street – was a high priority. The next year, architect Daryl Jackson prepared a report recommending the original building be handed over for use as a museum, and the State Library of Victoria (which occupied a portion thereof) be relocated to a new purpose-built facility on the next city block, occupied by the Queen Victoria Hospital. In 1985, nine leading architects were invited to enter a limited competition for the redevelopment of both sites on that basis; this, however, was abandoned. By the decade's end, it was proposed instead to expand the State Library *in situ* and to provide a new museum alongside. This scheme, in turn, was rejected in favour of an entirely new museum being erected in the former industrial area on the south side of the Yarra River. Designed by Daryl Jackson, this was only partially completed, up to the concrete framing stage, when, in October 1992, Joan Kirner's Labour government was succeeded by the incoming Liberal government under Jeff Kennett.

During Kennett's seven-year tenure at Victorian premier, he proposed many high-profile construction projects including the realisation of the dome at Parliament House, a new museum, exhibition centre, civic square and casino. Reversing the plans of the outgoing Labour government, Kennett proposed for the exhibition centre to be built on the museum site at Southbank, and the new museum to be built in the Carlton Gardens – with both commissions going to his preferred architects, Denton Corker Marshall. While the new exhibition centre had a fairly straightforward programme, it was still a vast building – providing over 30,000 square metres of exhibition space – with a limited budget. Indeed, such was the latter that the unfinished Daryl Jackson building on the site was retained and integrated into the new building. However, its transformation was so complete that, as an architectural journal later noted, “little is left of the pale concrete and circular geometric skeleton of Jackson's building; DCM have engulfed it in metal and glass cladding and an altogether new geometry”. The new building used simple forms, dominated by a curving metal-clad roof that had been designed with assistance from aeronautical engineers, and tested in a wind tunnel at Monash University. Construction was itself subject to political intrigue, with completion timed so that the new building could accommodate the motor show that preceded Melbourne's inaugural Formula One Grand Prix – another bold and controversial Kennett initiative – in March 1996. Right on schedule, the new exhibition centre was officially opened by the Premier himself on 14 February 1996. The building was much lauded by the local architectural press. It not only went on to become the “clear winner” in the commercial category (the Sir Osborne McCutcheon Award) at the RAI (Victorian chapter) awards for 1996, but also to receive the even more prestigious national prize, the Sir Zelman Cowan Award for Public Buildings, that same year.

## Description

Laid out at an angle on a riverbank site, the Melbourne Exhibition Centre is a huge building on an elongated rectangular plan. It comprises two distinct parts: a multi-storey “entry building” on Clarendon Street, containing administration areas, and the exhibition centre proper, comprising a row of vast spaces with a full-length concourse alongside. The latter is dominated by an enveloping metal-clad trussed roof, aerodynamically-designed with a convex curve akin to an aircraft wing, while a contrasting concave rooflet, set lower down, extends over the concourse to form a verandah along the north side, supported on three rows of angled posts. This facade is expressed as a sloping wall of fixed glass panels, with prominently framed doorways at regular intervals. The west and south elevations are more utilitarian, with the latter having a row of loading docks with roller shutter doors to provide direct access exhibition areas within. The “entry building”, which incorporates the inherited structure of Daryl Jackson's proposed museum, presents an asymmetrical street facade, mostly clad in aluminium panels. The left half is stepped inward, with horizontal strip windows, while the right half is screened by a billboard-like screen of green-tinted glass panels. The corner entry porch is marked by a huge yellow projecting plane, supported on two angled columns and incorporating the building's name along the upper edge.

Internally, the exhibition areas are utilitarian spaces, with polished concrete floors, concrete panel walls at each end, and vast operable walls between. The concourse has carpeted floor, walls lined with screw-fixed aluminium-faced timber panels (incorporating fin-like projections to define public telephone bays, etc) and a raked ceiling lined with perforated panels. Entrances to exhibition areas, and the external doorways opposite each one, are numbered and colour-coded. Some mezzanine office spaces, of cubic form, also project into the concourse space. The front foyer space also incorporates mezzanine floor, with a splayed floor slab supported on rectangular black piers, and a wide staircase with tinted green glass balustrade and steel railings. This part of the building is further enlivened by some jagged brightly-coloured spur walls and glass walls (and a skylight) screened with rows of yellow fin-like transoms.

## Condition and Intactness

Perhaps not surprisingly for a building under twenty years old, the exhibition centre remains in excellent condition and in a virtually intact state. Over the years, much time, effort and expense has been spent in maintaining the building, as its very function dictates that it should remain fresh, inviting and attractive. While some minor changes have been made in recent years, these have been made in consultation with the original architects and graphic designers. They include the removal of some of the original angled concrete benches from the concourse space, and their replacement with removable metal-framed counterparts. Some of the glass panels on the north wall have also been replaced when damaged. While the leather-covered lounge seating is original, the original black leather finish has recently been replaced by brighter colours to match the centre's new corporate logo, which was launched in February 2008. The carpet in the concourse has also been replaced several times over the past fifteen years, as it has only a limited lifespan. In the exhibition areas, some new banner-style signage has been erected above the kitchen areas along the south wall.

Internally, the building remains in excellent condition. As the concourse was designed to accommodate vending machines, public telephones and similar accretions within purpose-built alcoves, this has prevented any damages to walls, etc, which might have otherwise resulted from retro-fitting such elements. The centre's administration also maintains strict policies about how exhibitions displays are erected and installed, so that the high-quality internal finishes will remain pristine and undamaged.

One obvious change in recent years has been the construction of a new convention centre (NH Architecture/Woods Bagot, 2009), which is attached to the exhibition centre on its northern side by a discrete glazed link.

## Comparative Analysis

It was suggested, in the original *Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria* by Heritage Alliance, that the Melbourne Exhibition Centre (aka "Jeff's Shed") is of historical significance "for its associations with Jeff Kennett's controversial but memorable era as state premier". This particular building, however, is hardly unique in that regard, given that numerous other buildings in Victoria retain these same associations – notably the Museum in the Carlton Gardens (by the same architects), the casino complex and Federation Square (both of which, incidentally, occupy comparable riverside sites). What stands out about the exhibition centre, however, is that – unlike those examples cited above – the politics behind the project are uniquely expressed in the built fabric itself. That is to say, the exhibition centre incorporates the remnants of a building proposed by the outgoing government, which was designed by another architect for a entirely different civic purpose. It could be argued that Daryl Jackson's unfinished building was so completely transformed by DCM's subsequent work that it is now very difficult to interpret this while one is actually inside the building. Nevertheless, it remains rather more obvious from the exterior and, even more so, when the building is viewed from above. The fact that the completion of the building was timed to coincide with the motor show that preceded the Melbourne's inaugural Formula One motor race is also testament to the political intrigue that is deeply enmeshed in the building's origins.

The Melbourne Exhibition Centre is unique in Victoria as a twentieth century equivalent of a modern building type that is otherwise represented only by the Royal Exhibition Building. As a purpose-built exhibition centre, it is really only comparable with counterparts in other state capitals: the Sydney Exhibition Centre (Cox Architects, 1988), the Brisbane Exhibition Centre (Cox Rayner/Peddle Thorp, 1995), and the Perth Exhibition Convention Centre (The Cox Group, 2004). All of these were much lauded in the architectural press, with the example at Sydney even winning the Sulman Medal for 1989. The Melbourne Exhibition Centre was also the recipient two major architectural awards including the Sir Zelman Cowan Award for Public Buildings – one of only six buildings in Victoria (so far) to have received this prestigious national RAI A award since it was inaugurated in 1981.

## References

- "Melbourne Exhibition Centre", *Architect*, June 1996, pp 4-7.
- "Sir Osborne McCutcheon Award", *Architect*, June 1996, p 10.
- "Exhibit One", *Architecture Australia*, May/June 1996, pp 46-53.
- "Denton Corker Marshall: The Melbourne Exhibition Centre", *UME*, No 2 (1996), pp 18-27.

## Statement of Significance

### *What is Significant?*

The Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre, at 2 Clarendon Street, South Melbourne, is a large building on an elongated rectangular plan, distinguished by its vast curved metal roof, sloping north-facing glass wall, full-length porch with angled posts, and huge yellow inclined plane on the street front. Erected in 1992-96 to the design of Denton Corker Marshall, it was one of several major civic projects proposed during Jeff Kennett's tenure as state premier. It was controversially erected on the site of (and incorporating the remnant structure of) a state museum proposed under Kennett's predecessor, Joan Kirner. This part of the building, designed by Daryl Jackson, still remains apparent from the exterior, albeit encased in slick cladding conceived by DCM.

### *How is it Significant?*

The building is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

### *Why is it Significant?*

Historically, the building is significant for associations with Jeff Kennett's seven-year tenure as Liberal Premier of Victoria, which saw many ambitious public works proposed in and around Melbourne. While most (but not all) of these projects were implemented during Kennett's era, the exhibition centre stands out as the one where the political context is enmeshed in the built fabric: the centre not only occupies a site that was slated by the outgoing Labour government for as the site for the new state museum, but actually incorporates the building that was partially erected for that purpose, by other architects, before Kennett's landslide victory in the 1992 election. Such are the strong political associations of the building is still retains the popular nickname of "Jeff's Shed" to the present day.

Architecturally, the building is significant as a memorable example of what is essentially a highly unusual building type: the purpose-built public exhibition centre. The first example to have been erected in Melbourne for over a century, the building transformed the modern typology from the ubiquitous hangar-style structures into an extruded sculptural form. The significance of the building is acknowledged by its receipt of two major architectural awards in 1996: the Sir Osborne McCutcheon Award and the Sir Zelman Cowan Award for Public Building

## Suggested Extent of Registration

The entire building, including original furniture and signage, but excluding that glazed link that has recently been built between the exhibition centre and the new convention centre alongside.

## Suggested Policy Guidelines

Original furniture should be retained wherever possible.

The installation of temporary exhibition structures, banners and displays should not necessitate any new fixings to original wall, floor or ceiling surfaces.

Future alterations to the interior and exterior should only be made in consultation with the original architects, Denton Corker Marshall or – in the case of signage – the original graphic designers, Emery Vincent Design.

Semi-permanent elements in the concourse area (such as public telephones, vending machines, etc) should be placed only in those alcoves that have been set aside for the purpose, so that original wall finishes remain undamaged.

The extent of the Daryl Jackson's original museum building could be interpreted within the building.

## Suggested Permit Exemptions

Partition alterations to offices in the "entry building" on Clarendon Street, and concourse mezzanine.

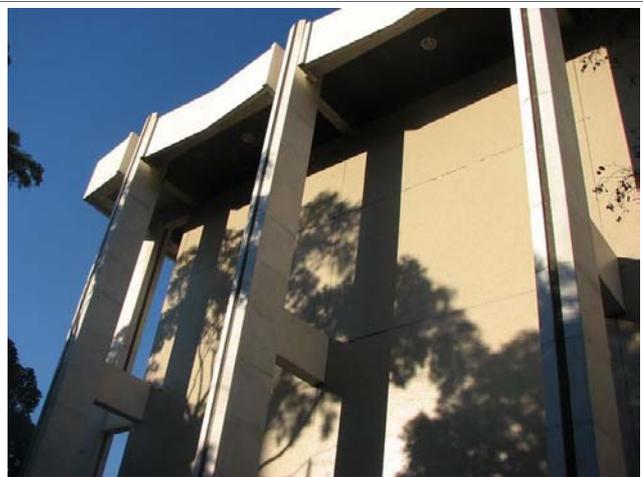
Fitouts to existing toilet and kitchenette areas throughout the building.

Alterations to the underground carpark, where these will not affect the external appearance of the building.

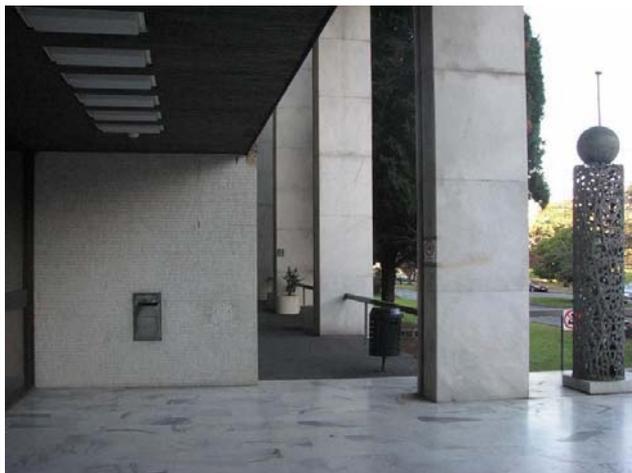
|                    |   |  |
|--------------------|---|--|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | Dallas Brooks Centre  | <b>002-007</b>   |
| <b>Other names</b> | Masonic Centre of Victoria; Dallas Brooks Hall (auditorium) |  |
| <b>Address</b>     | 300 Albert Street<br>EAST MELBOURNE                         | <b>Group</b> 002 Community Facilities<br><b>Category</b> 021 Masonic Hall                          |
| <b>LGA</b>         | City of Melbourne   | <b>Style</b> Late Twentieth Century Stripped Classical   |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1963-69   | <b>Theme</b> 8.0 Building a Community Life<br><b>Sub-theme</b> 8.4 Forming Community Organisations |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | Godfrey & Spowers Pty Ltd                                   | <b>Builder/s</b> E A Watts Pty Ltd   |
| <b>Designer/s</b>  | Grant Featherston (furniture)                               | <b>Engineer/s</b> John Connell & Associates (structural)   |
| <b>Artist/s</b>    | Rein Slagmolen (sculpted entrance pillars)                  | Bolt Beranek & Newman Inc (acoustic)   |



General view of Albert Street frontage



Detail, showing marble-clad piers and mosaic tiled walls



Detail of entrance porch, showing high-class finishes



Entry foyer (photographed through rear window)

|                                    |                            |    |   |                                    |                            |       |                            |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|----|---|------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------|----------------------------|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b>  |                            |    |   | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b>  |                            |       |                            |
| AHC                                | <input type="checkbox"/> - | NT | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | HO                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> - | Study | <input type="checkbox"/> - |
| <b>Level of Significance</b> State |                            |    |   | <b>Level of Significance</b> STATE |                            |       |                            |

## History

For many years, the headquarters of Freemasonry in Victoria was maintained at 25-31 Collins Street. Erected in 1885 to the design of architect John Grainger, this purpose-built centre provided masonic chambers, main hall, lodge and rehearsal room, supper rooms and other facilities. Built by a private company, which rented the spaces to various lodges then operating around Melbourne, the building was acquired by Sir William Clarke in 1889 on behalf of the newly-formed United Grand Lodge of Victoria. While further additions and renovations were made in the early twentieth century, the existing building remained inadequate. In 1938, plans for a new building on the site were drawn up, but these were shelved with the onset of the Second World War. It was not until 1954 that the proposal for a new Masonic Centre was revisited, and the Grand Lodge Building Fund was inaugurated. A few more years elapsed before consensus was reached as to whether it should be built on the same site, or elsewhere. This was resolved when, in 1958, the Presbyterian Ladies College premises in Albert Street, East Melbourne, became available after the school relocated to Burwood. The 3¼-acre site was duly acquired by the Grand Lodge for £750,000.

In 1963, the noted architectural firm then known as Godfrey, Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb was engaged to design the new Masonic Centre. John Davidson, partner-in-charge of the huge project, duly embarked on an study trip, inspecting many overseas auditoria and masonic centres. On his return, Davidson and associate Eric Taylor took responsibility for the design of the building. Their initial scheme, for a marble-clad building with an internal courtyard with coloured glazing to three sides, was rejected after it was costed at the equivalent of \$4,800,000. A revised scheme, with a budget of \$3,400,000, was subsequently prepared. Plans were approved, tenders called, and the contract awarded to E A Watts Pty Ltd, master builders. The foundation stone was laid on 18 March 1967 and construction, under project supervisor J G Brockie, began immediately, with completion scheduled for March 1969. It would later be reported, however, that “in spite of the complexity of the project, co-operation and co-ordination between client, architect and contractor enabled the completion on due date, with a considerable portion available for occupancy three months earlier”. At the opening ceremony, the Premier of Victoria, Henry Bolte, stated that “I believe this building will be recognised in 100 years time as a product of a prosperous age”. The complex was dominated by a “first class concert hall” with seating (over three levels) for 2,300 people and a pipe organ by Fincham & Sons. Designed with input from a prominent Massachusetts-based firm of acoustic consultants (who later presented a paper on the project before the Acoustic Society of America), the auditorium, known as Dallas Brooks Hall, became one of Melbourne's premier venues for live concerts of all kinds. Other spaces, including the vast banquet room, supper rooms and lodge rooms, were no less distinguished; the complex was well-appointed throughout, with Sicilian marble, Italian and Japanese mosaic tiles, specially-woven carpets and curtains, vinyl-clad walls, purpose-made blackwood furniture, and designer chairs (including Danish de Luxe chairs by Finnish designer Olli Mamerma) that were specified for the project by Grant Featherston. The entry foyer could be divided by a decorative aluminium screen (incorporating masonic symbols), while the main entrance was flanked by a pair of symbolic aluminium columns by Dutch-born artist and sculptor Rein Slagholen.

## Description

The Dallas Brooks Centre is a huge four-storey flat-roofed rectilinear building in a landscaped setting at the corner of Albert and Eades streets. Designed in the modern Stripped Classical idiom, it is expressed in a temple-like form, with a broad entablature-like roofline, stark walls and a full-height colonnade to all four sides. The walls, clad with beige-coloured “Vetricolour” Italian glass mosaic tiles, are almost entirely windowless, save for a continuous bay of full-height windows (with bronze anodised metal frames and tinted solar glazing) at ground level, which open onto a paved gallery. Facades are divided into regular bays – eleven to the north and south, and five to the east and west – by a colonnade of piers, clad with white Carrara marble with a central strip of black mosaic tiling. Half way up, the piers are attached to the walls with tie-beams. At roof level, each facade bay has a splayed fascia panel, clad with white Japanese mosaic tiles. The soffits of these panels have downlights, which creates a bold lighting effect at night. A public entry is set into the thirds bay on the north and south facades, emphasised by contrasting brown ceramic tile cladding and, at second floor level, a row of three projecting balconies, also clad in white mosaic tiles. These balconies incorporate cast bronze relief sculptures depicting the masonic square-and-compass symbol, the City of Melbourne crest, and the Bible. The Albert Street entrance is further marked by a flanking pair of cast aluminium columns, surmounted by orbs, which symbolise the pillars of Solomon's Temple. A wide marble-clad flight of steps, with matching path, leads down to the street.

The main foyer, with entries at each end, has white marble flooring, a feature wall of Italian split grey marble tiles, and a floating imperial staircase (extending over all levels) with treads, balustrading and handrails of African mahogany.

## Condition and Intactness

Externally, the building appears to and in good condition, although the cream-coloured mosaic tiling requires cleaning, with some areas, where tiles have become loose or have fallen off, requiring re-fixing. Other finishes, including the marble cladding to the piers and approach pathways, the dark-coloured tiles above the entrances and the anodised metal window frames, remain in excellent condition. The exterior is notably intact, retaining original signage, coats of arms, entrance sculptures, balcony railings, paving and retaining walls. Two illuminated signs, recessed into the walls that flank the main stairs, have been damaged.

Although a full internal inspection has not been undertaken for this report, the entry foyer (as seen from the exterior, through windows) appears to remain intact, with original floating staircase and tiled feature wall. From previous attendance at public events and concerts, the interior of the Dallas Brooks Hall is also known to be largely intact

## Comparative Analysis

At the time of its completion, it was reported that the new Masonic Centre of Victoria was the first masonic centre to have been erected anywhere in the world since the California Memorial Temple opened in 1959. This huge building – known today as the Nob Hill Masonic Temple – occupies an elevated site at the corner of California and Taylor streets in downtown San Francisco. Like its counterpart in Melbourne it is a stark and monumental marble-clad edifice, with integrated artwork (in this case, a sculpted relief mural and a huge decorative window of coloured acrylic panels, both designed by Emile Norman). Modern masonic centres of this size are certainly uncommon on a global scale; the head offices of most Grand Lodges around the world (eg London, New York, Washington DC) are invariably accommodated in much older buildings. The same is generally true of Australia, where masonic centres in most state capitals still occupy purpose-built premises dating from the pre-Second World War era: Adelaide (1927), Brisbane (1930) and Hobart (1938). The notable exception is Sydney, which has a striking Brutalist-style masonic centre (Joseland Gilling, 1974) of a scale and complexity comparable to that in East Melbourne. In Canberra, where a local masonic chapter was only consecrated as recently as 1959, a new purpose-built masonic centre was erected four years later; this, however, far smaller and simpler than its counterparts in Melbourne and Sydney and has, in any case, recently been demolished.

More broadly, the Dallas Brooks Centre, with its stark marble cladding and temple-like articulation, is of note as an outstanding manifestation of the Stripped Classical style of the 1960s. There are relatively few comparable examples of this idiom in Victoria, and those that have been identified to date tend to be on a considerably smaller scale. These include a two-storey house in Frankston for Lady Angliss (Leslie M Perrott & Partners, 1961), expressed as a flat-roofed volume with stack-bond brick walls and steel-framed colonnades to all four sides, and the former BP Administration building at Crib Point (Don Hendry Fulton, 1965), with more substantial piers and a distinctive raked fascia. However, to find examples of the Stripped Classical style of a scale and sophistication akin to the Dallas Brooks Centre, one must once again look interstate. The most pertinent (and oft-cited) comparator is the National Library of Australia in Canberra (Bunning & Madden, 1964-68); very much like the Masonic Centre of Victoria, this is expressed as a massive rectilinear volume with an entablature-like roofline and colonnades of marble-clad piers. Other examples in the same city include the Law Courts on City Hill (Yuncken Freeman, 1962-64) and the administration building of the Royal Australian Mint (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1966) – both with simpler colonnades of square steel columns. The Dallas Brooks Centre – which was included in *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture* (by Apperley, *et al*) as a quintessential manifestation of the modern Stripped Classical style – must surely be considered as the grandest and finest example in Victoria, and one of the best in Australia.

## References

- “Masonic Centre”, *Age*, 19 March 1969, p 12.
- “The Masonic Centre of Victoria”, *Foundations*, May 1969 [special issue devoted entirely to the building]
- “Victorian Architectural Awards”, *Architect*, No 7 (March/April 1970), p 22.
- “Dallas Brooks Hall, Masonic Centre of Victoria, Melbourne”, *Journal of Acoustic Society of America*, Jan 1971, p 126.
- “Masonic Centre”, *Architecture Australia*, June 1971, pp 444b-444c.

## Statement of Significance

### *What is Significant?*

The Dallas Brooks Centre, at 300 Albert Street, East Melbourne, is a four-storey concrete building expressed as a modern Greek temple, with stark mosaic-tiled walls, a colonnade of marble-clad piers, and canted mosaic-tiled fascia panels and balconies. Its lavishly-appointed interior includes grand foyers, lodge rooms, banquet rooms and a 2,300 seat auditorium. Designed by architects Godfrey, Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, it was built between 1967 and 1969 as the new headquarters of the Grand Lodge of Victoria, which had outgrown its original premises in Collins Street.

### *How is it Significant?*

The Dallas Brooks Centre is of historical, architectural and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria.

### *Why is it Significant?*

Historically, the Dallas Brooks Centre is significant as the state headquarters of Freemasonry movement, which has maintained an important and influential presence in Victoria since the earliest dates of post-contact settlement. It is necessarily the largest building in the state associated with Freemasonry, and (with its counterpart in Sydney) one of the largest in Australia. As a discrete entity within the building, the 2,300 seat auditorium (correctly known as the Dallas Brooks Hall) is historically significant as a important venue for public events including concerts, graduation ceremonies, school speech nights, lectures and meetings. Until the completion of the Arts Centre in the early 1980s, the Dallas Brooks Hall was Victoria's premier live music venue, and hosted many popular local and international performers.

Architecturally, the Dallas Brooks Centre is significant as an outstanding post-war example of a highly unusual building type: purpose-built masonic headquarters, which combine a diverse range of functions (administrative offices, lodge rooms, banquet rooms, library, auditorium, etc) within a single complex. The first such building to be erected in Australia, it is also said to have been the first built anywhere in the world since 1959; even today, it is rare in a global context as one of very few such centres erected, on such a scale, in the second half of the twentieth century. In its own right, the integrated auditorium is architecturally significant as a major international-standard concert hall, designed with input from American acoustic engineers and incorporating a pipe organ by George Fincham & Sons, which represents one of the largest and grandest instruments ever fabricated in the post-war period by that noted local manufacturer.

Aesthetically, the Dallas Brooks Centre is significant as an outstanding example of the late twentieth century Stripped Classical style. With its entablature-like roofline, stark tiled walls and peristyle of marble-clad piers, it is a striking modern re-interpretation of Greek peristyle temple. It is the largest, grandest and most sophisticated expression of this idiom in Victoria, and one of the finest in Australia. Its monumentality and grandeur is heightened by the use of luxurious imported finishes (eg Carrara marble, Italian and Japanese mosaic tiles), while its equally fine interior includes exotic timbers, split marble tiling, custom-made and designer furniture and other high-quality appointments.

## Suggested Extent of Registration

The entire building, including original furniture, signage, integrated artworks and hard landscaping elements.

## Suggested Policy Guidelines

Retain and conserve original furniture and light fittings, and prepare an inventory of all remaining items.

## Suggested Permit Exemptions

New fitouts to existing toilet and kitchen areas.

|                    |   |   |
|--------------------|---|---|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | Ivanhoe Library (Yarra Plenty Regional Library) | <b>002-009</b>  |
| <b>Other names</b> | City of Heidelberg Library (former)             |   |
| <b>Address</b>     | 255 Upper Heidelberg Road<br>IVANHOE            | <b>Group</b> 002 Community Facilities<br><b>Category</b> 026 Library  |
| <b>LGA</b>         | City of Banyule                                 | <b>Style</b> Late Twentieth Century International   |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1963-65<br>1985 (fountain)                      | <b>Theme</b> 9.0 Shaping Cultural and Creative Life<br><b>Sub-theme</b> 9.1 Participating in Sport & Recreation |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | Leith & Bartlett                                | <b>Builder/s</b> Neilson & Robinson<br>-  |
| <b>Artist/s</b>    |   | <b>Engineer/s</b> -   |



General view of the street frontage; note original logo



Side elevation, showing the three-storey glazed wall



Detail of street frontage showing book-mobile loading dock



The double-height reading room, looking up to the mezzanine

|  |                          |    |                          |                                    |                          |       |                          |     |                          |     |                          |    |                                     |
|--|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b>                    |                          |    |                          | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b>  |                          |       |                          |     |                          |     |                          |    |                                     |
| AHC  | <input type="checkbox"/> | NT | <input type="checkbox"/> | HO                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Study | <input type="checkbox"/> | VHR | <input type="checkbox"/> | AHC | <input type="checkbox"/> | HO | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Level of Significance</b> Not previously assessed |                          |    |                          | <b>Level of Significance</b> LOCAL |                          |       |                          |     |                          |     |                          |    |                                     |

## History

Although a subscription library had existed in Heidelberg as early as 1900, the modern phenomenon of a fully public library in the area dates back to 1937, when, following a suggestion from the Ivanhoe Reading Circle, local residents formed the Heidelberg Library Association. Its first project was the establishment of a children's library, which opened in rooms at the Heidelberg Town Hall on 17 September 1938 – an endeavour declared by the *Age* newspaper to be “unique in the history of free library movement in Victoria, because it is the result entirely of voluntary citizen effort”. Five years later, the Heidelberg Library Association, along with over 100 other local residents, presented “the biggest deputation ever received by the Heidelberg council” to stress the need for a fully-fledged public library. This, however, did not become viable until after 1951, when responsibility for the library service was transferred to the City of Heidelberg. The existing children's library expanded to include an adult section, which opened on 19 June 1952 in the Lower Town Hall. Three years later, the council instigated a mobile library service, with a blue-painted bus that could hold 2,600 books. In 1957, the entire library was transferred to the Eistedfodd Hall in Ivanhoe Parade; this, however, ended abruptly when, three years later, the building was damaged by fire. The library service temporarily returned to the Town Hall until a new home could be found. It was resolved that a new purpose-built facility would be built alongside the Town Hall on Upper Heidelberg Road. Plans were prepared by architects Leith & Bartlett – appropriately enough, the same firm that had designed the original Town Hall three decades earlier. Tenders were called and the contract was awarded to Neilson & Robinson. The foundation stone was laid by the then Mayor, Cr W L Kelly, on 7 August 1964, and the completed library officially opened on 8 October 1965. The three-storey building – unusual for a municipal library in Victoria – incorporated several innovations, including a mezzanine level, book lift, and a drive-through dock for the mobile library.

The construction of the new library at Ivanhoe coincided with the release of Jungwirth Report on Victorian Libraries (1964) which, among other things, emphasised the need for a more co-ordinated approach to library services across the state. This prompted the creation of regional library networks to service multiple municipalities, and the City of Heidelberg followed this trend in 1967 by establishing the Heidelberg Regional Library Service to provide libraries for its own ratepayers as well as those of the adjacent Shires of Eltham and Diamond Valley. The Ivanhoe Library served as the headquarters of the service, which was renamed the Yarra Plenty Regional Library Service in 1985. That same year, a fountain was erected in front of the library to mark Victoria's 150th anniversary.

## Description

The Ivanhoe Library is a simple modernist building comprising a large flat-roofed three-storey block on a rectangular plan, with an elongated single-storey wing across the street (east) frontage, which returns partly along the south side to form an enclosed entry porch. The rear block is expressed as a stark rectilinear volume, with projecting eaves to all sides, windowless beige brick walls to the east and west, and a triple-height glazed wall to the south. The latter facade is divided into five bays by piers, clad with white mosaic tiles and connected by a matching tile-clad band along the eaves line. The bays are thence divided, by anodised black metal frames, into pairs of large fixed-sash windows at each level, with narrow spandrels between. The north elevation is treated in a rather more utilitarian fashion, with face brick walls and narrow horizontal window bays with glazed terracotta sills. This side of the library also incorporates the former bookmobile loading dock – a simple flat-roofed two-storey brick structure that projects from the main building. It has openings at the north and south ends, with heavy steel gates, with a concrete slab loading dock within. The single-storey front wing is also flat-roofed, with a flush concrete parapet, continuous horizontal strip window and vertical timber board cladding. A glazed entrance bay at the far left side, with sliding doors and sidelights, provides access to the enclosed porch (which has another entrance, similarly detailed, at the opposite end). The street frontage also retain the original library logo (in cast metal), with the words IVANHOE LIBRARY alongside.

Internally, the building comprises an entry foyer and circulation desk at the east end (the latter contained in the single-storey front wing), a double-height reading room with full-length mezzanine (incorporating librarian's offices at the east end) and an enclosed top floor with children's library, audio-visual room and additional staff areas. The levels are connected by open stairwells at each of the reading room, with exposed steel frames, timber treads and landings (lined with mottled vinyl tiles) and simple square-section steel rods balustrades with japanned handrails. The mezzanine has a matching balustrade. The librarian's office, at the east end of the mezzanine level, overlooks the reading room through an aluminium-framed glazed wall with low timber panel spandrels (painted red on the outside, but exposed within). Rooms on the uppermost level are also defined by similar partitions. Ceilings throughout are mostly of perforated acoustic tile. The narrow entry porch has face brick walls and a timber-lined ceiling.

## Condition and Intactness

The library remains in good condition and in a remarkably intact state. Externally, the building is virtually unaltered. Its street frontage even retains the library's original logo (in cast metal), although the adjacent lettering has been amended to reflect the fact that (since council amalgamations in the 1990s) it is no longer the CITY OF HEIDLELBERG LIBRARY. The fountain in front of the building has also been removed, and its basin infilled to create a raised flower bed. Internally, the building retains its original plan form, although specific functions have necessarily been reconfigured over the years (eg the former librarian's office at the mezzanine level is now the genealogy/local history room, and the upstairs children's library is now a study area). Many original finishes remain, including the ceiling linings, partition walls and stairwells. None of the original furniture, however, appears to remain.

## Comparative Analysis

During the 1960s, purpose-built municipal libraries in Victoria were typically characterised by careful interior planning with a rather more utilitarian external appearance. Many of these early post-war libraries were expressed as unremarkable flat-roofed modernist blocks, with face brick walls and full-height glazed window bays. This approach is typified by those examples erected by the City of Moorabbin at Nepean Highway, Cheltenham (C Ian Turner, 1960), the City of Prahran at High Street, Armadale (Leslie Perrott, 1962) and the City of Essendon at Mount Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds (Harry Winbush, 1967). Although Victoria's very first purpose-built municipal library – erected by the City of Malvern in High Street (Stewart Handasyde, 1958) – was a double-storey building, subsequent examples were invariably single-storey. The three-storey library at Ivanhoe – its vertical stacking no doubt necessitated by the limited availability of land alongside the Town Hall – appears to have been a rare exception.

The former City of Heidelberg Library at Ivanhoe is significant not only as one of the distinguished examples of a 1960s public library in Victoria, but also as one of the more intact ones. Certainly many others of similar vintage (including the aforementioned examples at Malvern and Moonee Ponds) have been remodelled virtually beyond recognition; others (such as those at Armadale and Cheltenham) might appear externally intact, but no longer serve as public libraries and have been internally refurbished and adapted for other uses.

At present, the Ivanhoe Library is considered to be of local significance, although a more exhaustive typological study of public libraries in Victoria may well reveal it to be of greater significance - possibly even at the state level. It is not been conclusively established, for example, if any other examples of three-storey public libraries, incorporating mezzanine levels and fully-enclosed drive-through bookmobile loading docks, were ever built in Victoria, or, even if indeed they were, whether they might still survive in such an intact state.

## References

"Children's Library: Fine Effort at Heidelberg", *Age*, 8 September 1938, p 7.

"Library wanted for Heidelberg", *Age*, 24 November 1943, p

"Mobile library to open today", *Age*, 9 February 1955, p 6.

Liz Pidgeon, "The Novel Idea of a Library: the History of Library Services in the City of Heidelberg and Banyule", *Heidelberg Historian*, No 246 (June 2008), pp 2-5.

PB File No 13,743. Unit 1627, VPRS 7882/P1 (Department of Health Public Building files), Public Record Office.



|                    |   |  |
|--------------------|---|--|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | St Kilda Library (Port Phillip Library Service)   | <b>002-010</b>   |
| <b>Other names</b> | City of St Kilda Public Library (former)  |  |
| <b>Address</b>     | 150 Carlisle Street<br>ST KILDA   | <b>Group</b> 002 Community Facilities                    |
|                    |   | <b>Category</b> 026 Library                              |
| <b>LGA</b>         | City of Port Phillip  | <b>Style</b> Late Twentieth Century Organic              |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1970-73<br>1995 (extensions)  | <b>Theme</b> 9.0 Shaping Cultural and Creative Life      |
|                    |   | <b>Sub-theme</b> 9.1 Participating in Sport & Recreation |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | Dr Enrico Taglietti (1970-73)<br>MMH Partnership (1987 addition)<br>Ashton Raggatt McDougall Pty Ltd (1995) | <b>Artist/s</b> Mira Morka (1983 mural)                  |
|                    |   | <b>Builder/s</b> Notkin Constructions                    |
|                    |   | <b>Engineer/s</b> K Sellick & Associates (structural)    |



View along Carlisle Street; ARM additions in right foreground



Typical internal courtyard



Interior showing skylight, carrel doors and original furniture



Original light fittings in former children's reading area

|                                   |  |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b> |  | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b> |   |
| AHC                               | <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> NT <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> HO <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Study <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | VHR                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> AHC <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> HO <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <b>Level of Significance</b>      | Local  | <b>Level of Significance</b>      | STATE   |

## History

St Kilda's original subscription library, dating back to the 1860s, ceased operation in 1912. For the next sixty years, the municipality had no library at all, despite initiatives such as the St Kilda Library Promotion Committee (1953). It was not until late 1967 that the City of St Kilda finally resolved to establish a library, applying for funding early the next year. After the release of a report by the Public Libraries Division in May 1969, council set up a library subcommittee with the Mayor himself, Cr Ivan Trayling, as chairman. One early decision was that the new building would be a two-stage project: firstly, a library to serve as a single service point for the first five years (ie without needing branches), followed by an art gallery addition. The project gained momentum in April 1970 with the appointment of Dr Enrico Taglietti as architect, followed a month later by that of Mrs Vida Horn as city librarian. A year later, it was reported that "after more than twenty years of background work by the Library Establishment Committee, the St Kilda City Library is well on the way to reality". Land on Carlisle Street, opposite the Town Hall, had been acquired, and it was further noted that "clearance and preparation of the site will commence shortly, with construction expected to start well before the end of the year".

Based on a programme prepared by Vida Horn, Taglietti produced five different schemes in early 1971, in the form of highly expressionistic pen sketches. Scheme 5C, dated May 1971, was approved by council in July. As a reporter noted, it was "designed within the strictures of the architect's personal style – sweeping lines of wide overhanging eaves and sloping wall surfaces that appear to float above the ground". Taglietti proposed Stage One as an L-shaped wing around a court, allowing for Stage Two (theatrette, gallery and coffee shop) to be added later, creating a U-shaped footprint and retaining the court. Working drawings were completed in October, tenders called, and, in December, the contract awarded to M Notkin Constructions. Work began in February 1972 and was reportedly "well underway" by August, when the foundation stone was laid by the outgoing Mayor (and library subcommittee chairman), Cr Trayling. It was stated that the building would be finished by the end of the year and, as scheduled, staff moved into the library in December. Its official opening, by the Governor of Victoria, Sir Rohan Delacombe, took place on 14 May 1973.

Although Stage Two of Taglietti's scheme was never implemented, a minor addition was made to the rear of the building (staff workroom area) in 1987. A few years later, more extensive expansion became necessary and the project was undertaken by Ashton Raggatt McDougall, who were then refurbishing the Town Hall opposite. Their library addition followed Taglietti's intent to create a U-shaped plan, but otherwise represented a highly individualistic approach, with a new facade expressed as an open book. Its interior paid homage to Taglietti's distinctive geometries, and otherwise allowed the original building to remain strongly evident. The project received considerable coverage in the local architectural press, and was nominated for the RAIA (Victorian chapter) awards in 1995.

## Description

The former St Kilda Public Library is a large single-storey building on a U-shaped plan, comprising the original L-shaped library with the later addition on Carlisle Street. The former, raised on a recessed concrete block plinth, has massive battered concrete walls (realised in blockwork to the side and rear, and in off-form concrete to the front) with projecting splayed bases. The roof is flat, save for a projecting skylight in the form of truncated timber-clad pyramid, which rises above the former service desk area. There are huge eaves, with overscaled fascias panelled in Western Red Cedar, and coffered soffits lined with radiata pine boards. Elevations are similarly fenestrated, with continuous narrow windows below the eaves line, and larger polygonal window and door openings. A small box-like timber bay window projects from one side of the front wing. The rear (Duke Street) facade has a loading dock (at the left) and a ramp to the basement carpark (to the right). The 1995 addition, to the right the main frontage, presents a polished concrete wall in the shape of an open book, with a curving glass window to the right "page". The remaining walls to the front, side and the projecting entry bay (to the extreme right), are made up of alternating tinted glass and solid spandrel panels in a metal frame.

Internally, the original library has exposed off-form concrete walls and pine-lined ceilings with large square light-boxes and, over the children's area, an eye-catching cluster of hamburger-shaped pendant luminaires in red, white and yellow plastic. The truncated pyramidal skylight above the former circulation desk, originally timber-lined, has been carpeted. There are timber veneered doors (with matching highlight spandrels) between interior spaces, and glazed doors to the external courtyards. Original furniture includes moulded white plastic chairs with red vinyl covering (some connected in pairs), and metal-framed timber-veneered study tables. A mural by Mirka Moral, entitled *Mirka's Children* (1980), extends across the west wall of the reading area. The 1995 additions has a polished concrete floor, a panelled ceiling with green chevron motifs, and a plywood-clad east wall that echoes the geometry of Taglietti's battered walls.

## Condition and Intactness

Both externally and internally, the St Kilda Library remains in good condition and in an intact state. The elevations to the north (rear), east and most of the street frontage are virtually untouched. Admittedly, the additions made by Ashton Raggart & McDougall in the mid-1990s has altered the building's streetscape presence – and changed the front courtyard and fountain to the point that the most famous historical view of the building (as recorded in an oft-published 1973 photograph by Ian McKenzie) is now partly obscured. Having said that, however, the recent additions cannot be considered unsympathetic, as they were erected where Taglietti himself had envisioned a future extension, and, in any case, were designed with a post-modern sensibility that not only pays homage to the original building, but allows its form (and its original front walls) to show through.

Internally, the plan form of the Taglietti's library also remains substantially intact; the original toilets and cloakroom are no longer publicly accessible (having been replaced by new counterparts in the ARM addition) and the reception desk under the pyramidal skylight has been removed. Although zoning has also been reconfigured over the years (eg swapping the adult and children sections), the library interior still retains most of its original finishes, fittings (notably the coloured pendant lights in the children's area) and even some of the original furniture.

## Comparative Analysis

With a striking expression of floating off-form concrete masses, broad eaves with boldly sculptured fascias and coffered timber-lined soffits, truncated pyramidal tower and polygonal windows, the St Kilda Public Library was indisputably the most distinctive and remarkable municipal library to have been erected in Victoria since the Second World War. This fact was acknowledged even at the time, when local newspapers and others freely applied superlative accolades, describing the library as being “of international standard” and “one of the most modern and functional in Australia”. In many respects, its opening in 1973 marked the end of a decade of relatively unremarkable municipal library buildings in Victoria – invariably designed in a utilitarian modernist idiom, with flat roofs, brick walls and full-height glazing – and ushered in a new era of bolder and more expressive counterparts, which continues to this day.

Considered more broadly, the library is a highly significant example of the work of Dr Enrico Taglietti in Victoria. However, there appears to be some dispute regarding whether or not it is the only local manifestation of the work of this highly idiosyncratic Canberra-based practitioner. In his book *Places of Sensuous Resort*, Richard Peterson stated that Taglietti opened an office in Melbourne in the 1970s, and went on to undertake a number of other projects, including an office building at 570 Collins Street. Other sources, however, attribute the latter building to Taglietti's compatriot, the Italian-born but Melbourne-based architect Ermin Smrekar. Clearly, more research needs to be undertaken to clarify the full extent of Taglietti's work in Victoria. If nothing else, it can certainly be concluded at this point that the St Kilda Library is the Taglietti's best known and most widely-published building in Victoria. Moreover, it is Taglietti's only Victorian project to have featured in both monographs on his career: the Italian publication *Enrico Taglietti: Architect in Australia*, (1979) and Ken Charlton's more recent study, *The Contribution of Enrico Taglietti to Canberra's architecture* (2007).

## References

- “Library gets the go-ahead”, *Sun*, 8 July 1971.
- St Kilda Today*, April 1971 and August 1972; *Southern Cross*, 16 Feb 1972, 30 Aug 1972, 7 Mar 1973;
- “St Kilda Municipal Library”, *Australian Municipal Journal*, July 1973, pp 18-20.
- “St Kilda Public Library”, *Architect*, No 27 (Jul-Aug 1973), pp 12-15.
- “St Kilda Public Library, Victoria”, *Australian Library Journal*, December 1973, pp 457-461.
- “St Kilda Municipal Library”, *Australian Builder*, April 1974, front cover and pp 124-127.
- “St Kilda Public Library Extension”, *Transition*, No 47 (1995), pp 32-35.

*Additional information was drawn from extensive research files on the library, held in its own Local History section. These sources, which are too varied and numerous to list here, included local newspaper clippings, correspondence by Vida Horn, a souvenir brochure from the official opening, and copies of Taglietti's sketch designs and working drawings.*

## Statement of Significance

### *What is Significant?*

The St Kilda Public Library at 150 Carlisle Street, St Kilda, is a single-storey building of bold sculptural form, with massive battered concrete (off-form and blockwork) walls, wide eaves with huge timber-clad fascias and coffered soffits, and a projecting truncated pyramidal skylight. Designed for the City of St Kilda by Canberra architect Dr Enrico Taglietti, with a brief developed by council's progressive city librarian, the redoubtable Mrs Vida Horn, the building was erected in 1971-73 and the sympathetically extended (to an award-winning design by Ashton Raggatt McDougall) in 1995.

### *Why is it Significant?*

The library is of architectural and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria.

### *How is it Significant?*

Architecturally, the library is significant as the first in a new generation of bold architect-designed municipal libraries that began to appear in Victoria from the early 1970s. Designed by an eminent interstate architect (and based on a detailed programme prepared by a particularly progressive city librarian), the building represented a significance departure from the typically unremarkable flat-roofed brick modernist libraries that had proliferated in Victoria during the 1960s. This departure was manifest not only in the building's striking external form – the likes of which had never before been seen in a municipal library in Victoria – but also in its innovative internal layout (including such things as open-planning, lounge areas, courtyards, lockable study carrels and community hall with local history area) and services (integrated audio-visual equipment, basement carpark, wheelchair ramps and disabled toilets). At the time of completion, the library was lauded as being one of the finest and most modern in Australia, and on par with municipal libraries around the world.

Architecturally, the library is also significant as an important example of the work of eminent Italian-born Canberra-based architect Dr Enrico Taglietti (1926-). Known for his distinctive organic style, Dr Taglietti has worked extensively in ACT and New South Wales for over five decades (during which time his work has often been published and lauded by awards, including the RAIA Gold Medal for 2007), but has undertaken few projects in Victoria. The St Kilda Library – clearly influenced by Taglietti's most celebrated early work, the Dickson Library at Canberra (1964) – is by far his most well-known and well-published building in Victoria, and an important work when considered across his entire *oeuvre*.

Aesthetically, the library is significant as a representative example of the highly personal (and thus difficult-to-classify) style developed by Dr Enrico Taglietti, characterised by a bold expression of massive sculptural forms with rough timber and concrete finishes. Although sometimes referred as Brutalist because of its use of raw materials, Taglietti's work is more accurately considered as an idiosyncratic organic style, influenced both by his North Italian background and many years of designing buildings in the unique inland Canberra landscape.

## Suggested Extent of Registration

The entire building, including 1995 ARM addition, plus a curtilage extending to Carlisle Street at the front, and Duke Street at the rear. The extent of registration should include original light fittings, furniture and the Mirka Mora mural

## Suggested Policy Guidelines

Retain original courtyards (at far east and west side of building) as open space.

Retain original unpainted finish to off-form concrete walls, concrete block walls and timber lining boards.

Retain and conserve original furniture and light fittings, and undertake of an inventory of all remaining items.

Ensure that foundations stones remain clearly visible, and are not obscured by furniture, bookshelves, partitions, etc.

## Suggested Permit Exemption

New fitouts to existing toilet and kitchenette areas in both the original library and the 1995 addition.

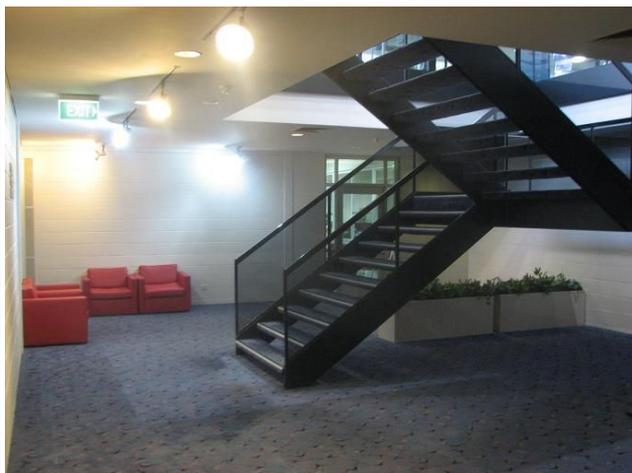
|                    |  |                   |   |
|--------------------|--|-------------------|---|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | Toorak/South Yarra Library (Stonnington Library & Information Service) |                   | <b>002-011</b>  |
| <b>Other names</b> | City of Prahran Public Library (former)                                |                   |   |
| <b>Address</b>     | 340 Toorak Road<br>SOUTH YARRA   | <b>Group</b>      | 002 Community Facilities  |
| <b>LGA</b>         | City of Stonnington  | <b>Category</b>   | 026 Library   |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1972-73  | <b>Style</b>      | Late Twentieth Century International  |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | Yuncken Freeman Pty Ltd [Barry Patten]                                 | <b>Theme</b>      | 9.0 Shaping Cultural and Creative Life  |
| <b>Artist/s</b>    | Lauren Berkowitz (1995 foyer installation)                             | <b>Sub-theme</b>  | 9.1 Participating in Sport & Recreation   |
|                    |  | <b>Builder/s</b>  | -   |
|                    |  | <b>Engineer/s</b> | Irwin, Johnston & Partner P/L (structural)<br>Loeby Triedel & Partners P/L (mechanical) |



General view of library's principal frontage to Toorak Road



View of entry foyer; note original display case in far corner



Basement foyer showing floating stair and original furniture



General view of library interior

|                                   |  |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b> |  | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b> |   |
| AHC                               | <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> NT <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> HO <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Study <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | VHR                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> AHC <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> HO <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <b>Level of Significance</b>      | State  | <b>Level of Significance</b>      | STATE   |

## History

The City of Prahran boasted the second oldest public library service in Victoria, which, established in 1860, had become one of Melbourne's leading public lending libraries by the turn of the century. In 1914, the service was relocated to a portion of the Town Hall formerly occupied by the art gallery and, four years later, expanded with the provision of what was Victoria's first dedicated children's library. In the mid 1930s, a proposal for a purpose-built library was mooted, but, although plans were drawn up by council's architect, Percy Oakley, the project was never realised. In 1944, the children's library was relocated to new premises in Greville Street and then, after the Second World War, branch libraries were established at Armadale (1951) and Toorak (1961) – respectively located in a shopfront at 699 High Street, and in the foyer of the former Village Theatre at Toorak Road.

The year 1962 was marked by two significant events in the history of library services in the City of Prahran. Firstly, the Armadale branch in High Street was replaced by modern purpose-built premises in Orrong Road, designed by council's architect, Leslie M Perrott. Secondly, the Toorak branch met an untimely end when the old theatre on Toorak Road was destroyed by fire in April, only four months after the library had opened. A new branch was subsequently established in the former South Yarra post office, on the corner of Toorak Road and Osbourne Street. This, however, proved to be only a temporary solution when, towards the end of the decade, the building was slated for demolition. Once again, a new home needed to be found for a branch library at South Yarra. After a proposal to incorporate a library within a new shopping centre fell through, it was decided to erect a dedicated purpose-built facility elsewhere. Plans had firmed up by August 1970, when the Mayor of Prahran, Cr C C E Gahan, stated in a newspaper article that one of the municipality's highest priorities was to “close two inadequate libraries and provide, in their stead, a modern library, adjacent to Toorak Road, which will not only lend books but provide space for reading and lectures and study areas for students”.

In October 1971, it was reported that after a “rowdy debate”, council had resolved to proceed with its plan to build the new library on the corner of Toorak Road and Cromwell Street – a relatively large piece of land donated by prominent Melbourne developers Jack and Eddie Kornhauser (of Chevron Hotel fame) in memory of their late brother, Bernard. The library commission was entrusted to the firm of Yuncken Freeman Pty Ltd, with senior partner (and Toorak resident) Barry Patten as project architect. The firm had recently garnered considerable acclaim for the design of multi-storey block of flats at the corner of Toorak and Orrong Roads, where Patten himself occupied the penthouse apartment. The foundation stone for the new library was laid on 16 August 1972 by the Mayor, Cr William M Dane, JP, and the completed building was officially opened (also by Cr Dane) almost exactly twelve months later, on 19 August 1973.

## Description

The Toorak/South Yarra Library is a quintessential modernist building expressed as a large metal-framed glass-walled box, elevated above the ground by a recessed concrete plinth. This expression belies the fact that the apparently single-storey building actually comprises two floors, with its plinth being the exposed part of a half-basement level. Plinth walls are of concrete block with a pebble-dashed finish, and incorporate some small rectangular windows to admit natural light to the lower level. There is an incised granite foundation stone at the north-east corner, and an engraved metal plaque (to the Kornhauser brothers) at the north-west corner. The box-like upper level has its floor and roof lines delineated by wide strips of black-painted steel plate, with full-height glazing between. Elevations are thence divided into regular bays (twelve bays along the front and rear sides, and ten to each side) by matching black-painted universal columns, which project out from the wall. Each window bay, thus defined, comprises a pair of metal-framed operable sashes with a single fixed highlight above. The two centremost bays on the Toorak Road frontage contain pairs of glazed sliding doors, which open onto a broad terrace that is accessed by a flanking pair of pedestrian ramps with half-landings. These ramps have a pebbled finish, and are supported on universal beams with thin square-section steel handrails.

Inside, the main level is divided (by full-height metal-framed glazed walls) into a U-shaped library area, with a foyer to the north and a solid-walled service core in the centre. The library area has a (non-original) staff area on the south side, defined by low partitions; the original position of the circulation desk (against the south wall of the service core) is indicated by a row of projecting cylindrical downlights. Some original furniture still remains, including moulded plastic seats and lounge chairs (covered with red vinyl or fabric), cream-coloured bookshelves and glass display cabinets. The foyer has a (non-original) passenger lift, with a marble-clad shaft and, in the centre of the room, a large rectangular opening that forms a stairwell to the lower level, with an elegantly-detailed floating staircase with simple metal handrails and glazed infill. Downstairs, spaces are more utilitarian in detailing and finishes, with painted concrete block walls.

## Condition and Intactness

The Toorak Library is in excellent condition and a remarkably intact state. Its external appearance – a flat-roofed glass box – is virtually unchanged, and still closely resembles photographs taken at the time of the building's official opening. Internally, the original plan form – a central service core, open-panned library space and foyer – similarly remains intact, although functions have been reconfigured over the years. Perhaps the most obvious change at this level is discreet insertion of a partitioned staff area, and the consequent relocation of the circulation desk from its original position on the south side of the service core. A new passenger lift has also been installed on the west side of the foyer, although this is elegantly designed as a marble-clad shaft and is hardly intrusive. Downstairs, partitioning in staff offices have also been reconfigured. Other changes include the replacement of original windows frames (with matching ones in dark anodised metal), replacement of original red carpet with stippled blue carpet, replacement of original Venetian blinds with slimline counterparts, and the installation of a public art piece in the foyer. None of these alterations, however, can be considered as unsympathetic or intrusive. A certain amount of original furniture also remains in use.

## Comparative Analysis

The Toorak/South Yarra Library is unashamedly designed in homage to the post-war work of acclaimed German-born American architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1885-1969). This fact was freely acknowledged even at the time of construction, when one journal noted that “there are few designed buildings today which do not owe something to [Mies], but there are even fewer which acknowledge their debt as openly as do some of the recent works from the office of Yuncken Freeman Architects Pty Ltd”. As demonstrated by such buildings as Crown Hall at Illinois (1956) or the National Gallery at Berlin (1962), Mies' mature style was characterised by a purity of expression with simple block-like forms, a limited palette of materials (typically dark-coloured steel and tinted glazing), and immaculate detailing. This approach is clearly evoked in the library, along with such Mies trademarks as the recessed plinth to create a floating effect, and the expression of universal columns so that they appear almost as an applied afterthought rather than integrated structure.

There are indeed few buildings in Victoria that so closely echo Miesian precepts. The two most pertinent comparators were designed by the same architects: the multi-storey BHP House in Bourke Street (1969) and the firm's own architectural office at 411 King Street, West Melbourne (1968). The former is obviously more akin to Mies' own skyscrapers, and, apart from its common vocabulary of dark-coloured steel and glazing, it somewhat removed from the floating box at Toorak. Yuncken Freeman's own office is more comparable, being a two-storey building with the upper level projecting over the lower one, and facades defined by metal plate straps, full-height glazing and applied universal columns. Although the building has important historical association as the architects' own offices, the floating expression is less pronounced and it otherwise represents a less sophisticated interpretation of the Miesian idiom than the library which, designed a few years later, clearly allowed for the architects to hone their expression and incorporate improvements. Moreover, the former building occupies a typical corner site in a built-up city streetscape, and thus lacks the library's unrivalled setting, with generous landscaped open space that enhances the building's serene minimalism and its appreciation as a floating volume in space.

Other local buildings in an explicitly Miesian vein include the now-demolished Post Office Information Centre at the north end of the GPO (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1966) and the former BHP Research Laboratories in Wellington Road, Clayton (Eggleston McDonald & Secomb, 1969). The latter – the first building in Australia to use exposed beams and columns of AusTen steel – won the Victorian Architectural Award (industrial category) in 1969. Here, the huge two storey building is articulated with projecting beams at ground, first and roof levels, with a row of attached columns that are almost suggestive of a classical colonnade. Although certainly influenced by Mies, and a striking and important building in its own right, it is not quite as explicitly Miesian as the stripped-down floating box that is the Toorak Library

## References

- “Free Library opened at Toorak”, *Age*, 6 December 1961, p 4.
- “Pahran on Parade”, *Age*, 25 August 1970, pp 19-23 (special supplement)
- “Pahran will get library”, *Age*, 11 October 1971, p 15.
- “Toorak/South Yarra Branch Library”, *Architect*, No 28 (Sep/Oct 1973), pp 13-16.

## Statement of Significance

### *What is Significant?*

The Toorak/South Yarra Library at 340 Toorak Road, South Yarra, is a modernist building in the clear tradition of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, expressed simply as a steel-framed and glass-walled, box elevated above a recessed plinth to appear as a floating volume. Designed by architects Yuncken Freeman Pty Ltd as a new central library for the City of Prahran, the building was erected in 1972-73.

### *How is it significant?*

The library is of architectural and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria.

### *Why is it significant?*

Architecturally, the Toorak/South Yarra Library is significant as the finest example in Victoria of a modernist building in the formal minimalist style developed by influential German-born architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in his post-war career in the United States. These mature works were characterised by a purity of expression with simple block-like volumes (often elevated so as to appear floating), a stripped-down tectonic (sometimes described as “skin and bones”), a limited palette of materials (typically tinted glazing and dark-coloured steel) and immaculate detailing (with structural members shamelessly exposed, rather than concealed). While many Melbourne architects were influenced by Mies van der Rohe to some degree, none adhered as closely to his precepts as the firm of Yuncken Freeman Pty Ltd; even in comparison to other work produced by the same architects in a similar vein, the Toorak/South Yarra Library stands out as Victoria’s most assured homage to the floating Miesian pavilion.

Aesthetically, the Toorak/South Yarra Library is significant for its extraordinary expression as an elegant and minimalist glass box that appears to float above the ground in a beautifully landscaped setting. Its seemingly rudimentary structure, with a simple frame of black-painted steel members infilled with vast areas of glazing, imparts a clarity of form and a physical transparency that provides a literally stark contrast to the busy residential streetscapes that surround the site. This remarkable sense of insubstantial physicality remains strongly evident inside the building, with fully-glazed partition walls, matching glass display cabinets, and a hovering staircase that provides access to the lower level.

## Suggested Extent of Registration

The entire building (with all original furniture) and a curtilage extending to all three street frontages, including the entrance ramps, kerbside illuminated signage and the formal rows of mature trees to the east and west sides.

## Suggested Policy Guidelines

Retain and conserve original furniture, and undertake an inventory of all remaining items.

Retain all external walls as continuous surface of glazed window bays; any new enclosed or semi-enclosed areas within the library should be expressed as free-standing elements, set back from external walls (as with the current staff areas)

Develop a policy for the appropriate placement of furniture, artwork and temporary elements (community notices, advertisements, etc) in the foyer area, to avoid a cluttered effect that is antithetical to the minimalist style of the building.

## Suggested Permit Exemptions

Repainting and reconfiguration of partitions in the staff administration area on the lower level.

New fitouts to existing toilet and kitchenette areas

Alterations to the semi-detached plant room at the rear of the building.

Recovering of original furniture with new fabric/vinyl (providing that appropriate colour scheme is maintained)

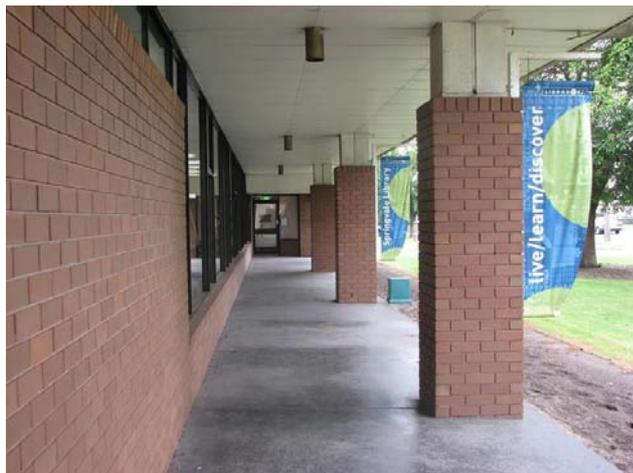
|                     |  |   |
|---------------------|--|---|
| <b>Identifier</b>   | Springvale Library                         | <b>002-012</b>  |
| <b>Other names</b>  | City of Springvale Public Library (former) |   |
| <b>Address</b>      | 411 Springvale Road<br>SPRINGVALE          | <b>Group</b> 002 Community Facilities   |
| <b>LGA</b>          | City of Greater Dandenong                  | <b>Category</b> 026 Library   |
| <b>Date/s</b>       | 1972-73                                    | <b>Style</b> Late Twentieth Century Organic   |
| <b>Architect/s</b>  | Bernard Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking      | <b>Theme</b> 9.0 Shaping Cultural and Creative Life   |
| <b>Consultant/s</b> | Douglas Savage (library planning)          | <b>Sub-theme</b> 9.1 Participating in Sport & Recreation                                      |
| <b>Artist/s</b>     | Kevin Gilders (1998 sculpture)             | <b>Builder/s</b> D A Constructions Pty Ltd  |
|                     |  | <b>Engineer/s</b> Clive Steele Consultants (structural)<br>Norman Disney & Young (mechanical) |



General view of the Springvale Road frontage



Detail of stepped roofline, showing infilled entrance bay



Covered walkway along Springvale Road frontage



Rear facade, showing stepped roofline and bricked-up entrance

#### Existing Heritage Listings

AHC  - NT  - HO  - Study  -

**Level of Significance** Not previously assessed

#### Proposed Heritage Listings

VHR  - AHC  - HO  Yes

**Level of Significance** LOCAL

## History

Although subsidies for public libraries in Victoria had been available since the late 1940s, it was not until the 1969-70 period that the City of Springvale, along with the adjacent Shire of Berwick, first applied for such funding. The following year, the contiguous Shire of Cranbourne and City of Dandenong also applied for the first time. During 1970, a field officer with the Public Libraries Division carried out a survey of the four municipalities, along with the City of Chelsea, and presented a report to the respective councils in September. Three months later, the first four councils agreed to establish a regional library service: the Dandenong Valley Regional Library Service. The remaining one, the City of Chelsea, opted instead to join with the City of Mordialloc to create the Mordialloc-Chelsea Regional Library Service.

The City of Springvale, with more than 58,000 residents, was then the most populous of the four municipalities, and resolved to erect the first purpose-built library for the new service. The new building was to be funded by council, with the Dandenong Valley Regional Library Service (as a discrete entity) renting a portion as its administrative headquarters. A site on Springvale Road, south of the existing municipal offices, was selected: "a large expanse of lawn on a fairly level site on which will be planted selected trees". It was stipulated that a mature oak tree at one end of the site be retained within the new development. On 25 May 1971, the Dandenong Valley Regional Library Service received official approval from the Governor-in-Council, and the first planning meeting for the Springvale Library took place the next day. Plans were prepared by the established firm of Bernard Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, with the original Public Libraries Division field officer, Douglas Savige, acting as a planning consultant. In addition to the standard components (ie library area, workroom, offices, staff and public amenities), the building was to include a loading bay for the book-mobile, an open courtyard and a generously-proportioned foyer that could be used for art exhibitions.

Plans were approved by council on 25 October 1971; tenders were called promptly and, within a month, the contract had been awarded to D A Constructions Pty Ltd. The first site meeting took place on 27 January 1972, and the building was completed (at a cost of \$278,200) by October. The library was officially opened by the Premier of Victoria, the Hon R J Hamer, on 17 February 1973. A souvenir booklet lauded both the planning and the external appearance of the building. It was observed that the library exuded a "classical dignity" due to the fact that its floor level was raised above the ground, with lawns graded upwards, "thus providing a visual concept similar to that which is obtained from a podium".

In the late 1980s, it was proposed to remodel the library to accommodate changing demographics – namely the larger ethnic community and an increasing number of young families. The works included the reclaiming of former foyer and courtyard spaces for library purposes, the creation of a new public entrance facing the rear carpark, and the replacement of all original furniture. The remodelled library was officially opened on 15 July 1993.

## Description

The former City of Springvale Library is a large single-storey portal-framed building on a rectangular plan, with walls of dark brown brick with raked joints. It has a flat roof with broad eaves, emphasised by a heavily moulded fascia of splayed profile, clad with cement sheeting. At the far south end of the building, the roofline is further enlivened by a elongated plant room that is expressed as a sculptural element, with four fin-like walls that create a distinctive stepped profile. These fin-like elements extend below the line of the fascia to articulate what was originally the main entrance, but since been infilled with matching brown brick and large windows, with a narrow planter box at the base. The Springvale Road frontage is otherwise dominated by a long loggia, where large brick piers (surmounted by smaller concrete impost blocks) support the massive eaves. A continuous bay of tall windows, with dark-coloured anodised metal framed, opens onto the loggia, which has a concrete paved floor and panelled ceiling with a row of projecting cylindrical metal downlights. The north and south (ie side) elevations of the building are more utilitarian in detail, with narrow horizontal window bays below the eaves line; on the south side, the building has been partly extended, with a new bay of full-height windows that aligns with the outer edge of the eaves. The east (rear) elevation has been altered; the original rear entrance, to the south side (which, like its counterpart on the Springvale Road side, aligns with the rooftop plant room, and is articulated by the same fin-like piers) has been infilled, and a new entry created further north, where the courtyard was originally located. To the right of the new entry is the former loading dock/bookmobile bay. Windows along this side of the building are in the form of narrow horizontal bays just below the eaves line.

Internally, the library is open planned, with various zones defined by brick piers and spur walls. Staff offices are located along the entire northern end and public toilets in the south-west corner. Walls are mostly of face brick, with some of the original ceiling linings (white acoustic tiles with a geometric pattern of splayed squares) still evident in some areas.

## Condition and Intactness

The building was considerably altered during the 1993 refurbishments. While the alterations and additions are not immediately apparent (on account of being undertaken in matching materials, such as dark down brick and dark-coloured anodised metal window frames), they have, to some extent, compromised the original architectural statement. Originally, the library had a large entrance foyer/gallery at the southern end, which ran the full width of the building. Matching entrances, to the front and rear, were conspicuously marked by the sculptural rooftop plant room, which followed the same alignment. Another notable element was the semi-enclosed courtyard, on the east side of the building. Following the 1993 works, the original foyer and courtyard were both reclaimed to create additional library space; the two original entrances were infilled, and a new one was created where the courtyard used to be. The south wall was also extended outward, and a new internal wall built to create a corridor to the public toilets.

Also during the 1993 renovations, all of the original furniture was replaced.

## Comparative Analysis

Designed during 1971 and opened in 1973, the new Springvale Library represented part of a burgeoning movement in Victoria to provide architect-designed municipal libraries that made a much bolder architectural statement than the frequently unremarkable modernist flat-roofed brick buildings that had proliferated during the 1960s. The new St Kilda Public Library, designed by eminent Canberra architect Dr Enrico Taglietti in 1970, was one of the first local libraries to break away from this familiar pattern, and many others. The new library at Springvale was designed by a firm of architects (Bernard Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking) that was far more well-known as designers of large-scale inner-city office blocks, rather than smaller-scaled community-oriented public buildings. Nevertheless, the office produced a striking design, dominated by its bold sculptural roof and loggia with vaguely Wrightian capped piers. The former element, although memorable, has echoes of Dr Taglietti's earlier building at St Kilda, which was designed the previous year. Whether Bernard Evans' office was familiar with the design (for which sketch drawings had certainly been published during 1971) has not been confirmed. Nevertheless, Taglietti's library, with its battered off-form concrete walls and, sculpted fascias and coffered timber-lined eaves, remains the far more striking and distinctive building of the two. In addition, its interior is both more architecturally interesting, and more intact, than the library at Springvale.

If the St Kilda Public Library is considered worthy on inclusion on the *Victorian Heritage Register* as a building of aesthetic and architectural significance at the state level, then its counterpart at Springvale, which is still, in its currently altered state, an eye-catching building and a minor landmark on Springvale Road, should be considered for inclusion on the local heritage overlay.

## References

*Souvenir Brochure to mark the official Opening ... of the Springvale Public Library.* (1973)

Barrett Reid, "Notes for the Premier: Opening of Springvale Public Library and Inauguration of Dandenong Valley Regional Library Service", 5pp typescript, dated 6 February 1973 (copy held by State Library of Victoria)



|                    |  |                   |   |
|--------------------|--|-------------------|---|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | Eltham Library (Yarra Plenty Regional Library) |                   | <b>002-014</b>                          |
| <b>Other names</b> |  |                   |   |
| <b>Address</b>     | 4-10 Panther Place<br>ELTHAM                   | <b>Group</b>      | 002 Community Facilities                |
|                    |  | <b>Category</b>   | 026 Library                             |
| <b>LGA</b>         | Shire of Nillumbik                             | <b>Style</b>      | Late Twentieth Century Post-Modern      |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1993-94<br>2010 (extension)                    | <b>Theme</b>      | 9.0 Shaping Cultural and Creative Life  |
|                    |  | <b>Sub-theme</b>  | 9.1 Participating in Sport & Recreation |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | Gregory Burgess Pty Ltd (both stages)          | <b>Builder/s</b>  | Shire of Eltham [+ subcontractors]      |
|                    |  |                   | -                                       |
| <b>Artist/s</b>    | Marcus Skipper (1994 sculpture)                | <b>Engineer/s</b> | -                                       |



*Looking down at library from Main Road*



*Main entrance off Panther Place*



*Entry foyer, showing vaulted ceiling and terracotta walls*



*Interior of library proper, showing circulation desk (left)*

|                                   |                          |    |                          |    |                                   |       |                              |     |                          |     |                          |    |                              |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|----|-----------------------------------|-------|------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|------------------------------|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b> |                          |    |                          |    | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b> |       |                              |     |                          |     |                          |    |                              |
| AHC                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | NT | <input type="checkbox"/> | HO | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes      | Study | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | VHR | <input type="checkbox"/> | AHC | <input type="checkbox"/> | HO | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <b>Level of Significance</b>      | Local                    |    |                          |    | <b>Level of Significance</b>      | LOCAL |                              |     |                          |     |                          |    |                              |

## History

Although a few book lending services operated informally in Eltham from the 1930s, the area's first public library was not established until 1965, following the formation of the Heidelberg Regional Library Service by the City of Heidelberg and the Shires of Eltham and Diamond Valley. For several years, Eltham's branch was housed in a converted house in Dudley Street before space became available in the newly-extended Shire Offices in 1971. By the late 1980s, issues with government funding prompted a council resolution to close the library; this, however, was rescinded after community opposition, and a committee was set up to consider the library's future. Council resolved to erect a new building, with an anticipated completion date of 1997. However, the project was suddenly brought forward, when, in late 1992, successful application was made for a Federal Government grant of \$900,000 under the Local Capitol Works program.

The library was to be built at the edge of Alistair Knox Park, between the Shire Offices and historic Shillinglaw Cottage. A design brief, dated September 1992, not only stipulated that the building must respond to its park setting, but also "complement the heritage of the area and community", use low (or no) maintenance materials, and have a minimal solid interior walls. An appropriately organic design was prepared by award-winning architect Gregory Burgess, who had recently completed another noted municipal project, the Box Hill Arts Centre. His library scheme (for which sketch plans are dated in early 1993) evoked Eltham's cherished tradition of art, craft and vernacular building through extensive use of log poles, radial sawn timber (a Burgess *leitmotif*) and mud brick. A cardboard model of Burgess's "concept design" was published in the council newsletter. Construction commenced promptly: excavation began in February 1993, footings were completed in March and concrete slab and sub-floor steelwork underway in April. Steel framing for the central ovoid space was finished in August, and bricklaying, windows and roof fixing in September. Installation of electrical and mechanical services commenced in October, and the building reached lock-up stage a month later. The finished library was officially opened on Sunday, 22 May 1994, by Councillor Bob Manuell, with more than three thousand people visiting the new facility on the day. The library won further acclaim from the architectural community, winning an Award of Merit in the Institutional Category at the 1995 RIAA (Victorian chapter) awards; it was also published in overseas journals (namely *Architectural Review* and *Architecture+Urbanism*) and monographs (notably Michael Crosbie's *Architecture for the Books* of 2003, which profiled recent library buildings around the world).

## Description

Irregular in plan form and elevation, the Eltham Library is a split-level structure built into a slightly sloping site at the edge of the Alistair Knox Park. It comprises a central egg-shaped volume with a low-pitched gabled roof, encircled by a lower structure with radiating rings of sawtooth roofs. The building stands on a plinth, variously clad with glazed face bricks (to the west side) or radial sawn horizontal timber planks (on the north side), while the main building has mud brick walls with a bagged-and-painted finish, and large timber-framed windows, variously with glazed terracotta sills or face brick jambs and lintels. The walls of the central ovoid, and its encircling sawtooth bays, are clad with vertical timber boards, and their respective roofs in red-painted corrugated steel sheeting. There are jagged eaves, with timber fascias and concealed gutters, along the south, east and west sides of the building, and a verandah to the north. The latter has a timber floor, supported by timber struts, with simple timber balustrade, rough timber poles supporting a corrugated steel roof, (with clerestory windows above) and a timber slatted ceiling. The verandah has a projecting bay in front of the main entrance, with a rough L-shaped timber bench seat, and a set of open stairs (with sinuous metal handrail) leading down to ground level. The verandah otherwise ramps down to ground level at its respective outer ends.

Internally, the library is dominated by the central top-lit ovoid space, which contains a timber circulation desk and lighting bulkhead of matching curvature. This is surrounded by a ring of rough timber poles with segmental arches; the ceiling between rises up as a concave vault (lined with timber slats with an insulating blanket visible behind) that curves up to bays of clerestory windows with angled piers. This vaulted effect is repeated thence in the radiating rings that surround the main desk and form the bookshelf and reading areas. A mezzanine study area, west of the main desk, has half-round openings that overlook the main library, and a timber-lined convex vaulted ceiling. External walls of the reading areas include jagged bays with curving timber-lined pelmets, supported on log poles. The main foyer, set at a slightly lower level than the library proper, includes a large area for public exhibitions. It has bagged-and-painted mud brick walls, a vaulted side-lit plywood ceiling, and a pedestrian ramp along three walls, defined by a low glazed brick wall with metal columns. In the east corner is a canted open fireplace with corbelled edges and a pointed-arch opening. A flight of terracotta-tiled stair steps, flanked by rough log poles, marks the entrance to the library proper. A memorial plaque from the 1994 opening, and its counterpart from the demolished 1971 library, are also displayed here.

## Condition and Intactness

Barely fifteen years old, the Eltham Library remains in excellent condition, and in a substantially intact state. The exterior and the principal interior spaces are virtually unchanged; a former reading area, for instance, has been given over to internet terminals while the former toy library (at the far end of the meeting room) has been re-fitted as a cafe. All of these changes have been made in a sympathetic fashion.

At the time that the site was inspected for this assessment in March 2010, excavations were being made for a new addition to the building, designed by the library's original architect, Greg Burgess.

## Comparative Analysis

Significance has been ascribed to the Eltham Library on the basis that it was published internationally, and received an architectural award from the local RAIA chapter. It must be noted, however, that it was hardly the first – or indeed the last – project by Gregory Burgess to be thus lauded. His work has been published internationally since as early as December 1985, when the Hackford House in Traralgon and two houses in Carlton featured in the British *Architectural Review*. Since then, Burgess has become the Australian architect whose work has featured most frequently in that source, with such projects as the Davis House alterations (February 1986), the Brambuk Cultural Centre (October 1988), the Northcote Community Health Centre (February 1991), the Box Hill Cultural Centre (October 1991), the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre (November 1996). Some of these projects also appeared in such overseas journals as *Architecture+Urbanism* (Japan), *Baumeister* (Germany) and *World Architecture* (USA). A list of buildings by Burgess that have won architectural awards is too lengthy to include here; suffice to say, several projects in Victoria have won prizes equal to (or even greater than) the Merit Award received by the Eltham Library in 1995.

The Eltham Library was also described in the *Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria* as “the most celebrated new library to be built in Victoria in the post-war period”. This title, however, should more pertinently be attached to the Bailleau Library at the University of Melbourne (J F D Scarborough, 1957-59), which was the first truly modern international-standard library to be built in Victoria after the Second World War. Even considered within the more specific realms of municipal libraries, the Eltham Library would be trumped by the earlier St Kilda Public Library (Dr Enrico Taglietti, 1971-72) – the building that brought about a profound shift in public library design in Victoria during that same era. The Eltham Library may not even be the most outstanding example of that type by Gregory Burgess. In Michael Crosbie's 2003 monograph on recent library architecture around the world, only two examples from Victoria were featured – the Eltham Library, and the Daniel Mannix Library at the Catholic Theological College in Clayton – which was also designed by Gregory Burgess.

Ultimately, the significance of the Eltham Library is most resonant at the local or regional level – that is, as an expression of the important and long-standing tradition of craftsmanship, vernacular building and organic architecture in the Eltham area – rather than at the state level.

## References

- Harry Gilham, “History of Eltham Public Library Service<sup>4</sup>”, 3pp typescript, c. 1994 (courtesy Eltham Library)
- Yarra Plenty Regional Library Service, “Design Brief: Eltham Library”, September 1992. (courtesy Eltham Library)
- Eltham Echo*, No 29 (April 1993), No 30 (May 1993), No 31 (October 1993) and No 32 (November 1993).
- “Institutional”, *Architect (Victoria)*, July 1995, pp 15-16.
- “Gregory Burgess: Eltham Library”, *Architecture+Urbanism* [Japan], No 5 (320), May 1997, pp 118-131.
- “Literary Executor”, *Architectural Review* [UK], October 1997, pp 53-55
- Michael Crosbie, *Architecture for the Books*, Mulgrave: The Images Publishing Group, 2003.
- Michael J Ostwald and Steven Fleming (eds) *Museum, Gallery and Cultural Architecture in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Region: Essays in Antipodean Identity* New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2007.



|                    |   |                   |   |
|--------------------|---|-------------------|---|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | Recreation Hall, Lady Gladys Nicholls Hostel (Aboriginal Hostels Limited) |                   | <b>002-015</b>                            |
| <b>Other names</b> | Recreation Hall, girls' hostel (Aboriginal Advancement League)            |                   |   |
| <b>Address</b>     | 56-58 Cunningham Street (cnr Ross Street)<br>NORTHCOTE                    | <b>Group</b>      | 002 Community Facilities                  |
|                    |   | <b>Category</b>   | 769 Hall - Club/Social                    |
| <b>LGA</b>         | City of Darebin   | <b>Style</b>      | Late Twentieth Century Structuralist      |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1965-66   | <b>Theme</b>      | 8.0 Building a Community Life             |
|                    |   | <b>Sub-theme</b>  | 8.3 Providing Health and Welfare Services |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | W H Nankivell   | <b>Builder/s</b>  | -   |
|                    |   |                   | -   |
| <b>Artist/s</b>    |   | <b>Engineer/s</b> | -   |



*Vintage photograph by Peter Wille (State Library of Victoria)*



*Vintage photograph by Peter Wille (State Library of Victoria)*



*Vintage photograph by Peter Wille (State Library of Victoria)*



*Vintage photograph by Peter Wille (State Library of Victoria)*

|                                   |                          |    |                          |                                   |                          |       |                          |                              |                          |     |                          |                  |                          |  |  |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b> |                          |    |                          | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b> |                          |       |                          |                              |                          |     |                          |                  |                          |  |  |
| AHC                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | NT | <input type="checkbox"/> | HO                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | Study | <input type="checkbox"/> | VHR                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | AHC | <input type="checkbox"/> | HO               | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |  |
| <b>Level of Significance</b>      |                          |    |                          | Not previously assessed           |                          |       |                          | <b>Level of Significance</b> |                          |     |                          | Nil (demolished) |                          |  |  |

## History

In June 1956, Aboriginal activist Pastor Doug Nicholls (1906-88) noticed a former Anglican vicarage for sale in Cunningham Street, Northcote, and launched a fund-raising programme to acquire it for use as a hostel for young Aboriginal women who came to Melbourne to seek employment. The building was duly acquired; as it was being renovated in early 1957, management of the hostel was vested in the newly-formed Aboriginal Advancement League, with Pastor Nicholls as its field officer. Two years after the hostel opened in 1959, it was reported that “despite the home's friendly atmosphere, conditions are very cramped – the girls sleep four to a bedroom in double-decker beds, and facilities are limited”. It was further revealed that a fund-raising appeal was soon to be launched, which, it was hoped, would provide the means to upgrade facilities at the hostel – with the specific remark that “the girls are hoping, too, for a bigger recreation room; their present one is only about 12 x 16 feet”. The subsequent fund-raising regime included an annual ball at the Northcote Town Hall; following the 1964 event, it was definitely reported that “the proceeds will be used for building a new recreation centre for Aborigines at Northcote”.

The new recreation centre was finally erected in 1965-66 on the corner of Cunningham and Ross Streets, alongside the former vicarage. It was designed by architect W H (Bill) Nankivell, who was formerly in partnership with the more well-known Bernard Joyce (1929-93). Nankivell's original sketch plan (later published in *Architecture Australia*) depicted a building with a hall, reading room, kitchenette and a storeroom, while a paved pathway led south to a small detached toilet block, with dotted lines indicating where a future office building might be added at a later stage. Described as a recreation centre, the building was to be used “as a community centre for youth clubs, women's auxiliary, socials, dances, etc”. An early interior photograph of the building, also published in *Architecture Australia*, shows the small space set up for a concert, with rows of seating and an upright piano in one corner.

After the retirement of Pastor Doug Nicholls in 1972, the girls' hostel in Cunningham Street was renamed in honour of his late wife, Gladys Nicholls. A new building was erected on the site in 1980-82, and the old vicarage was demolished. The recreation centre on the corner has also been demolished. Its vacant site forms part of what is still known as the Gladys Nicholls Hostel, which now provides accommodation to Koori tertiary students as one of a nationwide network of hostels operated under the auspices of a federal government department, Aboriginal Hostels Limited,

## Description

Located on the south-west corner of Cunningham and Ross streets, the recreation centre was a small single-storey timber-framed structure, square in plan, with grey concrete block walls. Its most distinguishing element was the roof, which was a hyperbolic paraboloid form built up of three layers of tongue-and-groove softwood boarding over a frame of laminated timber beams, with a lining of PVC foam sheeting and a white-coloured fibreglass coating on top. Internally, the hall has a polished timber floor, with the timber lining boards of the ceiling also exposed.

The site of the recreation centre currently remains vacant.

## Condition and Intactness

The recreation centre has been demolished, and no trace now remains even of the associated paving or fencing. Only the large melaleuca tree along the Cunningham Street frontage, which is evident (albeit as a considerably smaller specimen) in early photographs taken by Peter Wille, remains to provide evidence of the building.

## References

“Part-Aboriginal Girls enjoy home life”, *Age*, 22 July 1961, p 5.

“Aborigines' League”, *Age*, 27 August 1964, p 8.

“Recreation Centre, Northcote, Victoria”, *Architecture Australia*, October 1967, pp 800-801.

*Victims or Victors? : the Story of the Victorian Aborigines Advancement League* (1985).

|                    |   |                   |  |
|--------------------|---|-------------------|--|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | Kew Library (City of Boroondara)  |                   | <b>008-001</b>   |
| <b>Other names</b> | Kew City Hall; City of Kew Civic Centre; Odd Mod Club; Q Club                     |                   |  |
| <b>Address</b>     | Cotham Road (cnr Civic Drive)<br>KEW  | <b>Group</b>      | 008 Administration                                     |
|                    |   | <b>Category</b>   | 164 Council Chambers                                   |
| <b>LGA</b>         | City of Boroondara  | <b>Style</b>      | Post-War International (1940-1960)                     |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1959-60<br>1986 (refurbished/converted to library)                                | <b>Theme</b>      | 7.0 Governing Victorians                               |
|                    |   | <b>Sub-theme</b>  | 7.1 Developing Institutions of Self-Govern't           |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | Leith & Bartlett Pty Ltd  | <b>Builder/s</b>  | Messrs H F Yuncken Pty Ltd                             |
| <b>Artist/s</b>    | George H Allen (1960 relief sculpture)<br>John Sumner (1983 stained glass window) | <b>Engineer/s</b> | J L & M E Daly (structural)<br>G A B Riley (acoustics) |



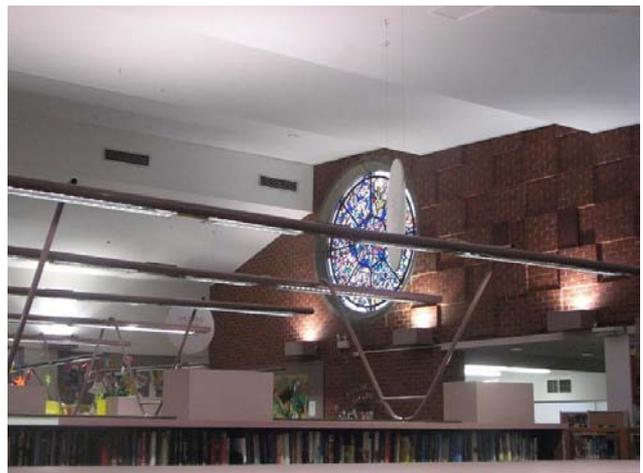
General view of Cotham Road facade



View from Civic Drive, showing George Allen sculpture



View from Alexandra Gardens, showing butterfly roof



Interior, showing stepped ceiling and stained glass window

|                                   |                          |    |                          |    |                                   |       |                              |     |                          |     |                          |    |                              |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|----|-----------------------------------|-------|------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|------------------------------|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b> |                          |    |                          |    | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b> |       |                              |     |                          |     |                          |    |                              |
| AHC                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | NT | <input type="checkbox"/> | HO | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes      | Study | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | VHR | <input type="checkbox"/> | AHC | <input type="checkbox"/> | HO | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <b>Level of Significance</b>      |                          |    |                          |    | <b>Level of Significance</b>      |       |                              |     |                          |     |                          |    |                              |
| Local                             |                          |    |                          |    | LOCAL                             |       |                              |     |                          |     |                          |    |                              |

## History

The Municipality of Kew was proclaimed on 19 December 1860, then upgraded to a Borough (1863), a Town (1910) and finally a City (1921). From 1865, its offices were based in the former Athenaeum Hall in Walpole Street, which, although extended in 1883, inevitably became inadequate. Plans for a new purpose-built Town Hall were first mooted in the late 1880s, but fell prey to six subsequent decades of debate. During that time, many sites were considered and rejected, and several schemes prepared. Finally, in 1945, it was resolved to build a new civic centre as a war memorial. The council acquired *Southesk*, a mansion on the south-west corner of Cotham Road and Charles Street – first mooted as a possible Town Hall site two decades earlier – and plans for a civic precinct were drawn up by John Scarborough. The project stalled until 1957, when a Town Hall Committee was formed and a new architect appointed: Harold Bartlett of Leith & Bartlett. He also proposed an entire civic precinct, of which a large public hall would constitute Stage One. Designed to accommodate almost any public or official function, the space had had a small stage at one end for intimate theatrical productions, a larger stage at the other (with operable sunken orchestra pit) for musical performances, plus the most up-to-date equipment for live TV transmission. The building, befitting its original intent as a war memorial, was also to include a sculpted monument, for which a separate design competition was held. First prize went to George H Allen (1900-1972), long-time head of the Sculpture Department at RMIT and a former war artist himself (the only one, in fact, to have worked in the medium of sculpture). At the time of the Kew project, Allen was best known for his Cenotaph at the Shrine of Remembrance (1955) and a controversial abstract sculpture at *Hume House* in William Street (1957).

Tenders for the new hall were called and the contract (worth £104,986) was awarded to H F Yuncken. The foundation stone was laid by the Mayor, Cr F C O'Brien, on 1 June 1959. Completion (initially scheduled for October) was delayed by the unavailability of certain materials; it was barely finished in time for the official opening (by Premier Henry Bolte) on 23 April 1960. The war memorial was unveiled two days later (Anzac Day) by Bolte's deputy, the Hon A G Rylah. Fittingly, that year also marked Kew's municipal centenary, and many celebratory events were held in and around the new civic centre in December, including a special council meeting (attended by the Prime Minister), a tree planting ceremony and a youth ball. Teenage dances subsequently became a regular attraction at the Kew Civic Centre. From the mid-1960s, it would be transformed each weekend into a temporary nightclub (known as the Odd Mod Club and later as the Q Club), renowned across Melbourne for live music performances by noted local bands (eg Aztecs, Skyhooks).

Harold Bartlett's ambitious proposal for a grand civic precinct was never realised, although a new municipal office was erected on the opposite side of Civic Drive (connected by an elevated walkway) in 1972. The original civic centre continued to be used as such until 1986, when its grand public spaces were converted for use as a library.

## Description

Prominently sited at the east end of the Alexandra Gardens, the former Kew City Hall is a single-storey building on an elongated rectangular plan. It comprises a tall central block of red brick construction, with a longitudinal butterfly roof (ie an inverted gable with central box gutter), flanked by a flat-roofed wing (to the east) and a narrower flat-roofed gallery (to the west). The lively Cotham Road facade has a hit-and-miss red brick base and a cream brick wall, divided into six equal bays by piers clad in black mosaic tile. At roof level, piers are linked by a matching tiled parapet, with a narrow clerestory window to each bay below. The first four bays also contain first-floor windows (not original), while the fifth bay has a casting of the city crest, and the sixth contains a public-art piece in the form of a giant hand with a walking stick. The flat-roofed east wing presents a stark facade to Cotham Road: a windowless wall of random-coursed grey-coloured split concrete block, relieved by three small metal plaques and a recessed relief sculpture in Sydney Freestone, depicting two WW2 servicemen with an allegorical mother/child. In front of the memorial wall is a row of three brushed metal flagpoles. The east (Civic Drive) elevation is also divided by piers into bays; these typically contain metal-framed windows with rendered spandrels. A broad cantilevered awning extends across three bays, marking the main entry. On the west side, the flat-roofed gallery has a continuous bay of metal-framed windows with panel spandrels. Below, a half-basement level, with cream brick walls and roller-shutters, contains plant rooms and stores for maintenance equipment.

Internally, the main hall has a stepped ceiling and red brick walls enlivened by a chequerboard pattern of projecting and recessing panels. John Summer's abstract stained glass window, *The Four Seasons*, is set into a large round opening on the east wall. The subsidiary public areas, including the adjacent smaller hall and flanking wings, have flat ceilings lined with acoustic tiles. One of the spaces in the east wing contains a wall-mounted display, in timber-grained laminate and anodised metal, bearing names and photographs of former Mayors of Kew from 1853 until 1992.

## Condition and Intactness

The building has been altered in its conversion into a municipal library. External elevations remain largely intact along its west and north sides, save for the insertion of four new windows on the Cotham Street facade. On the east (Civic Drive) frontage, one of the original public entrances, below the cantilevered awning, has been infilled. The distinctive multi-paned screen wall, which ran along the adjacent covered walkway (as seen in early photographs) has been removed, and new metal handrails installed in its place. Internally, the original plan form remains somewhat legible, with two central halls (one large, one small) flanked by smaller spaces. The former stage areas, at the respective ends of the two halls, have been infilled; the principal stage (to the north) has been converted to staff offices, while the smaller stage (to the south) has been glazed over to create a display for the local historical society. The former cloak rooms in the east wing have been gutted, and the original toilets and foyers replaced by modern counterparts in an entirely new configuration. The large meeting room, at the south end of the building, still remains in use as such.

## Comparative Analysis

At the time of construction in 1960, the Kew City Hall was lauded by the *Age* not only as the first city hall ever built by the City of Kew but also as the first one built in the entire metropolitan area since the Heidelberg Town Hall, designed over two decades earlier (and by the same architects). However, this assertion – which might equate with a case for heritage significance at the state level – needs to be qualified. Firstly, it may well have been the first city hall – in the strictest sense of a space for performance and public events – but it was by no means the first municipal building built since 1937. A number of local government centres – mostly outside the Melbourne – were erected between 1937 and 1942, including the Warracknabeal Town Hall (Seabrook & Fildes, 1940) and shire offices at Numurkah (A C Leith & Bartlett, 1938) and Eltham (Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall, 1941). The trend underwent a lull during the 1940s, but re-emerged after building restrictions were lifted in the 1950s. Subsequent examples included the Benalla Shire Offices (Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall, 1958) and the Springvale City Hall (Alsop & Duncan, 1959). Even around Melbourne, the Kew City Hall was pre-dated by new municipal offices at Brighton (Oakley & Parkes, 1958-61). Although the latter was not officially opened until 1961, its foundation stone was laid in February 1959 – four months before that of the Kew City Hall. The building at Brighton, therefore (which is already included on the *Victorian Heritage Register*) can thus claim the title of the first new municipal building to be erected in suburban Melbourne after the Second World War.

The Kew City Hall is otherwise of local architectural significance for its butterfly roof, which was a fashionable motif in modern residential architecture in Victoria during the 1950s. It was praised by Robin Boyd in his *Age* newspaper column (5 February 1952), illustrating an example of a Small Homes Service plan (No T2101) by Kevin Borland. That same year, the house that architect Kenneth McDonald designed for himself in Tuxen Street, Balwyn (1952) attracted considerable attention for its bold butterfly roof, and spurred many imitators. However, the use of this motif in a non-domestic context was somewhat rarer. Known examples included the Falk Stadelman & Co showroom at 87 Langridge Street, Collingwood (Mason & Weinstock, 1959), a series of fire stations in regional Victoria (Buchan, Laid & Buchan, 1960) – said to be unique in Australia – and the music school at MCEGS (Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell, 1964).

George Allen's sculpture should be considered in the broader context of his other works. Involved with the Sculpture Department at Melbourne Technical College for over 30 years (as principal instructor from 1933, and department head from 1945 to 1965), Allen undertook few large-scale private commissions during his career. Several, like the Kew City Hall project, were prize-winning competition entries: the Pinkerton Sculpture at Ballarat (1951) and the WW2 memorial at the Shrine of Remembrance (1955) – the latter being by far his most famous work. Other examples of Allen's work in an architectural context include the abstract sculpture (aka "The Thing") at *Hume House* in William Street (1957; since removed) and a symbolic relief at the Municipal Library in Kirk Street, Moe (1961; still intact).

## References

"New Town Hall has Butterfly Roof", *Age*, 13 April 1960, p 11; "Kew City Hall", *Architecture & Arts*, Oct 1960, pp 66-67

W D Vaughan, *Kew's Civic Century* (1960), pp 31-41.

Ken Scarlett, *Australian Sculptors* (1980), pp 5-9 [biographical detail on sculptor George H Allen].

PB File No 3,154. Unit 491, VPRS 7882/P1 (Department of Health Public Building files), Public Record Office.



|                    |  |                   |  |
|--------------------|--|-------------------|--|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | City of Hobsons Bay Civic Centre   |                   | <b>008-002</b>                               |
| <b>Other names</b> | City of Altona Civic Offices and Council Suite (former)  |                   |  |
| <b>Address</b>     | 115 Civic Parade<br>ALTONA   | <b>Group</b>      | 008 Administration                           |
|                    |  | <b>Category</b>   | 164 Council Chambers                         |
| <b>LGA</b>         | City of Hobsons Bay  | <b>Style</b>      |  |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1962-63<br>1983, 1987, 1992-93, 1999-200 (additions)   | <b>Theme</b>      | 7.0 Governing Victorians                     |
|                    |  | <b>Sub-theme</b>  | 7.1 Developing Institutions of Self-Govern't |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | Robert Warren (1962-63)<br>Suendermann McFall (1987 additions)<br>Perrot Lyon Matheson (1992-93 additions) | <b>Artist/s</b>   | Ian Bow (fountain)                           |
|                    |  | <b>Builder/s</b>  | Clements Langford Pty Ltd                    |
|                    |  | <b>Engineer/s</b> | W L Meinhardt (structural)                   |



Original building circa 1963 (City of Hobsons Bay Library)



Council Chamber, with remodelled offices beyond (right)



Underside of dome, showing ribs and rendered finish



Interior of Council Chamber; note timber-clad plant room

|                                   |  |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b> |  | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b> |   |
| AHC                               | <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> NT <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> HO <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Study <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | VHR                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> AHC <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> HO <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <b>Level of Significance</b>      | Local  | <b>Level of Significance</b>      | STATE (Council Chamber)   |

## History

For almost a century, the districts of Altona and Laverton were part of the municipality of Wyndham, which began as a Road District (1862) before being upgraded to a Shire (1864). In 1909, the municipality was renamed as the Shire of Werribee, and, three years later, divided into four ridings. Portions of the Altona Riding were subsequently annexed by the contiguous City of Williamstown (1940) and City of Footscray (1941) before the remainder was finally severed to create the Shire of Altona, proclaimed on 29 May 1957. The new Shire of Altona was initially accommodated in the historic bluestone *Altona Homestead*, on Queen Street, where council meetings were held in the former dining room.

In February 1961, council selected a site for a new purpose-built headquarters: the J K Grant Reserve on the north side of what was then known as Nellie Street. Befitting its status as one of Victoria's newest municipalities, council sought a building of especially bold form; amongst specific requests made to architect Robert Warren were a domed council chamber and freestanding clock tower. Warren coupled these with two flat-roofed T-shaped blocks – one for administration and the other for committee rooms and civic hall – around a courtyard. Tenders were called in 1962, and the contract (worth £116,000) awarded to Clements Langford. The first sod was turned by the Shire President, Cr R J Cooper, on 23 July. By November, much work had progressed on the main buildings, with the concrete slab and steel framing in position for the dome. By August 1963, the main building and clock tower were virtually completed, and the dome roofing still in progress. The complex was officially opened on 7 December 1963 by the Hon A A Caldwell, in a gala event with guided tours for council staff and the public, music from the RAAF Central Band, and a catered afternoon tea. A souvenir booklet was issued to every household, and the building was subject to a lengthy write-up in the local newspaper. Its description of the Council Chamber interior noted specially-woven blue carpets (incorporating the shire emblem), yellow leather-covered chairs, and gallery seating, in stained timber, of “a very modern style”.

The Altona Civic Offices, as it was dubbed, remained virtually unchanged until the early 1980s, when an office wing was built on the courtyard's east side. A much larger extension, containing a theatre, was added to the west side in 1987 by architects Suenderman McFall. Further alterations were made in 1992-93 by Perrott Lyon Matheson, including the reclamation of the courtyard, the erection of a new curved facade to Civic Parade and the relocation of the clock tower further south. These, coupled with more recent extensions and refurbishment in 1999-200, have effectively obliterated the original form of the building, save for the distinctive domed chamber.

## Description

The Council Chamber comprises a cylindrical drum with a domed roof technically known as a *sail vault* – a spherical cap with arches to four sides, forming pendentives that support the dome on four points. The dome itself is of shell concrete, with its underside (both inside and outside the chamber) finished in a rough-textured sprayed cement render. The lower portion of the shell's steel structural ribs are visible (albeit encased in plywood) under the “eaves” between the chamber walls and the ground. The surface of the dome is clad with copper sheeting; the roof necessarily drains towards the four corner anchor points, each of which ingeniously incorporates a concealed rainwater-head with an internal spout to a drainpipe. The curved chamber walls, of textured pale-coloured brickwork, have alternating panels of slightly increased diameter, thus creating a gap that forms an aluminium-framed slit window (or, in some cases, a louvred vent). On the street (south) frontage, the words COUNCIL CHAMBER are emblazoned in metal lettering.

Internally, the dome has a textured rendered ceiling, walls of beige-coloured ribbed brickwork, and a floor that is concentrically stepped to define the an observer's gallery around the perimeter of the chamber. A large full-height timber-panelled enclosure on the west wall conceals the air-conditioning plant. The huge “chandelier”, comprising a cluster of white glass is original, as are the wall-mounted dome-shaped bronzed metal uplights around the side walls. The original chamber furniture and monogrammed blue carpet (as seen in early photographs) have been replaced.

The remainder of Robert Warren's original 1963 building has been entirely engulfed by subsequent phases of extension and refurbishment, and now bears no resemblance whatsoever to the slick modernist building shown in early postcards and photographs. Despite being relocated further south in the early 1990s, the detached clock tower is otherwise mostly intact: a tall three-sided six-tiered structure of reconstituted stone panels, with number-less clock faces to all three sides and (new) signage to the front. There are two further items of interest in the environs of the civic centre: an abstract sculpted metal fountain to the left of the building's main entry, which bears the name of artist Ian Bow and the date June 1964, and an undated war memorial comprising a sculpted “Eternal Flame” (artist unknown) raised up on a tall granite plinth. This war memorial, directly in front of the main building, is accessed by a crazy paved pathway.

## Condition and Intactness

As has already been mentioned, the two flat-roofed T-shaped wings that comprised the original extent of the council administration offices, committee rooms and civic hall, have both been rendered entirely unrecognisable by subsequent extensions and refurbishment. As such, they are considered to be of no heritage significance.

By contrast, the domed council chamber and the free-standing clock tower – the two most distinctive elements in the architect's original scheme – both remain substantially intact and in fine condition. Externally, the dome is virtually unchanged; even the copper sheet roofing (now almost fifty years old) is original. Internally, the space retains its original light fittings and finishes to walls and ceiling, although the carpet and furniture have been replaced. Apart from the fact that it has been relocated slightly further south of its original position, the clock tower otherwise also appears unchanged, save for the replacement of its original signage (stating ALTONA CIVIC CENTRE) with an updated description.

## Comparative Analysis

The domed Council Chamber is an extremely unusual element, and has attracted considerable attention since it was first completed in 1963. Even a mere five years later, when a property reporter for the *Age* newspaper profiled the burgeoning suburb of Altona, the Council Chamber was singled out for special mention: "Its cinnamon dome sits on the ground like a flying saucer come to rest". Other fanciful metaphors – a hamburger, or the top of an Easter Egg, for example – have been coined by successive generations of local schoolchildren. Such was the high regard in which the dome was held that, when major renovations were proposed to the civic centre in the 1980s, careful measures were taken to ensure that the dome would be retained without significant change.

As an example of a freestanding concrete shell dome, the Council Chamber at Altona is almost certainly unique in Victoria, and rare even in a broader nationwide context. By far the most well-known and celebrated example in Australia is Becker House (now the Shine Dome) in Canberra, designed by Roy Grounds for the Australian Academy of Science in 1958-59. With its copper clad spherical-cap dome and arched perimeter creating a series of pendentives, the Canberra building was surely Robert Warren's inspiration for the smaller and simpler counterpart at Altona. It is highly pertinent that Warren himself not only entered the competition for the new Academy of Science Building (and would thus have been well aware of Grounds' winning entry) but, furthermore, had even proposed, as his own entry, a building based on a concrete shell dome. Warren remained interested in shell concrete technology for several years thereafter; he subsequently designed a church complex in Canberra (1959) with a blob-like domed chapel as its centrepiece, and later used the similar forms in a scheme for Queanbeyan Recreation & Leisure Centre (1960-61). Outside of Warren's few forays, only one other truly pertinent comparator has been identified in Australia: the Dome Restaurant in the Perth suburb of Dalkeith (Forbes & Fitzhardinge, 1957). Located off Birdwood Parade, overlooking the Swan River, this small building originally comprised a concrete shell dome supported on three points, with glazed infill to two sides and a small flat-roofed wing (containing a kitchen) to the other. In contrast to the council chamber at Altona (and to the Shine Dome in Canberra), it is triangular in plan, rather than circular, and has a concrete finish rather than copper cladding. The building still stands (now in use as a conference centre) but has been engulfed by additions on its two remaining sides, so that the original shell is not readily interpreted from the exterior.

More broadly, the concrete shell dome at Altona might be compared to the Bini Shells that proliferated in certain parts of this country in the 1970s. Using a system devised by Italian engineer Dr Dante Bini, these structures were formed by spraying concrete onto an inflatable formwork; as such, they are structurally quite different to the shell domes at Altona, Canberra and Perth. Under license, the New South Wales PWD erected numerous Bini Shells at high schools across the state. They were always less common in Victoria, with one well-known example being the Shire of Diamond Valley offices at Diamond Creek (since demolished). One remaining specimen at Monash University's Gippsland campus in Churchill – said to be the last survivor of its kind in the state – has only recently (and lamentably) been destroyed.

## References

*Altona Civic Offices* (souvenir brochure to record the official opening, 7 December 1963).

Susan Priestley, *Altona: A Long View* (1988).

Graeme Butler & Associates, with David Helms Heritage Planning & Management, *Hobson's Bay Heritage Study* (2004).

## Statement of Significance

### *What is Significant?*

The Council Chamber at the former Altona Civic Centre comprises a cylindrical room of textured brick construction, with a copper-clad concrete shell roof in the form of a sail vault, supported on four points. It was erected in 1962-63 as part of the broader civic centre development, designed by architect Robert Warren for the newly-proclaimed Shire of Altona. Although the remainder of the complex has been altered virtually beyond recognition, the distinctive domed council chamber remains in a substantially intact state.

### *How is it Significant?*

The council chamber is of technological and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria.

### *Why is it Significant?*

Technologically, the council chamber is an extremely rare example of a building that is defined entirely by a concrete shell dome. As a specific manifestation of a concrete shell in the form of a sail-vault (ie with pendentives) it is almost certainly unique in Victoria and rare even on a nationwide basis, pre-dated by (and possibly inspired by) two slightly earlier and much-published examples erected at Perth (Dome Restaurant by Forbes & Fitzhardinge, 1957) and Canberra (Becker House by Roy Grounds, 1958-59). Considered more broadly as a freestanding concrete dome, it is comparable only to the Bini Shells of the 1970s that, while ubiquitous in New South Wales, were always rarer in Victoria – with, in any case, only one surviving example known to exist here.

Aesthetically, the council chamber is significant for its highly unusual appearance, which is consequent to the choice of the shell dome type. The pure geometry of the dome (as a segment of a sphere) and its rich brown-coloured copper sheet cladding combine to produce an effect that is not merely distinctive but memorable and evocative of a broad range of whimsical metaphors (space ship, hamburger, Easter egg). This effect is heightened by the expression of segmental archways between the pendentives, providing glimpses of the underside of the dome and the stepped and curving textured brick walls of the chamber. Whether viewed up close, from across the civic centre carpark or even while driving along the street, the domed council chamber remains as an extraordinary object in the landscape.

## Proposed Extent of Registration

The domed council chamber only (ie excluding the remainder of the former Altona Civic Centre)

## Proposed Policy Guidelines

Retain original light fittings, wall finishes and timber strip panelling to plant room

## Proposed Permit Exemptions

Replacement of carpet and furniture inside the council chamber

|                    |  |                   |   |
|--------------------|--|-------------------|---|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | Sale Memorial Hall; Sale Civic Centre                                    |                   | <b>008-003</b>  |
| <b>Other names</b> | City of Sale Municipal Offices, Memorial Hall & Gallery (former)         |                   |   |
| <b>Address</b>     | 80-88 Macallister Street<br>SALE   | <b>Group</b>      | 008 Administration  |
|                    |  | <b>Category</b>   | 164 Council Chambers  |
| <b>LGA</b>         | Shire of Wellington  | <b>Style</b>      | International Style   |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1955 (hall); 1957 (library & RSL)<br>1959 (civic centre); 1960 (library) | <b>Theme</b>      | 7.0 Governing Victorians  |
|                    |  | <b>Sub-theme</b>  | 7.1 Developing Institutions of Self-Govern't                                      |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | Buchan, Laird & Buchan (1955-60)<br>J R Stuart Ashton (1962-64)          | <b>Sculptor/s</b> | Carolyn Burley (1968 library sculpture)   |
| <b>Artist/s</b>    | Ronald Miller (1963 civic centre mural)                                  | <b>Builder/s</b>  | Frank Drury; Lemchens & Skulte (hall)<br>Denziel Black (library and civic centre) |



Looking north-west, showing council offices and memorial hall



Looking south-east, showing library wing



Street frontage of former council offices (1959)



Street frontage of former library/art gallery (1962-64)

|                                   |  |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b> |  | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b> |   |
| AHC                               | <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> NT <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> HO <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Study <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | VHR                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> AHC <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> HO <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <b>Level of Significance</b>      | Local  | <b>Level of Significance</b>      | STATE   |

## History

The community buildings in Macallister Street trace their origins back to the Sale Mechanics Institute (1856) which occupied premises in Foster Street before building its own in York Street in 1889. The building was sold to the technical school in 1948, with the institute remaining as tenant until a new home could be found elsewhere – a situation that coincided with the City of Sale's ambitious post-war proposal to erect a new public hall and municipal offices. The council, however, had limited funds, and, during 1948, it was resolved that the Mechanics Institute would erect the buildings and rent them back to council. The institute set up a board of trustees and adopted a new name: the Sale Memorial Hall, Civic & Youth Centre and Public Library. The present site was purchased for £3,830, and a period of intensive fund-raising followed. In late 1951, Geelong-based architects Buchan Laird & Buchan were engaged; initial plans for the hall and library/RSL wing were completed in early 1952, and full working drawings by December. When it became apparent that the institute could not afford to build the municipal offices as well, the responsibility for this (and a portion of the land) was handed back to the council, who duly engaged the same architects to design the building.

Tenders for the hall were called in early 1953, but the project was stalled when a government grant failed to materialise. After securing a mortgage, fresh tenders were called for the hall and library in late 1954. The contract for the latter was awarded to local builder Denziell Black, who began work immediately; a foundation stone was laid by the Premier, the Hon John Cain, on 19 February 1955, and the building finished by November. In the interim, plans for the hall were approved, and a contract signed. The foundation stone was laid by Governor-General Sir William Slim on 11 June 1956, but there were further delays (caused by design revisions, funding problems and the death of original builder Frank Drury) and the official opening did not take place until 22 April 1957. Later that year, Buchan Laird & Buchan was retained to design a supper room-kitchen addition, which was completed by September 1958. Around the same time, they also began to prepare plans for the new municipal offices. This foundation stone was laid by the mayor, Cr W J Stephenson, on 11 March 1959, and the building (erected again by Denziel Black) officially opened on 3 June 1960.

In 1962, local architect J R Stuart Ashton was engaged to extend the library. His initial scheme proposed an east addition with serrated facade and slit windows; this, however, was later revised to include a second storey for an art gallery. During the 1960s, both buildings were enlivened by public art projects. To mark the council centenary in 1963, Ronald Miller designed a ceramic tile mural, *Gippsland Panorama*, for the civic centre foyer. In 1968, Carolyn Burley designed a semi-abstract mural for the front wall of the library/arts centre. Both artworks were assembled by students from the Sale Technical College, then located on the other side of Macallister Street. Around the same time, the town's WW2 Cenotaph was moved to the forecourt from its original site in Raymond Street. More recently, it is the occupants of the buildings that have changed. The council moved elsewhere in the mid-1990s, and its former home was taken over by the RSL veteran's support group. In 2003, when the library moved across the road (to the former technical school), the RSL purchased the old library and relocated its veteran's support group from across the courtyard. The former municipal office is currently occupied by several community groups including a toy library.

## Description

The buildings are arranged in a U-shaped configuration around a paved courtyard, with the memorial hall to the rear, the civic offices to the left and the library to the right. Although somewhat different in appearance, the three components are broadly unified by the use of face cream brickwork and modernist expression. As seen from the street, the hall comprises a large gable-roofed structure concealed by a stepped parapet and a lower front wing containing the entry foyer. The latter is dominated by a quadripartite central bay articulated by a projecting concrete frame and divided thence by brick piers, forming a recessed entry porch flanked by two large windows. Above, original metal signage states SALE MEMORIAL HALL. The hall's remaining elevations (ie to the east and west, and the rear frontage to Bond Street) cannot be seen from the courtyard and are far more utilitarian in their fenestration and detailing.

The former council office block, to the west, is a stark flat-roofed two-storey building with a street facade that incorporates a double-height recessed porch to the left side (with full-height glazing) and a single second-storey window bay (opening onto a cantilevered concrete balcony with steel railing) to the left. The courtyard (east) facade has a huge window wall, with projecting concrete frame and brick piers defining five bays, each infilled with timber-framed sashes and spandrels. There is a second recessed double-height porch at the far end. The main foyer, off the front porch, has its original vinyl tiled floor, open staircase with terrazzo steps and steel railing, and the eye-catching ceramic tiled mural.

The library wing, to the east, is a composite structure. The rear (original) portion is single-storey, with a pair of steep skillion roofs clad in red-painted corrugated galvanised steel sheeting. The inner roof, facing the courtyard, is set lower down, creating a continuous bay of clerestory windows as well as a full-width verandah, on brick piers. Under the verandah, there are long rows of square window and multi-paned double doors. The double-storey portion to the street has a sawtooth roof and a distinctive serrated facade, with strip windows, to the east (laneway) side. The street facade is simpler and echoes the nearby civic offices with its stark brick wall and full-height glazed window bay to one side. It is otherwise enlivened by a colourful mosaic-tile and steel sculpture (depicting aspects of the arts), and a low plinth wall of flagcrete slabs. The latter defines low planter boxes below the window and at the courtyard corner, where a simple single-storey flat-roofed verandah (on steel posts) opens off another double-height glazed wall.

The courtyard itself has a U-shaped concrete driveway that defined an elongated central lawn area, with the stone and marble war memorial Cenotaph at the far end. There are concrete-edged garden beds, contain various low plantings, between the driveway and the buildings on the east and west sides.

### Condition and Intactness

The original complex, as developed between 1951 and 1960, can be considered substantially intact. While the additions that were made to the library in 1962-64 (including the second story) have altered the “original” street frontage (and also represent the work of another architect), they were designed in a comparable modernist idiom (flat roof, face cream brick, large windows) and thus cannot be considered unsympathetic or intrusive. The retention of original signage (eg SALE MEMORIAL HALL) and landscaping (paved forecourt with garden beds) is also notable. From most angles, the exterior of the building looks exactly as it did in photographs taken at the time of completion.

Although not all of rooms within each building could be accessed during the field survey, cursory examination indicated that many key interior spaces remain intact. The foyer of the memorial hall, for example, retains its original black-and-white chequerboard floor tiles, varnished timber panelling and spun aluminium light fittings, and thus remains strongly evocative of the 1950s era. The entry foyers to the former library and civic centre are also substantially intact, with original staircases (terrazzo treads, mild steel or timber balustrades), finishes (timber panelling) and light fittings. The civic centre foyer also retains its eye-catching ceramic tiled mural, *Gippsland Panorama*.

### Comparative Analysis

After the Second World war, many municipal councils across Victoria announced grand proposals for civic centres: not merely a municipal office, but a cohesive complex providing a range of community buildings such as public halls, libraries, infant welfare centre and clubrooms for local organisations such as youth, elderly citizens or the RSL. Few of these ambitious schemes, however, reached fruition within a reasonable period. Many were only partially realised at the time: the City of Sunshine, for example, completed only Stage One (library) and Stage Two (municipal office) of its ambitious masterplan, while the City of Kew never proceeded beyond its initial stage, for a city hall, built in 1960. In cases where a civic centre was completed, this invariably took place over several decades, with the input of several different architects so that stylistic cohesion was not maintained – as in the case of the City of Warrnambool, where the original Town Hall (1891) was supplemented by a council chamber (1924), offices and library (1976) and performing arts centre (1980-83). One of the finest examples of a cohesive civic precinct in post-war Victoria was the Shepparton Civic Centre (Douglas Alexandra, 1964-65), which comprised three discrete buildings in a matching modernist style – town hall (with auditorium and supper room), municipal office (with council chamber) and an art gallery. The building, however, has since been extended and refurbished beyond recognition (qv 008-004). A couple of cohesively-planned (if less architecturally distinguished) civic centres still exist, such as the Civic Square at Croydon (with offices, chamber, library, hall and sports centre, 1969), but these tend to be of far more recent vintage than the notably early example at Sale.

### References

“Sale's Civic Pride Praised”, *Age*, 2 June 1956, p 5.

Stuart Lawson, *Sale Memorial Hall: A History*. Self-published, 2007.

PB Files No 9,820 (memorial hall) and No 13,715 (library and arts centre complex). Units 1142 and 1625, VPRS 7882/P1 (Department of Health Public Building files), Public Record Office.

## Statement of Significance

### *What is Significant*

The former Sale Civic Centre, at 80-88 Macallister Street, Sale, comprises a cluster of cream-brick community-oriented buildings in the modernist style, arranged in a U-shaped configuration around a central landscaped courtyard. The initial development was designed by Geelong-based architects Buchan Laird & Buchan in 1951-52 and subsequently realised, in several stages, over a period of six years: the library and RSL wing (1954-55), the public hall (1956-57) and the municipal office (1959-60). Additions, in a sympathetic style, were made in the early 1960s by local architect J R Stuart Ashton. The complex also includes integrated public artwork, made with the assistance of students from the local technical college: a large tiled mural (in the municipal office foyer) by Ronald Miller (1963) and a wall-mounted sculpture (on the former library) by Carolyn Burley (1968). The complex has undergone several changes in use, including the relocation of council administration and library services to other sites, but currently remains occupied by a number of community groups.

### *How is it Significant?*

The former Sale Civic Centre is of architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

### *Why is it Significant?*

Architecturally, the former Sale Civic Centre is significant as the earliest example of a cohesively-planned local government precinct to be erected in Victoria after the Second World War. While many municipalities proposed such developments at that time, very few of these were ever actually realised in their intended form, or in their entirety, and fewer still were realised within a reasonable period of time. The Sale Civic Centre, designed by architects Buchan Laird & Buchan in the early 1950s, and erected in several stages between 1954 and 1960, not only stands out as the first such civic complex to be completed in Victoria after the War, but also one that atypically represents a single cohesive development, conceived by a single architectural firm and realised within a relatively short period.

## Suggested Extent of registration

The entire complex of cream-brick buildings extending between Macallister and Duke Street: public hall, supper room, former library/RSL wing and former municipal office. The library/art gallery additions made by J Stuart Ashton in the early 1960s are considered to be entirely sympathetic to the modernist character of the complex, and thus should not be excluded from the extent of registration as an intrusive element.

The registration should include all integrated public art (wall sculpture and tiled mural), the central courtyard and the war memorial, and interior spaces of particular merit, notably the entrance foyers to the respective buildings.

## Suggested Policy Guidelines

Retain original metal signage (SALE MEMORIAL HALL)

Retain original unpainted finish to cream brick exterior walls.

Retain original fittings to entry foyers (including original vinyl floor tiling, timber panelling and light fittings)

## Suggested Permit Exemptions

Partition alterations to former office spaces in the former library/RSL and municipal office buildings;

New fitouts to existing kitchen and toilet areas across all of the buildings;

Minor additions to the rear/side of the public hall/supper room, where these will not be visible from Macallister Street.

Replacement of existing roof claddings, where like material is specified.

|                    |  |  |
|--------------------|--|--|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | Shepparton Council Offices                             | <b>008-004</b>   |
| <b>Other names</b> | City of Shepparton Civic Centre (former)               |  |
| <b>Address</b>     | 90 Welsford Street (corner Nixon Street)<br>SHEPPARTON | <b>Group</b> 008 Administration<br><b>Category</b> 164 Council Chambers                                |
| <b>LGA</b>         | City of Greater Shepparton                             | <b>Style</b> Late Twentieth Century International  |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1961-65  | <b>Theme</b> 7.0 Governing Victorians<br><b>Sub-theme</b> 7.1 Developing Institutions of Self-Govern't |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | Berg & Alexandra                                       | <b>Builder/s</b> W O Longmuir & Son Pty Ltd  |
| <b>Designer/s</b>  | Gordon Ford & Peter Glass (landscape)                  | <b>Engineer/s</b> J & M Daly (structural)<br>W C Jewell & Associates (mechanical)                      |



*Panoramic streetscape photograph from the cover of souvenir booklet, showing the three buildings along Welsford Street*



*1965 photograph by Wolfgang Sievers (National Library)*



*1965 photograph by Wolfgang Sievers (National Library)*

#### Existing Heritage Listings

AHC  NT  HO  Study

**Level of Significance** Not previously assessed

#### Proposed Heritage Listings

VHR  AHC  HO

**Level of Significance** Nil (significantly altered)

## History

The City of Shepparton, originally part of the Shire of Shepparton, was severed in 1927 to create a separate borough, which was subsequently elevated to the status of a city in 1949. A few years earlier, the council had already resolved that the land bounded by Welsford, Nixon, Marungi and Fryer Streets be reserved “for civic centre purpose”. However, there was no further development of the site until 1959, when a war memorial was unveiled. In mid-1961, council negotiated to sell their existing Town Hall to the Commonwealth Government, which would provide a sum of £85,000 to finance the new civic centre. Further funding included a government grant for £50,000 and a donation of £25,000 from the district's chief industry, the Shepparton Preserving Company; both of these sums, however, were tied to the provision of an art gallery as part of the civic complex. To generate further interest in the ambitious civic centre proposal, council approached Professor Brian Lewis, Dean of Architecture at the University of Melbourne, to organise a design competition amongst students of the faculty. The competition – essentially a hypothetical design exercise – was won by Soo Suan Yang. The actual commission, however, was awarded to the prominent architectural firm of Berg & Alexandra – both partners of which (perhaps not entirely coincidentally) had formerly taught at the university. More significantly, however, Douglas Alexandra (born 1923) was himself a native of Shepparton, and his Greek-born parents still resided there.

In October 1961, barely two months after their appointment, Berg & Alexandra presented initial sketch plans to the City of Shepparton. They proposed three discrete two-storey blocks, connected by covered walkways, which accommodated a town hall (with 1,000-seat auditorium, supper room, lounges, kitchen and associated spaces), an art gallery (with exhibition spaces and 200-seat theatre) and municipal offices (with office space on ground floor and council chambers and mayoral suite above). As the architects later reflected, “the project was conceived with the utmost consideration for the Shepparton climate” – of which Alexandra was clearly very familiar – and included various passive shading and cooling devices such as broad eaves, colonnades, porticoes, and courtyards planted with native vegetation. The final plans were accepted by council in March 1962, and the architects went on to prepare detailed working drawings and specifications while a model of the proposed complex was placed on public exhibition. In July 1962, council vacated the Town Hall and moved into temporary accommodation (in the former mechanics' institute building in Wyndham Street) pending the completion of the new civic centre. Tenders were called, and, in July 1963, the contract was awarded to W O Longmuir & Son. A foundation stone was laid in October 1963 by the Governor of Victoria, Sir Rohan Delacombe, who returned to officially open the finished building on 22 February 1965. Completed at a total cost of £403,770, the new civic centre was described by the *Age* as “one of the best in Victoria”.

The complex remained substantially intact for the next three decades, evidenced by a 1994 photograph included in Andrew Ward's survey of Victorian municipal offices. Following subsequent council amalgamations, the building was substantially altered by partial demolition, rebuilding and refurbishment. It currently remains occupied by the City of Greater Shepparton.

## Description

The former City of Shepparton Civic Centre originally comprised three discrete two-storey buildings in a line along the site's Welsford Street frontage, connected by a continuous covered walkway. Although somewhat different in size and individual articulation, the three blocks were united by their common modernist expression: volumetric forms with flat roofs and broad eaves, and bays of pale cream brickwork delineated by exposed steel frames. Each block had glazed entrance bay that opened onto a matching flat-roofed portico to the street frontage.

## Condition and Intactness

Regrettably, this fine modernist civic centre has been altered, extended and refurbished to the point that it is now virtually unrecognisable when compared to photographs that were taken at the time of its official opening.

## References

*City of Shepparton Civic Centre Official Opening: Souvenir Programme, 21-26 February 1965.*

“Civic Centre, Shepparton”, *Architecture Australia*, October 1967, pp 806-810

“The City of Shepparton today”, *Architecture Australia*, October 1971, pp 802-804.

|                    |   |  |
|--------------------|---|--|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | City of Brimbank Municipal Offices  | <b>008-005</b>   |
| <b>Other names</b> | City of Sunshine Municipal Offices (former)                                   |  |
| <b>Address</b>     | 6-18 Alexandra Avenue<br>SUNSHINE   | <b>Group</b> 008 Administration  |
| <b>LGA</b>         | City of Brimbank  | <b>Category</b> 164 Council Chambers   |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1962 (designed) 1964-67 (built)<br>1981 (additions)                           | <b>Style</b> Twentieth Century International   |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | G Stuart Warmington Pty Ltd (1962-67)<br>Robinson Loo Wyss & Schneider (1981) | <b>Theme</b> 7.0 Governing Victorians  |
| <b>Builder/s</b>   | D A Constructions Pty Ltd   | <b>Sub-theme</b> 7.1 Developing Institutions of Self-Govern't  |
|                    |   | <b>Artist/s</b> Edgard Pirotta ( <i>dalle de verre</i> window)<br>Hunt Club Stained Glass Group (window) |
|                    |   | <b>Engineer/s</b> W L Irwin, Johnston & Breedon (structural)   |



*Main frontage, looking towards Alexandra Avenue*



*Main entry portico, with dalle de verre window at upper level*



*Rear facade; note entry with cantilevered concrete canopy*



*Upstairs foyer; note window and hexagonal panelled ceiling*

|                                    |                          |    |                          |    |                                    |       |                              |     |                              |     |                              |    |                              |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|----|------------------------------------|-------|------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|----|------------------------------|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b>  |                          |    |                          |    | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b>  |       |                              |     |                              |     |                              |    |                              |
| AHC                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | NT | <input type="checkbox"/> | HO | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes       | Study | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | VHR | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | AHC | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | HO | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <b>Level of Significance</b> Local |                          |    |                          |    | <b>Level of Significance</b> STATE |       |                              |     |                              |     |                              |    |                              |

## History

The City of Sunshine, named after the Sunshine Harvester Works that H V McKay founded in the area in 1906, was proclaimed in 1951. Despite several subsequent proposals to replace the old town hall with a modern municipal office, it was not until 1960 that council formally resolved to proceed with the project. There was some difficulty selecting a site, as the suburb had undergone such intensive development since World War II that no vacant land was available near the commercial centre. The Town Clerk, T W Deutschman, suggested Moon's Paddock – a tract of land named after former owner, bookmaker Phil Moon. Much of Moon's property had been acquired by the Railways Department, which developed it as an estate of pre-cut "Operation Snail" houses for migrant workers. A remaining portion of Moon's land, considered unsuitable for residential use, was acquired by council for £10. The Railway Department granted an option on 12 adjoining houses, which, if necessary, could be shifted to provide space for further expansion of council facilities.

Council engaged Sunshine-born architect G Stuart Warmington – a distant relative of H V McKay – to report on the site's suitability. He suggested a master plan for a full civic precinct (council chamber, municipal offices, public hall, library and health centre) and, in 1962, was engaged to prepare one. Stage One (library/health centre) began in late 1963 and was completed a year later. Stage Two (municipal offices/council chamber) comprised building on a Y-shaped plan, sited to take advantage of northern sun and to provide a landscaped setting. Tenders were called and, in November 1964, the contract let to D A Constructions Pty Ltd. With Sunshine's strong industrial background, many materials were supplied by local manufacturers, including Humes Ltd (pre-cast concrete) and ARC Engineering Ltd (reinforcement). A symbol of the city was incorporated into the building in the form of a large *dalle de verre window* (ie coloured glass in a concrete matrix) over the main entry. Designed by Edgard Pirota, a young member of Warmington's office (and later a noted architect in his own right), this depicted the sun's rays through clouds – "a modern version of the symbol adopted by the founder of the Sunshine Harvester Works, H V McKay". The new building was opened for business in on 29 August 1966, and was officially opened by the Minister for Local Government, the Hon R J Hamer, on 17 March 1967.

While the third stage of Warmington's master plan, for a public hall, was never implemented, council still took up the option on the adjacent Railway Land and occupied the existing "Operation Snail" dwellings for some years; these, however, were later removed for a new single-storey extension to the main building, which was designed by another architect and officially opened by the Hon L S Lieberman, the Minister for Local Government, on 27 October 1981.

## Description

Occupying an oddly-shaped site at the corner of Alexandra Avenue and Wilkinson Road, the former City of Sunshine Municipal Office is two-storey flat-roofed building on a Y-shaped plan. It comprises two angled wings (the east one slightly longer than the west) with a wedge-shaped portico at the north junction. The wings stand on a recessed black-tiled plinth, with narrow basement windows. North and south facades are similarly treated, with closely-spaced rows of fin-like splayed concrete piers. Narrow bays, thus defined, have metal-framed windows at each level (with alternating highlight/lowlight sashes) and tall brown brick spandrels; north-facing windows have projecting louvred metal sunshades. The angled south facade has a ramp to the basement carpark, and two pedestrian entries at ground floor marked by canted concrete slab awnings. Doors open onto cantilevered concrete landings with matching steps and a simple square-section metal balustrade. End (east and west) elevations have a central window bay with ribbed concrete spandrels, flanked by full-height brown brick walls. The north portico comprises a recessed ground floor, with full-height windows alternating with rendered wall bays, and a row of three fielded piers that support the projecting upper level and create an open porch below, with steps leading to a glazed entry. The side walls of the upper level are treated the same way as the north and south sides of the main wings, while its north frontage contains Edgard Pirota's eye-catching *dalle de verre window*, in an abstract design symbolising the sun's rays. At the centre of the building, at the junction of the three wings, the council chamber is contained within a massive windowless volume with ribbed concrete walls.

Internally, the main foyer has a patterned terrazzo floor (with mottled grey and beige diamond shapes) and two flanking open staircases (with thin steel balustrades and polished timber handrails) leading up the council chambers and upper foyer. Both of those spaces have unusual hexagonal panelled ceilings; the latter is lit by Pirota's huge coloured glass window and has a built-in clock on the opposite wall. Council chamber, councillor's lounge and committee room have polished timber panelled walls; the curved external wall of the council chamber is of ribbed concrete.

The 1981 addition, at the east end of the complex, is an unremarkable single-storey building with continuous bays of windows with black anodised frames, beige brick spandrels, and wide eaves forming a steel-posted verandah.

## Condition and Intactness

The original 1960s building is relatively intact externally. The rear frontage (to Wilkinson Road) is virtually unaltered, while the west frontage has only been altered to the extent of a new passenger lift, which has been erected on one side of the portico wing. This, however, has been sensitively designed as a glass-walled structure with a simple corrugated steel barrel-vaulted roof, and can hardly be considered an intrusive accretion. The same can be said of the single-storey 1981 addition to the east side of the building, which is set slightly back from the original east wall, connected by a glazed link. This link extends slightly across the north frontage of the original east so that it aligns with the building's original staff entry. While this necessitated the removal of the large canted concrete canopy (similar to, but larger than, those that still remain on the rear facade), it does not otherwise deface or overwhelm the original building. The only other major external change has been the erection of a new pedestrian ramp to the entry portico.

Internally, the ground floor foyer has been partitioned by new glazed walls, although many original elements (notably the floating staircases and terrazzo flooring) remain intact. Upstairs, the upper foyer, council chambers, committee rooms and other key spaces are also intact, with original timber panelling and ceilings. Edgard Pirotta's coloured glass window remains in immaculate condition. Little original furniture appears to remain, aside from the timber bench in the council chamber and some of the chairs in the councillor's lounge. Office fitouts in the two flanking wings have mostly been altered to various degrees, although some retain remnants of original finishes such as acoustic tile ceilings, timber veneered doors, wall-mounted light fittings and original plastic signage. The eastern staircase is also intact.

## Comparative Analysis

The former City of Sunshine Municipal offices are one of the most distinctive post-war examples of that building type in the state. In the 1960s, new municipal offices in Victoria were often expressed as utilitarian structures more than civic monuments, designed in an unremarkable modernist idiom characterised by flat roofs, plain brick walls and repetitive fenestration. While some architects designed striking block-like municipal offices in the fashionable International Modern style (eg City of Sandringham by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960), few experimented with unusual plan forms, such as the expression of the council chamber as a discrete centrally-planned volume – as with the respective headquarters of the City of Brighton (Oakley & Parkes, 1959-61), the City of Altona (Robert G Warren, 1963) and the Shire of Myrtleford (A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall, 1966-67). The building at Sunshine, with its council chamber in a large hexagonal volume rising from the centre of a Y-shaped plan, is similarly striking – and the geometry thence echoed elsewhere in the building, from panelled ceilings and patterned terrazzo floors to the canted concrete canopies above the rear entrances. The usual plan form is heightened by the lively facades, with closely-spaced fin-like piers defining narrow window bays, which has counterparts in commercial and industrial buildings of the era (eg the administration and laboratory buildings at the former Kodak factory in Coburg, designed by H A & F L Norris in 1957-62) but is rare in a municipal office.

The *dalle de verre* window by Edgard Pirotta is both a key component of this unusual building, and a striking piece of public artwork in its own right. The use of this distinctive technique is somewhat unusual in Victoria. By far the most celebrated local example is the coloured glass ceiling above the Great Hall of the National Gallery of Victoria, designed by Leonard French in 1967. Some of coloured glass leftover from that vast project was subsequently acquired by artist Janusz Kuzbicki, who incorporated it into a monumental ceremonial entrance at St Paul's Cathedral. Pirotta's window at Sunshine, although admittedly smaller, still stands out as a notable example of *dalle de verre* set into the external wall of a building, which can thus be appreciated from outside as well as within. In this sense, it is perhaps only comparable to the foyer window of the former City of Sandringham Public Hall in Balcombe Road, Black Rock (Bates, Smart & McCutcheon, 1962), although this is a much smaller and far less complex design, with the coloured glass blocks simply inserted into a concrete breeze-block screen wall.

## References

"New Offices opened", *Sunshine Advertiser*, 23 March 1967, p 1.

*New Municipal Offices: City of Sunshine, Victoria*. Souvenir booklet, 1967 [with contribution by Stuart Warmington].

PB File No 13,178. Unit 1551, VPRS 7882/P1 (Department of Health Public Building files), Public Record Office.

Interview with Stuart Warmington, April 2010.

## Statement of Significance

### *What is Significant?*

The former City of Sunshine Municipal Offices at 6-18 Alexandra Avenue, is a two-storey flat-roofed modernist building on a Y-shaped plan, comprising two office wings (each with facades defined by fin-like piers with metal-framed windows and brick spandrels) with a wedge-shaped portico and a windowless hexagonal volume (containing council chamber) rising up at the junction. The portico has a glazed lower level and wide piers supporting the projecting upper level, incorporating an eye-catching coloured glass (*dalle de verre*) window in an abstract design symbolising the sun's rays. The building, designed by G Stuart Warmington (with the front window by his young employee Edgard Pirotta) was erected for the City of Sunshine in 1964-66 as the second stage of a grand civic centre masterplan.

### *How is it Significant?*

The building is of architectural and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria.

### *Why is it Significant?*

Architecturally, the building is significant as one of the most distinctive municipal offices erected in Victoria during the 1960s. At a time when the design of local governmental headquarters was too often characterised by flat-roofed block-like buildings in a fairly conventional modernist vein, this particular example adopted a highly unusual Y-shaped plan with the council chamber symbolically expressed as a windowless hexagonal volume that rises up from the intersection of the three wings. The distinctive facade articulation, with narrow window bays defined by closely-spaced fin-like piers, is also uncommon in municipal architecture in Victoria, as is the portico with integrated *dalle de verre* window. Architecturally, the building is also significant as the most important example of the work of Sunshine-born architect G Stuart Warmington, a distant relative of H V McKay and former employee of Frederick Romberg, who served as official architect to the City of Sunshine in the 1960s and designed over thirty buildings in that capacity.

Aesthetically, the building is significant as a striking and idiosyncratic example of modernist architecture. This is not simply a result of its atypical Y-shaped plan form (see above) but also to its unusual integration of features (the recessed plinth, boldly articulated entry portico with *dalle de verre* window, and the windowless hexagonal volume at roof level) and contrasting textures (brown brick spandrels, rendered piers, black tiling and ribbed concrete walls). The quirky angled geometry, introduced in the plan form, is echoed elsewhere in the building: hexagonal panelled ceilings in council chamber and upper foyer the diamond-patterned terrazzo floor in the lower foyer, and the striking canted cantilevered concrete canopies to the rear entrances. The eye-catching *dalle de verre* window, with its abstract design symbolic of the City of Sunshine, is not only significant as an integral component of Warmington's remarkable composition but as a remarkable piece of public art in its own right – a uncommon example of this medium in Victoria – and a notable early project by the young Edgard Pirotta (later to become an award-winning architect in his own right)

## Suggested Extent of Registration

The building to the extent of the original 1960s fabric, including the *dalle de verre* window by Edgard Pirotta, key interior spaces such as the lower and upper foyers, council chambers and councillor's lounge area, and any original furniture. The 1981 addition should not be included within the extent of registration.

## Suggested Policy Guidelines

Retain and conserve original furniture, and prepare an inventory of remaining items.

## Suggested Permit Exemptions

Alterations (including reconfiguration of partitions) to office spaces in the two flanking wings.

New fitouts to existing toilet and kitchenette areas throughout the building.

|                    |   |   |
|--------------------|---|---|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | Myrtleford Library (High Country Library Corporation)   | <b>008-006</b>  |
| <b>Other names</b> | Shire of Myrtleford Municipal Offices (former)          |   |
| <b>Address</b>     | 14 O'Donnell Avenue (cnr Standish Street)<br>MYRTLEFORD | <b>Group</b> 008 Administration                               |
| <b>LGA</b>         | Alpine Shire  | <b>Category</b> 164 Council Chambers                          |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1965-67   | <b>Style</b> Late Twentieth Century International             |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall<br>[Barry Marshall]    | <b>Theme</b> 7.0 Governing Victorians                         |
| <b>Artist/s</b>    |   | <b>Sub-theme</b> 7.1 Developing Institutions of Self-Govern't |
|                    |   | <b>Builder/s</b> Leita Brothers                               |
|                    |   | <b>Engineer/s</b>   |



General view, showing council chamber (light) and offices (left)



Detail of curved facade (with covered walkway) to office block



Rear of office block, showing screen walls and glass louvres



Interior of Council Chamber; note original furniture

|                                    |                          |    |                          |    |                                    |     |       |                          |     |                          |     |     |                          |     |    |                          |     |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|----|------------------------------------|-----|-------|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|-----|--------------------------|-----|----|--------------------------|-----|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b>  |                          |    |                          |    | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b>  |     |       |                          |     |                          |     |     |                          |     |    |                          |     |
| AHC                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | NT | <input type="checkbox"/> | HO | <input type="checkbox"/>           | Yes | Study | <input type="checkbox"/> | VHR | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | AHC | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | HO | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes |
| <b>Level of Significance</b> Local |                          |    |                          |    | <b>Level of Significance</b> STATE |     |       |                          |     |                          |     |     |                          |     |    |                          |     |

## History

The Shire of Myrtleford was created on 31 May 1960 by the severance of part of the Shire of Bright. As one of Victoria's newest municipalities, the provision of purpose-built premises was a high priority. In December 1965, the local newspaper reported that "in the very near future Myrtleford Shire Councillors will make a decision that will have a lasting impact on the Shire... they must make a decision as to what form the proposed civic centre will take, and how much it will cost the ratepayers". To be fair, the two most pertinent decisions – the architect and the site – had already been made. The former was Barry Marshall, of the Melbourne firm of A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall – since the 1950s, the state's leading municipal office specialists. It was to be built on a site that Marshall himself had described as the most outstanding municipal site he had ever seen: a wedge-shaped allotment at the corner of O'Donnell Avenue and Standish Street, elevated above the road, with a row of mature trees forming a stunning backdrop.

The shire was an atypically progressive one, as it hoped to provide ratepayers with a memorable civic premises rather than opting for a low-cost utilitarian one. That same article observed that "whatever type of buildings are erected will cost a lot of money, so it seems pointless in being too austere when planning for an amenity that will serve the community for many years to come. No ratepayer wants to have his rates increased, but no doubt all would like to have a civic centre that they can be proud of". Marshall's initial plans, presented to council in December 1965, proposed an unusual building in two parts: a circular council chamber, connected by a covered walkway to an office block of matching curvature. This not only responded well to the context – as the local reporter put it, "the whole set-up fitting admirably into the contour of the site" – but also allowed for future expansion. While there was some concern about the project cost, this was resolved when a \$100,000 bank loan was secured in July 1966. Tenders were called and, in early August, the contract awarded to Leita Brothers, who (with a tender of \$89,000) were not only the lowest tenderers, but also the only ones from Myrtleford. The first sod was turned on 24 August by Shire President, Cr C J Rootsey, and the builders began work the following week. At that time, the official opening was scheduled for 31 May 1967 – fittingly, the seventh anniversary of the shire's foundation. However, the ceremony was delayed, and the official opening (by the Governor of Victoria, Sir Rohan Delacombe) took place a week later, on 8 June 1967.

With council amalgamations in the mid-1990s, the Shire of Myrtleford became part of the new Alpine Shire Council, which consolidated its administrative functions at Bright. The former premises at Myrtleford was adapted for use as a council service point and local library, with the council chamber retained for occasional official use.

## Description

The former Shire of Myrtleford council office is a small flat-roofed single-storey building with a plan form comprising a circle with a larger interlocking quadrant to one side. The latter is bisected by a driveway, which effectively creates two wings: one for the council chamber and another for the offices. The circular part is expressed as a squat cylinder with beige-coloured rough-textured rendered walls and projecting roof beams supported paired steel columns, which define full-height window bays with stippled glass. The first stage of the quadrant wing, to the north, of brown brick construction with deeply raked joints and blue-painted timber fascias. A central entry porch, facing north, is flanked by two alcoves containing pencil conifers. The entry, with paired glazed doors and sidelights, opens onto the bisecting roadway, while a perpendicular covered walkway extends across to the office block, forming a *porte cochere*. The office block, generated by the same geometry, is a long curved block, also of brown brick with raked joints and timber fascias. While the two end walls are windowless, the south (ie concave) frontage has a low brick plinth, continuous full-height windows, and a curving covered walkway. The facade is broken into five bays, alternately projecting and receding, with the central one having double doors, directly opposite those of the council chamber. The north (ie convex) frontage has wide eaves with a central door (for staff use) flanked by breeze-block screens and thence by continuous horizontal windows with rendered spandrels and, fixed to the far edge of the eaves, operable tinted glass louvres for sun-shading.

Internally, the former office block is divided laterally by a long curving aluminium-framed and timber-panelled partition, with highlight windows and timber veneered doors. The council chamber has brown brick walls and a textured ceiling with exposed beams around the edge and circular white glass light fittings. Its wide doorway has a dentillated lintel with a concertina door (lined with orange fabric on one side, and green vinyl on the other). The room retains its original furniture: a central circular table with two curving benches around it (both finished in polished timber veneer), plus executive chairs and other seating covered with blue vinyl. Some similar furniture (including low couches and a coffee table) also remain in the adjacent office area. Toilet doors retain original plastic signage with the letters M and F.

## Condition and Intactness

The building remains substantially intact, with its change in use (from council offices to a public library) necessitating few significant alterations. Externally, the building is largely unchanged, retaining its original face brick finish, concrete breeze-block screen walls and other surface treatments. A few of the original external doorways to the office block have been permanently closed, although they have not actually been infilled and thus can still be interpreted as doorways. Along the canted glazed wall, some of the lower panes of glass have been overpainted to create opaque spandrels; this, however, is neither an intrusive nor irreversible alteration. The most obvious external changes have been the construction of two new slate-clad pedestrian ramps, to provide access to the office block and council chamber.

Internally, the former office building has been altered by the removal of the original walls at one end, in order to create an open-planned area for library shelves. While the external faces of original partitions and doors (ie facing the public area) have been overpainted, they retain their timber panelled finish on the internal (ie office) side. The rough-textured cement ceiling is original, and still has (above the door of the former Mayor's office) a small recessed blue lamp, which once indicated when the Mayor was not to be disturbed. Some spaces (including a kitchenette and at least one former office) retain built-in bench units, with timber veneered cupboard doors, and the original council strongroom, with heavy steel-panelled door, also remains unaltered. The former council chamber is virtually untouched, with the bulk of its original furniture (blue leather chairs, curved timber-veneer benches and matching circular table).

## Comparative Analysis

Even at first glance, the former municipal complex at Myrtleford is an extremely distinctive and unusual building. The specific expression of the council chamber as a discrete and virtually freestanding element has few counterparts in Victoria. The former City of Altona (now City of Hobsons Bay) civic offices in Civic Parade, Altona, is perhaps the most obvious comparator. Here, the council chamber is similarly expressed as a freestanding circular-planned room, albeit with a prominent domed roof rather than the cylindrical form seen at Myrtleford. In this case, however, the striking visual effect has been somewhat diminished by the fact that the remaining portion of the municipal office (originally a fairly conventional flat-roofed glass-fronted modernist block) has since been remodelled beyond recognition. There are certainly other buildings in Victoria, of comparable vintage, that incorporate centrally-planned features as an apparently detached appendage. Examples include shopping centres at Boronia and Avondale Heights (both by Kenneth McDonald, 1959), which provided supermarkets in discrete circular buildings that projected from one end of the complex. Such large-scale projects, however, lack the delicacy evident in the much smaller-scaled building at Myrtleford.

Considered in isolation, the curved form of the office building block is also highly unusual in Victoria. This has a number of significant counterparts in post-war domestic architecture, including the so-called Periwinkle House at Eltham (Alistair Knox, 1948), the Snelleman House in Ivanhoe (Peter & Dionne McIntyre, 1955-56), the lamentably demolished Lloyd House in Brighton (Robin Boyd, 1958) and the Kennedy House in Glen Waverley (David Godsell, 1965-66). Curving plans for houses – ultimately derived from such overseas precedents as Frank Lloyd Wright's Hemicycle Houses of the 1940s – were readily justifiable for reasons of passive solar heating. This, however, was less pertinent for other building types. The curving office block at Myrtleford is thus uncommon in non-residential architecture in Victoria – its closest comparators are probably curved high-office buildings such as BP House in St Kilda Road (Demaine Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, 1963-65) or the later Shell House in Spring Street (Harry Seidler, 1985-89) – and almost certainly unique within the specific field of civic or municipal architecture.

## References

“Councillors face big decision: planning for our civic centre”, *Myrtleford Times*, 21 December 1965, p 1.

“Council to proceed with Civic Centre”, *Myrtleford Times*, 18 January 1966, p 1.

“\$100,000 loan to Shire”, *Myrtleford Times*, 5 July 1966, p 1.

“Tenders let for Civic Centre”, *Myrtleford Times*, 2 August 1966, p 1.

“Work to commence on Civic Centre”, *Myrtleford Times*, 30 August 1966, p 1.

“Governor opens Myrtleford Municipal Buildings”, *Myrtleford Times*, 13 June 1967, p 1.

## Statement of Significance

### *What is Significant?*

The former Shire of Myrtleford council offices at 14 O'Donnell Avenue, Myrtleford, was designed in 1966 by Barry Marshall of A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall, and officially opened in 1967. It is a small flat-roofed single-storey building, dominated by a discrete cylindrical form (containing the council chambers) with a textured rendered perimeter wall, full-height stippled glass windows and pairs steel columns supporting projecting roof beams. To the north is a quadrant-shaped brown-brick wing, bisected by a curving roadway to create two separate parts (containing a foyer to the council chamber, and an office building) that are connected by a covered walkway. The office block has a fully glazed facade to the south, with breeze-block screens and continuous windows bays, with glass louvres, to the north.

### *How is it Significant?*

The building is of architectural and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria.

### *Why is it Significant?*

Architecturally, the former municipal offices are significant for their unusual geometric planning, with the council chamber expressed as a virtually freestanding cylindrical volume, from which a quadrant-shaped wing (centred on the same focus) extends northwards, bisected by a roadway (again following the same arc) to create two separate wings: one providing foyer and amenities to the council chamber, and the other a discrete office block. The expression of a council chamber as a discrete object is uncommon in the design of municipal offices in Victoria (with a noted, if less striking, example at Altona), while the integration of an elongated curving block, although not without some parallels in contemporaneous residential design, is rarely seen in other building types, and almost certainly unique within the sphere of municipal architecture. Architecturally, the building must also be considered as one of the most outstanding municipal complex ever produced by the prolific firm of A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall, which specialised in the design of such buildings for over forty years, from the early 1940s until the 1980s.

Aesthetically, the former municipal offices are significant for their extremely distinctive external appearance. This is not only consequent to the highly atypical plan form (as outlined above) but also to its contrasting textures (ie brown brick and textured render), the use of paired steel columns to support roof beams and define window bays, the glazed curved facade to the office block (with curving covered walkway), and the north-facing breeze-block screens and bays of glass sun-louvres. The pair of pencil conifer trees that flank the council chamber entrance, set into alcoves but "trapped" behind the timber fascia, is another extremely distinctive element. The building is both strongly related to, and enhanced by, its site; described by its original architect as the most outstanding civic centre site he had ever seen, it comprises an elongated triangular block, elevated above a prominent road junction, with a backdrop of mature trees.

## Suggested Extent of Registration

The entire building, plus a curtilage extending right to the two street frontages. The extent of registration should include original furniture in the council chamber (and elsewhere), council memorabilia such as the timber honour boards and framed photographs, hard landscaping elements such as retaining walls (including the circular retaining wall that follows the curve of the council chamber), and the two pencil cypress trees that flank the entrance to the council chamber.

## Suggested Policy Guidelines

Retain and conserve original furniture, and undertake of an inventory of all remaining items.

Retain original unpainted finish to face brickwork, timber joinery and timber panelling throughout the buildings.

Investigate original external colour scheme, and reinstate when building next requires repainting.

## Suggested Permit Exemptions

New fitouts in existing toilet and kitchenette areas in both the council chambers and former office building.

|                    |   |                    |  |
|--------------------|---|--------------------|--|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | City of Boroondara Council Offices                              |                    | <b>008-007</b>   |
| <b>Other names</b> | The Camberwell Centre; City of Camberwell Civic Centre (former) |                    |  |
| <b>Address</b>     | 8 Inglesby Street<br>CAMBERWELL                                 | <b>Group</b>       | 008 Administration                                       |
|                    |   | <b>Category</b>    | 164 Council Chambers                                     |
| <b>LGA</b>         | City of Boroondara  | <b>Style</b>       | Late Twentieth Century Stripped Classical                |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1967-69<br>1978 (addition)                                      | <b>Theme</b>       | 7.0 Governing Victorians                                 |
|                    |   | <b>Sub-theme</b>   | 7.1 Developing Institutions of Self-Govern't             |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell<br>[John Mockridge]                | <b>Builder/s</b>   | H T McKern & Sons Pty Ltd (1967-69)<br>A J Galvin (1978) |
| <b>Artist/s</b>    | Michael Meszaros (1982 sculptor)                                | <b>Engineers/s</b> | J L & E M Daly (structural)                              |



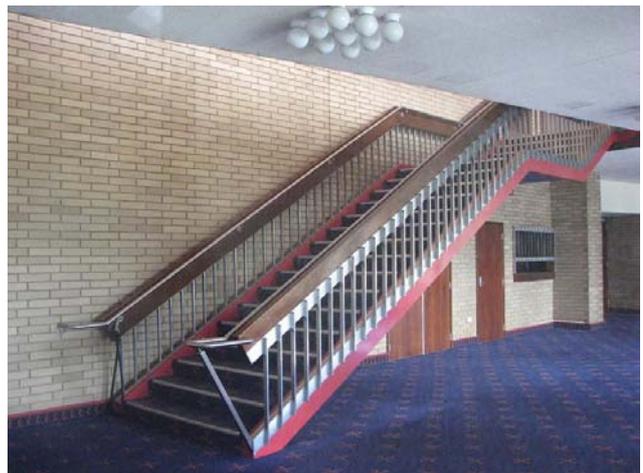
General view along principal frontage, showing entrance porch



Original building (right) and addition (left) viewed across gardens



Detail of porch showing wide piers and foundation stone



Interior of main entrance foyer (photographed through window)

#### Existing Heritage Listings

AHC  -  NT  -  HO  -  Study  -

**Level of Significance** Not previously assessed

#### Proposed Heritage Listings

VHR  Yes  AHC  Yes  HO  Yes

**Level of Significance** STATE

## History

The municipality of Camberwell began as a district (1854) and was upgraded to a shire (1871), a borough (1905) and a town (1906) before proclaimed a city (1914). From 1891, it was housed in a grand Boom-era town hall on Camberwell Road, although this was already inadequate by 1923, when the *Argus* reported that “residents of Camberwell have long felt that their rapidly expanding city is worthy of something better than the small grey building”. An addition, with new council chamber and offices, was completed in 1924, and a clock installed in the hitherto empty tower. This proved only a temporary solution; barely a decade passed before the building's state was again subject to council debate. A £16,000 scheme for “enlarging and remodelling” the town hall was mooted (and rejected) in 1935; five years later, a councillor described the building as “an absolute disgrace”. By the mid-1950s, council had resolved to erect a new civic centre on the adjacent Town Hall Reserve – a choice not popular with all ratepayers – and another decade passed before plans were prepared, with the proviso that the new building be sited to “preserve as many of the existing trees as possible”.

The civic centre was to comprise an “official suite” (council chamber, committee rooms, dining room, kitchen etc), a large hall for 1,250 people (for “concerts, pageants, ballets, large meetings and dances”) and a smaller hall for 500 people (“primarily for stage presentations”). During 1966, plans were drawn up by Mockridge Stahle & Mitchell, who proposed a huge rectangular block (containing the halls and council chamber) with a projecting hexagonal wing (containing a small hall and committee rooms), providing a total of 586m<sup>2</sup> of space. Externally, the building was to be faced with pre-cast load-bearing units of “reconstituted stone”, which incorporated curved openings with deep reveals and splayed sills. It was later observed that “the design of these elements derived from the architect's desire to complement the character of the existing town hall nearby, which has a stucco finish and arched windows”. The units were manufactured and installed by the Melocco Brothers Pty Ltd, a former Sydney-based terrazzo company that had expanded in the post-war era to become Australia's leading exponent of pre-cast concrete.

Tenders were called in March 1967; the contract was duly awarded to H T McKern & Sons Pty Ltd, with construction commencing straight after the contract was signed in June. With an anticipated contract period of 73 weeks, the building was completed in March 1969 at a cost of \$1,450,000. The architects were also responsible for the interior design, and specified imported Danish furniture (with a set of Swan Chairs, by Arne Jacobson, in the council chamber) and specially-designed contemporary-style chandeliers in the foyers and main hall. The bold lighting throughout the building, including old-fashioned carbon filament lamps and spotlights mounted on tubular steel grids, was subject to an article in the *IES Lighting Review*. The new civic centre was officially opened by the Governor-General, Sir Rohan Delacombe, on 12 April 1969. In the late 1970s, the council chamber wing was extended further north, in a matching style; this created a small courtyard, where a bronze statue by Michael Meszaros, entitled *The Mayoress*, was erected in 1982.

## Description

Most of the civic centre is contained in a huge two-storey rectangular concrete building on a battered bluestone plinth. The low roofs (ie curved vault over the main hall, and mansard roofs over council chamber and small hall) were finished with built-up layers of gypsum plaster, fibreglass, cork and white gravel (to reduce noise from rain), with the sides of the mansard clad in vinyl-coated metal tray-deck. External walls are faced with pre-cast concrete units (or “reconstituted stone”), which contain quartz to give an off-white colour and rough texture. Units on the west wall are solid, while those to the north, east and west generally have round-arched windows at first floor and rectangular ones below. All openings have deep reveals, splayed sills, bronze anodised aluminium sashes and tinted glazing. The north (principal) facade has an projecting off-centre entry bay, with large piers supporting a broad copper-clad *porte cochere*. Steps led up to a recessed porch, flanked by glazed bays and a white marble foundation stone. The south (service) elevation also has some loading bays with roller shutters. The smaller west wing, extended since 1969, is now three storeyed; the original (canted) wall to the south is of solid pre-cast concrete units as elsewhere, while the north, east and west elevations are curtain walled (with matching bronze anodised metal and tinted glazing), set back behind a screen wall of concrete units with arches or rectangular openings. The extension has formed a narrow north-facing courtyard between the main building, which contains Michael Meszaros' abstract (but vaguely humanoid) bronze sculpture.

Although interior access to semi-public spaces has not been permitted, inspection through windows shows that the hall foyers still have walls of beige-coloured modular brickwork, acoustic tile ceilings and clusters of spherical white glass light fittings. The large hall (not sighted as part of this project, although known from previous experience) is known to still have its dress circle and stepped boxes, niche lighting, curved false ceiling with narrowly-spaced battens of Mountain Ash, acoustic panels of perforated plywood, and four elongated “stalactite” chandeliers.

## Condition and Intactness

From the exterior, the Camberwell Civic Centre remains substantially intact. The main block, containing halls and associated spaces, is virtually unchanged and, from the street frontage, looks virtually the same as it did when it first opened in 1969. The “official suite” to the east has been altered; initially by a small two-storey extension to the north (in a matching style, reportedly designed by the same architects) and more recently by the refurbishing of the foyers and the erection of a connecting walkway to the old town hall. Neither of these changes, however, can be considered unsympathetic or intrusive. The original landscaped setting, with bluestone pitching and retaining walls, also remains intact, although the formal pond to the north of the porte cochere has been converted into a garden bed.

An internal inspection of the council chambers, halls and other semi-public areas was not possible; however, interior photographs on the website of the Camberwell Centre (along with this consultant's own recollections of attendance at public events at the centre in recent years) suggest that the main halls and foyers remain substantially intact, with original wall panelling, light fittings, stair details and so on. No information is available on the current intactness of the council chamber and whether, for example, the Arne Jacobson chairs still remain *in situ*.

## Comparative Analysis

In his 1994 survey of municipal offices, Andrew Ward described the Camberwell Civic Centre as “one of the last monumental town halls erected in Victoria”. It should be noted that this comment was informed by a slight mis-dating, as Ward cited only the date of the additions (1978) rather than the original building (1967-70). It could be argued that a many monumental municipal offices were erected in Victoria after 1970, including those at Rosebud (Don Hendry Fulton, 1973-76), Wangaratta (Grahame Shaw & Partners, 1979-80) and Glen Waverley (Harry Seidler, 1982-84). Having said that, though, these later examples tend to be monumental in the modernist sense: large buildings of stark masonry construction that exhibit civic grandeur through a sculptural or Brutalist expression. This is a marked contrast to the former Camberwell Civic Centre, where monumentality is simultaneously modern (ie block-like forms and pre-cast concrete units) and traditional (ie bluestone plinth, repetitive round-arched windows and grand entry portico). The historicist fenestration, in particular, brings to mind odd precedents such as the *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana* in Rome (Marcello Piacentini, 1938-43), or the buildings in surrealist paintings by Giorgio de Chirico. Specifically designed to echo the existing Boom-style Town Hall, the Camberwell Civic Centre is an uncommon and outstanding expression of contextual design in civic architecture in Victoria, evoking a grandeur both historicist and progressive. It can indeed be considered as the last truly monumental town hall – in the nineteenth century sense – erected in Victoria.

When considered within the *oeuvre* of architects Mockridge Stahle & Mitchell, the Camberwell Civic Centre stands out as a particularly large and important public commission. The firm, established in 1948 by the highly-regarded John Mockridge together with Ross Stahle and George Mitchell, made a name for itself during the 1950s as designers of fine modernist houses and churches in the 1950s and, later, of institutional buildings (most notably at private inner-suburban denominational schools). The present building, however, represents a unique foray into civic architecture by this leading modernist architectural firm. Although the architects designed a number of large block-like buildings of comparative scale – notably the Zoology Building at the University of Melbourne (1962) and the Australian Roads Research Broad headquarters at Vermont (1971-72) – there were much simpler in design and lacked the distinctive historicist articulation that is such a striking part of the character of the Camberwell Civic Centre.

## References

*The Argus*, 29 December 1923, p 20; 11 October 1924, p 27; 5 November 1935, p 10; 15 August 1939, p 2

“New Civic Centre of Camberwell”, *Architecture & Arts*, Sept/Oct 1967, p 33.

“Camberwell Civic Centre”, *Constructional Review*, August 1969, pp 40-43.

“The Camberwell Civic Centre”, *IES Lighting Review*, August 1969, pp 92-94.

“Cost analysis: new Civic Centre for the City of Camberwell, Victoria”, *Building Economist*, February 1970. pp 129-131.

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## Statement of Significance

### *What is Significant?*

The former Camberwell Civic Centre on Camberwell Road, Camberwell, is a monumental two-storey concrete building on a bluestone podium, with a flat roof behind a steel-deck mansard and a repetitive facade of pre-cast concrete (or “artificial stone”) units with rectangular windows at ground floor and round-arched windows above, and an off-centre ceremonial entry portico with massive piers, glazed walls and a boldly cantilevered copper-clad canopy. Internally, it contains several large halls (with panelled walls and purpose-made stalactite-like light fittings), offices and a council chamber with imported designer furniture. Designed by architects Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell, it was built in 1967-70 as a long-awaited upgrade to the City of Camberwell's existing civic precinct.

### *Why is it Significant?*

The building is of architectural and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria.

### *How is it Significant?*

Architecturally, the building is significant as the last truly monumental town hall – in the grand traditional sense – to be erected in Victoria. Completed in 1970, the building's distinctive abstracted historicist expression – specifically adopted to relate to the existing 1891 Town Hall nearby – is extremely rare in the design of post-war municipal offices, and contrasts with the more conventionally modernist approach to monumentality (eg Brutalist concrete) exhibited in council offices of the 1970s. The Camberwell Civic Centre can therefore be considered as a notably early and impressive example of the contextual approach to modern design that, three decades later, has now become the norm. The building is significant not only for the way in which it sensitively responds to the earlier Town Hall, but also as a grand civic monument in its own right. It is also significant as a unique and memorable foray into this type of public architecture by the prominent post-war practice of Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell. Who are more commonly associated with more conventionally modernist buildings.

Aesthetically, the building is significant as an outstanding example of the post-war Stripped Classical style in Victoria. While that idiom is most typically expressed through a modern adaptation of the traditional Greek temple form, the Camberwell Civic Centre – in a deliberate attempt to provide contextual design – instead invoked the Renaissance forms and details of the adjacent Boom-style Town Hall. The building, with its battered bluestone podium, quartzite finished pre-cast panels and distinctive round-arched windows with deeply splayed sills, exhibits an appropriate sense of civic grandeur, further enhanced by its elevated siting, generous setback and landscaped context.

## Suggested Extent of Registration

The entire building, comprising the original 1967-70 portion as well as the 1970s addition (which is considered to be a sympathetic addition) but excluding the more recent entry porch and covered walkway at the east end of the complex. The extent of registration should include a generous curtilage to the Camberwell Road frontage, to maintain the garden setting, the Michael Meszaros sculpture, and any original hard landscaping (including bluestone pitching, paving and the former fountain). Internally, all original furniture and light fittings should be included in the registration.

## Suggested Policy Guidelines

Retain and conserve all original furniture and light fittings, and create an inventory of remaining items.

The grand auditorium spaces should be retained as such, and not be subdivided by new partitioning or mezzanines.

Any future extensions or additions to the building should be restricted to the south (ie rear) frontage.

The small courtyard to the east end of the north frontage should remain as open space, with the 1982 sculpture retained *in situ*, and not be infilled.

## Suggested Permit Exemptions

None.

|                    |   |  |
|--------------------|---|--|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | Manningham City Council Offices & Manningham Gallery              | <b>008-008</b>   |
| <b>Other names</b> | City of Doncaster & Templestowe Council Offices (and art gallery) |  |
| <b>Address</b>     | 699 Doncaster Road<br>DONCASTER                                   | <b>Group</b> 008 Administration  |
|                    |   | <b>Category</b> 164 Council Chambers   |
| <b>LGA</b>         | City of Manningham  | <b>Style</b> Late Twentieth Century International                                |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1966-67<br>1977-79 (extensions)                                   | <b>Theme</b> 7.0 Governing Victorians  |
|                    |   | <b>Sub-theme</b> 7.1 Developing Institutions of Self-Govern't                    |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | Gerd & Renate Block (1966-67)                                     | <b>Builder/s</b> Keith G Hooker Pty Ltd (1966-67)<br>L U Simon Pty Ltd (1977-79) |
| <b>Artists/s</b>   | Anthony Pryor (1986 sculpture)                                    | <b>Engineers/s</b> -   |



East side of original 1966-67 building; note concrete blockwork



North side of original 1966-67 building; note fixed louvres



The street (south) frontage of the 1977-79 additions



The rear (north) frontage of the 1977-79 extensions

|                                   |  |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b> |  | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b> |   |
| AHC                               | <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> NT <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> HO <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Study <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | VHR                               | <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> AHC <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> HO <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <b>Level of Significance</b>      | State  | <b>Level of Significance</b>      | LOCAL   |

## History

The City of Doncaster & Templestowe (now City of Manningham) was once the Shire of Bulleen, from which one riding was severed in 1890 to create the Shire of Doncaster. Two years later, the remaining part was renamed the Shire of Templestowe and then, after local council reforms in 1915, the two municipalities reunited. Like many districts on the metropolitan fringe, it remained pastoral (mostly dairy and orchards) until after the Second World War, when intensive residential settlement saw the population increase from 3,8000 in 1947, to 11,200 in 1958 and 38,000 in 1966. This development placed enormous pressure on the local council, and its new municipal offices on Doncaster Road – a utilitarian two-storey cream brick building, erected in 1957 – was outgrown within a mere decade. Council's annual Statements of Accounts record two contracts from building contractors Keith G Hooker Pty Ltd: one, worth £13,236, for “erection and addition to municipal offices” in 1965-66, and another, worth £10,120, for “erecting and completing municipal offices” in 1966-67. Both contracts were executed by the prominent building firm of Keith G Hooker Pty Ltd, and the building itself designed by the German-born husband-and-wife team of Gerd & Renate Block. The couple was presumably commissioned because of recent acclaim as first prize winners in a 1964 competition to design a new civic centre for the nearby City of Nunawading.

In February 1972, a special *Age* newspaper feature on the ever-expanding Doncaster-Templestowe area noted that “the present Council Chambers, with their magnificent setting, looking down on the City of Melbourne on one side and then away on the other to the blue backdrop of the hills and mountains, are regarded as among the most outstanding municipal offices and council chambers in the state”. But such was the district's ongoing population increase – reportedly having the highest annual growth rate of any Australian municipality by 1973 – that the council premises were, once again, rendered inadequate within only a decade. Further expansion, to include new council chambers, reception rooms and committee rooms, was proposed, and the works entrusted to L U Simon Pty Ltd, builders and project managers. Tenders for sub-contractors were called between December 1977 and May 1978, and the building completed in 1979. This work entailed the demolition of the original 1957 building; while the 1970 wing was retained, it was largely engulfed by a series of slick glass and concrete wings in the fashionable Brutalist idiom.

In 1985, part of the complex was adapted as an art gallery, set up by the Doncaster & Templestowe Arts Association with council's support. The following year, a bronze and AusTen steel sculpture by Anthony Pryor, entitled *I am a man like you*, was installed alongside the building. After council amalgamations in 1994, management of the gallery was handed over to the new City of Manningham, which had taken over the entire premises. In 2001, the Manningham Gallery (as it had become known) was relocated to a purpose-built space within the new function centre at the council complex.

## Description

The former City of Doncaster & Templestowe municipal office is expressed as a group of discrete but attached blocks that step down a sloping site. As it was realised in several stages, the complex has a irregular footprint: a squat rectangular block fronting facing Doncaster Road, with an off-centre H-shaped cluster of blocks to the rear. The 1970 office building (itself an addition to the original 1957 shire hall, since demolished) is now only evident from the east and north-west approach to the complex, as it has been otherwise engulfed on three sides by the 1977-78 extensions.

The 1970 block is a two-storey flat-roofed modernist building on an elongated rectangular plan. Its two exposed facades are similarly treated, with random-coursed split concrete block walls at ground level, and conventional brickwork (painted grey) above, with tall metal-framed window bays, arranged in pairs, with small spandrel panels. Elevations are otherwise distinguished by rows of square metal columns that support the broad eaves, with tie-beams at the first floor level. On the north elevation, these columns also include rows of fixed metal louvred that act as a sun-shading device. The 1977-78 extensions are also flat-roofed, double-storey and block-like, although with an entirely different aesthetic. The front wing (on Doncaster Road) comprises a central projecting bay, flanked by two curtain-walled glazed volumes elevated on a windowless concrete podium. To the left, the podium includes a glazed entrance porch with a double-height *porte-cochere*. At each level, the central bay has full-height windows (with dark-coloured anodised metal frames and dark tinted glazing), delineated by a row of non-structural black-painted universal columns. The side and rear elevations are similar articulated, but with more extensive window bays at both levels, several projecting concrete fire-escape stairwells and, at the first floor, rows of fixed metal louvred, which are supported on tubular steel frames that project well outward from the wall surface to create a distinctive effect.

## Condition and Intactness

The substantial additions made in 1977-79 diminished the physical integrity of the 1966-67 building. The latter, which originally had an L-shaped footprint, was reduced to a single elongated rectangular wing, and otherwise engulfed on three sides by the new extensions. Today, the remaining part can only be seen from the north-east of the complex. Other changes, such as the overpainting of the first-floor brickwork, have also been made in more recent times. In themselves, the 1977-79 additions appear to remain in a substantially intact external condition, although some relatively minor changes (such as the double-height *porte cochere* on the street frontage) have been made. At the time of inspection for this project, the interior of the building was being subjected to a major refurbishment.

## Comparative Analysis

Previous assessments of this complex have failed to identify it as two discrete developments: the “original” International Style building designed by Gerd & Renate Block in 1966-67, with substantial additions in the style of a “Miesian pavilion”, added by others in 1977-79. Confirmation that the Blocks were not involved with the second phase (which dominates the complex today) means significance cannot be ascribed to that part of the building as “a notable work by two of Mies’ compatriots”. The fact that the earlier building has been conclusively dated to 1966-67 (as opposed to “circa 1970”) also means that it can no longer be considered as one of the last projects undertaken by the couple before they left for New Zealand in 1974. Partially demolished, altered and engulfed by subsequent additions, the Block’s original 1966-67 building can hardly be lauded as a particularly fine or intact example of their work. While the couple are not especially well-known as leading local practitioners of the modernist style, they did complete several projects that won acclaim from the architectural community and would thus be better contenders for inclusion on the *Victorian Heritage Register*. Their three most celebrated projects in Victoria are: the Biancardi House in Kew (1960), published in Neil Clerehan’s *Best Australian Houses*, and in several local (and even overseas) journals; the Siemens administration building in Church Street, Richmond (1964), which won a commendation in the 1965 Victorian Architecture Awards; the City of Nunawading Civic Centre on Whitehorse Road, Nunawading (1964-68), which won first prize in a much-hyped design competition.

In the *City of Doncaster and Templestowe Heritage Study* (1991), this building was ascribed with state significance “as the most complex and arguably the finest expression of a Miesian pavilion in the state”. This allusion is to the post-1940 work of the German-born American modernist architect, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1885-1969), which, as typified by Crown Hall at Illinois (1956) or the National Gallery at Berlin (1962), was characterised by a purity of expression with simple block-like forms, a limited palette of materials, and immaculate detailing. By their very minimalist nature, such buildings do not exhibit complexity, so it is ultimately contradictory to ascribe significance to the present building as “the most *complex* example of a Miesian pavilion in the state”. While the 1977-79 extensions do exhibit some Mies-like qualities (eg the podium-like massing, glazed walls and applied universal columns), certain other elements are alien to Mies’ spirit: the irregular footprint, projecting concrete fire-escape stairs and prominent metal-framed sun louvre screens. Moreover, the 1966-67 building, which can still be interpreted from the north-east side of the complex, remains more evocative of the mainstream International Style of the 1960s, with its random-coursed concrete blockwork and repetitive fenestration. Overall, the entire complex exhibits a busy-ness that is antithetical to the stripped-down approach of Mies van der Rohe. There are other buildings in Victoria, notably the South Yarra/Toorak Library (Yuncken Freeman, 1971), the same architects’ own offices in West Melbourne (1972) and the former BHP offices in Clayton (Eggleston, McDonald & Second, 1971) that are far more worthy of the title of “the finest example of a Miesian pavilion in the state”.

## References

- City of Doncaster & Templestowe Statement of Accounts*. 1965-67, 1966-67, 1967-68.
- “Doncaster-Templestowe: A Place to Live”, *Age*, 25 February 1972 (six-page supplement)
- “Doncaster-Templestowe: City growth five times the national average”, *Age*, 23 February 1973, p 15.
- “Cradle of the fruit growing industry in Victoria”, *Age*, 14 March 1975, p 9 (photograph of 1966-67 building)
- “Tenders”, *Age* 13 December 1977, p 17; 29 March 1978, p 23; 2 May 1978, p 39.
- Jenny Zimmer, *Anthony Pryor: Sculpture & Drawings, 1974-1991* (1999), p 102.



|                    |   |   |
|--------------------|---|---|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | Mornington Peninsula Shire Offices  | <b>008-009</b>  |
| <b>Other names</b> | Shire of Flinders Municipal Administration Building (former)              |   |
| <b>Address</b>     | 90 Besgrove Street<br>ROSEBUD   | <b>Group</b> 008 Administration   |
|                    |   | <b>Category</b> 164 Council Chambers  |
| <b>LGA</b>         | Shire of Mornington Peninsula   | <b>Style</b> Late Twentieth Century International   |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1973-76 (original building)<br>1986 (East Wing)                           | <b>Theme</b> 7.0 Governing Victorians   |
|                    |   | <b>Sub-theme</b> 7.1 Developing Institutions of Self-Govern't                                     |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | Don Hendry Fulton (1973-76, 1986)   | <b>Builder/s</b> Simmie & Company Pty Ltd   |
| <b>Designer/s</b>  | Don Hendry Fulton (furniture)<br>Carol Frank-Mas & Associates (landscape) | <b>Engineers/s</b> Hardcastle & Richards (structural)<br>W E Bassett & Partners (mech/electrical) |



*Original building (right) and bridge to East Wing (left)*



*Detail of fenestration to council chamber wing*



*Interior of the Council Chamber*



*East Wing*

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b>   | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b>   |
| AHC <input type="checkbox"/> - NT <input type="checkbox"/> - HO <input type="checkbox"/> - Study <input type="checkbox"/> - | VHR <input type="checkbox"/> - AHC <input type="checkbox"/> - HO <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <b>Level of Significance</b> Not previously assessed  | <b>Level of Significance</b> LOCAL  |

## History

When the Shire of Flinders proposed a new civic centre at Rosebud in the late 1960s, Shire Engineer Peter Parkinson recalled a local building that he admired – the award-winning BP administration block at Crib Point – and suggested that the same architect, Don Hendry Fulton, be engaged. Fulton drew up a masterplan for a civic centre “incorporating a range of community functions including library, community hall and art gallery, each able to contribute an individual image expressive of purpose, but integrated within the whole”. The first stage was to be the municipal office and council chamber, which would, as Fulton put it, be “presented as a prestige building, the image and quality of which the visitor will associate with the organisation for which it was designed”. At the same time, it was designed economically, with modular grid, pre-cast concrete panels (with local aggregate) and low-maintenance (but high quality) finishes. Particular attention was also given to lighting and acoustics. Initial working drawings (plans, sections) were completed in June 1973; documentation continued for two years, with final partition plans dated as late as May 1975. Another year later, on 21 April 1976, council staff moved into the finished building. This milestone was reported in the local press, which noted: “ratepayers and others wishing to do business at the new Civic Centre will find the new offices decidedly different from the old ones in Dromana... they are roomy and comfortable, with every facility for fast and efficient service”. These features included hi-tech audio equipment in the council chamber’s control room, and a “push-button illuminated plan console” that was used “as a public relations aid by automatically showing series of slides with taped commentaries”.

The building was to be officially opened two weeks later, on Saturday, 8 May, by the Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser; however, he became unavailable and sent Senator Alan Missen to perform the duty on his behalf (with the memorial plaque amended accordingly). Don Fulton recalls that his friend, noted architect John Mockridge, visited the building and suggested that it should be nominated for the RAI A awards. Fulton, however, was busy on other projects, and did not have time to prepare the required documentation. In any case, the building’s distinctive top-lit council chamber went on to receive the 1976 Meritorious Lighting Award from the Illuminating Engineers Society of Australia (Victoria). Fulton’s original civic centre masterplan was never fully implemented, although the architect was retained in 1986 to design a major addition to the building. Concerned about the relationship between old and new, he conceived the addition as a freestanding unit connected by an elevated walkway. With a limited budget preventing identical materials from being used, Fulton specified simpler ones, including mirrored glass to literally reflect the original building. The addition was officially opened by the Shire President, Cr Rowland J Brown, on 11 November 1987.

## Description

The original (1976) municipal office is a large double-storey reinforced concrete building, expressed as a monumental block-like form (first floor) elevated above a recessed podium (ground floor). It has a square plan (on a modular grid), with a rectangular bay (ie the council chamber) projecting slightly from the north-west corner, where the building is built into a slope. The low hipped roof is concealed by an overscaled concrete fascia, supported on concrete piers that define modular bays, infilled with pre-cast concrete panels and a continuous row of windows with bronzed metal frames. On the council chamber wing, to the north-west, windows are partly screened by matching concrete mullions. All of these pre-cast concrete units have a rough aggregate finish. The recessed ground floor has similar windows (some full-height) and conventional concrete block walls (some of which are not original, as part of the undercroft was originally an open carpark). Matching concrete ramps to the west and north frontages provide access to recessed porches, which constitute the main entry and the “official” entry for functions. A notable element on the north side is a freestanding concrete structure with steep roofline and timber slat screen, which conceals air-conditioning cooling towers.

Internally, some spaces have been altered; the council chamber remains intact, with its timber-panelled walls and ceiling, giant circular recessed light fixture and matching curved timber benches below. Throughout the building, pale-coloured timber (mostly lime-washed Mountain Ash) has been used for wall panelling, joinery, partition spandrels and furniture, with the latter (designed also by Don Fulton) also making use of contrasting black leatherette and laminate finishes, and bronzed metal.

The 1986 extension is also a block-like flat-roofed double storey building, albeit on a V-shaped plan. It has a beige-coloured concrete plinth, a curtain wall of mirrored glazing, and a fascia of metal sheeting that incorporates sculpted rainwater heads. The end of each wing is punctuated by an expressed concrete staircase of curved sculptural form: an open escape stair to the east, and an enclosed stairwell to the north; the latter, with its large circular window, also forms the point of connection to the original 1976 building, via an elevated walkway with barrel-vaulted tinted plastic roof.

## Condition and Intactness

Externally, the 1976 building is largely intact and in fine condition. The original expression of an elevated first floor over a recessed podium has been compromised by partial infilling of the undercroft (formerly a carpark) to create additional storage. Internally, the building remains intact except for the foyer, which was remodelled and reconfigured after council amalgamations in the 1990s. Don Fulton's Brutalist spiral staircase was removed, and the reception area (originally top-lit by a pyramidal skylight) converted into two meeting rooms. The council chamber is mostly intact, although the gallery seating and councillor's chairs have been replaced. Throughout the building, many original finishes and fittings remain, including Mountain Ash panelling, bronzed metal stair handrails, and kitchenette fit-outs with distinctive curved laminate benches. Much of the original furniture also remains (desks, cupboards, shelving and side tables), while Fulton's fastidious detailing remains strongly evident in such ingenious solutions as the concealed concertina partition in the committee room, the recessed towel dispensers in the toilets, and the built-in bar in the Shire President's room.

The 1986 extension is also mostly intact both internally and externally; the enclosed stairwell and pedestrian bridge, with their beige carpeted walls, tinted glazing and brushed aluminium handrails, remain particularly evocative of the period.

## Comparative Analysis

With its monumental expression as stark flat-roofed block, elevated on concrete piers, the municipal office at Rosebud can be compared with a number of contemporaneous local government headquarters of similar form. The former shire offices at Davey Street, Frankston (1965) and Fawckner Drive, Benalla (Perrott, Lyon, Timlock & Kesa, 1972) represent two especially pertinent comparators, although both are somewhat smaller in scale, with expressed concrete frames (piers and exposed floor slabs) and conventional brick infill.

The building at Rosebud is a highly significant one within the broader *oeuvre* of its architect, Don Fulton, who considers it "an extension of the same formula used at Westernport" – referring to the award-winning administration building at the BP Refinery at Crib Point, which not only won the 1966 RAI A Bronze Medal but also, pertinently, brought about the commission for the present building from the Shire of Flinders. The BP building is already included on the *Victorian Heritage Register*, in which it is lauded as a "remarkably intact building, combining the disciplined structure and detail of classical composition with a distinctive temple-like roof form, stylistically represents a shift away from the strict tenets of the International Style. Austere, rational and elegant, the building is an extraordinary example of Don Hendry Fulton's designs". The same could also be said of the later building at Rosebud which, if anything, evokes an even more primitive sense of monumentality though its stark pre-cast concrete units.

Ultimately, the municipal office stands on its own merits as a quintessential example of Don Fulton's distinctive and highly personal architectural style. By his own admission, the architect has "a passion for designing simple forms", together with a preference for modular planning (both as "an intrinsic insurance of economic optimisation" and to "present a very simple aesthetic formula") and a tendency toward monumental expression (influenced by an long-held admiration for the 12th century Cambodian temple complex of Ankor Wat). Fulton is also an advocate of total design, and considers that landscaping, interior design and furniture are integral components of an overall architectural scheme. He has also stated that, during the peak of his practice in the 1960s and '70s, he and his office staff were known for their fastidious detailing. Notwithstanding alterations to the fabric, all of these qualities or principles remain very strongly imbued in the design of the municipal administration building at Rosebud.

## References

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"Business as usual", *the Southern Peninsula Gazette*, 28 April 1976, p 12

*Shire of Flinders: Official Opening and Inaugural Council Meeting at Municipal Offices*. Souvenir booklet, May 1976.

"IES Meritorious Lighting Award (Victoria) 1976", *IES Lighting Review*, December 1976. Front cover and p 159.

*Special acknowledgement is made to architect Don Fulton, who generously supplied copies of the above material and kindly provided additional information about the building in an interview with Simon Reeves on 9 April 2010.*



|                    |  |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | City of Casey: Main Office and Council Chamber |                    | <b>008-010</b>                               |
| <b>Other names</b> | City of Berwick Municipal Offices              |                    |  |
| <b>Address</b>     | Magid Drive<br>NARRE WARREN                    | <b>Group</b>       | 008 Administration                           |
|                    |  | <b>Category</b>    | 164 Council Chambers                         |
| <b>LGA</b>         | City of Casey                                  | <b>Style</b>       | Late Twentieth Century International         |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1978   | <b>Theme</b>       | 7.0 Governing Victorians                     |
|                    |  | <b>Sub-theme</b>   | 7.1 Developing Institutions of Self-Govern't |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | Jennings Industries Ltd                        | <b>Builder/s</b>   | Jennings Industries Ltd                      |
| <b>Designer/s</b>  |  | <b>Engineers/s</b> |  |



North-west elevation, showing 1997 additions at right



South-east elevation, showing full-height window bay



View from north side, showing enclosed garden at right



North-west elevation of office block, showing window bays

|                                   |                          |    |                          |                                   |                          |       |                          |                              |                          |     |                          |       |                                     |  |  |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b> |                          |    |                          | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b> |                          |       |                          |                              |                          |     |                          |       |                                     |  |  |
| AHC                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | NT | <input type="checkbox"/> | HO                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | Study | <input type="checkbox"/> | VHR                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | AHC | <input type="checkbox"/> | HO    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |  |  |
| <b>Level of Significance</b>      |                          |    |                          | Not previously assessed           |                          |       |                          | <b>Level of Significance</b> |                          |     |                          | LOCAL |                                     |  |  |

## History

The municipality of Berwick began as a road district (1862) but was soon upgraded to a shire (1868) and remained as such for more than a century. During that long period, one of the original four wards was severed to create the new Shire of Ferntree Gully (1899), and the remaining three wards subsequently re-subdivided on two occasions (1901 and 1965). Finally, in October 1973, the City of Berwick was created from the shire's former Berwick and Doveton Ridings.

The provision of a new civic centre was a high priority, and council entrusted the project to Jennings Industries Ltd – the well-known and long-established Australian construction and development company, formerly known as A V Jennings, which had then only recently been restructured (and renamed) after the retirement of its eponymous founder, Sir Albert Jennings, in 1972. Although mostly associated with housing estates, the firm had, since the 1950s, expanded into the construction of larger-scale commercial, industrial and institutional buildings and, by the late 1970s, was moving even further toward offering full design, construction and project management packages.

The new City of Berwick presumably engaged Jennings Industries Ltd because the company, then based in Mulgrave, had recently undertaken a considerable number of large-scale construction projects in Melbourne's south-eastern fringe, including buildings at La Trobe University and the new VFL Park at Waverley (1966-70). The foundation stone for the new civic centre at Berwick was laid by the Mayor, Cr H B Hodson, on 17 February 1978.

Following council amalgamations in 1994, the former City of Berwick was merged with the City of Cranbourne and part of the City of Knox to form the new City of Casey. The former City of Berwick civic offices at Narre Warren were retained but remodelled, being officially re-opened by the Hon Robert Maclellan, MLA, on 23 July 1997.

## Description

The former City of Berwick civic offices, on Magid Drive, Narre Warren, is a large flat-roofed building of tilt-up concrete slab construction with a smooth brown-coloured pebbled finish. Built into a slope, the building comprises two discrete but connected parts: the double-storey square-planned block-like element at the highest point (containing the council chambers, kitchens, committee rooms and such) and the lower but more elongated rectangular office wing, which, owing to the slope of the land, is single storeyed to the east side and double-storeyed to the south. The two parts are connected by a common public foyer, which runs between them with an entrance at either end.

The council chamber wing exhibits an especially monumental character, with thick windowless walls terminated by a narrow recessed band supporting the massive slab-like roof, with broad eaves and concrete fascia. On the north and east sides of the building, the walls return inward to form recessed full-height window bays, with tinted glazing set into bronze anodised metal frames. The north window bay is off-centre, while the east one is centred, and further delineated by a row of concrete piers to define six narrow strips of glazing. The latter facade also incorporates a covered walkway at ground level, with another slab-like roof supported on square piers, which returns along the side of the adjacent office block and extends thence towards the otherwise detached public library building further east. On the opposite (south) frontage, a matching concrete wall defines an enclosed garden and loading dock. There is also a projecting glazed box to the right side, which contains a new staircase that was added as part of the 1997 refurbishments.

The large office wing, although constructed of similar materials, is expressed somewhat differently. The elevations to the east and south have rows of small square or rectangular windows (with matching anodised frames and tinted glazing); at the south-east corner, the walls step inward to create a small garden alcove with bays of full-height windows. The double-storeyed west elevation contains a row of four double-height rectangular alcoves that form recessed window bays, with full-height glazing to each level, a concrete spandrel between, a set of fixed sun-shading louvres above, and landscaping below. The foyer entrance to the left side, which was remodelled in 1997, has full-height doors and contrasting silver-coloured panelling and matching cantilevered canopy roof.

Internally, the building has no spaces of particular architectural merit. The new public foyer and staircase are both typical of the 1990s, with sloping coloured planes, curved walls, highly polished metal and glass. The ground floor meeting rooms have plaster walls, acoustic tile ceilings and operable laminate panel doors between them. The original council chamber, on the first floor, is a large space, more akin to a conference room, with a ceiling of anodised metal slats, operable panels with a light-coloured timber veneer facing, and matching double doors.

## Condition and Intactness

Externally the former City of Berwick civic offices are substantially intact, except for those alterations made to the south elevation when the building was refurbished in 1997. These changes included the construction of a new staircase (expressed externally as a double-height class-walled projection from the council chamber building) and the new foyer entrance, with its cantilevered canopy and flanking walls in a shiny grey-and-silver colour scheme that contrasts sharply with the brown pebbled concrete finish of the original building. New colonial-style powder-coated metal palisade fencing has also been erected across some of the garden courts on the west frontage of the office wing.

Internally, the principal semi-public spaces (conference rooms, council chamber) appear to remain intact, although the main public foyer has been remodelled.

## Comparative Analysis

Although A V Jennings Pty Ltd (later Jennings Industries Ltd) is mostly associated with the development of suburban residential estates from the 1930s to the 1980s, the post-war period saw the company expand into the construction of larger non-residential projects such as schools, hospitals and university buildings. From the early 1970s, Jennings completed a number of high-rise city office blocks, such as Nubrik House in William Street (1971), and also began to experiment with (and then become highly proficient at) the use of the new tilt-up concrete slab system. The firm's Construction Group underwent a lull during 1974-75 (prompted, as noted in the official history, by the "chaotic economic and industrial environment") but subsequently boomed in the latter half of that decade, to the point that, for the first time ever, the Construction Group outshone the Housing Group. The official history further records that:

In the 1970s an increasing proportion of new work was government rather than private, a reflection of increased government spending in the period as well as the flatness of the private sector. In both sectors, the [Construction] Group sought increasingly to find more design and construction work such as the Kingston Heath Primary School and the Berwick Civic Centre in Victoria. This was the effective start of the move by the company, considerably expanded in the 1980s, to provide all-round project management service rather than just construction.

The Berwick Civic Centre can thus be considered to be of some historic interest as evidence of the new direction taken by Jennings Industries Ltd after the 1970s. This, however, does not necessarily equate with historic significance at the state level, as a number of other buildings in Victoria (eg the Kingston Heath Primary School in Cheltenham) demonstrate this same aspect. The school at Cheltenham, which opened in 1976, not only pre-dates the Berwick Civic Centre by two years, but also, with its cluster of open-planned pyramid-roofed pavilions linked by covered walkways, is probably the more architectural interesting of the two projects.

Considered on its own merits, the Berwick Civic Centre is of limited architectural significance. While its monumental massing and stark wall surfaces (expressed through the modern medium of textured pre-cast concrete slabs) are certainly of some interest, this aesthetic is better demonstrated by other buildings in Victoria – not least of all by two near-contemporaneous civic centres assessed for the present project: the Camberwell Civic Centre (Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell, 1967-70) and the former Shire of Flinders Civic Centre at Rosebud (Don Hendry Fulton, 1973-76).

## References

Don Garden. *Builders to the Nation: The A V Jennings Story*. (1990)



|                    |  |                    |   |
|--------------------|--|--------------------|---|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | Wangaratta Government Centre; City of Wangaratta Municipal Offices |                    | <b>008-011</b>  |
| <b>Other names</b> | Wangaratta Arts Centre (Stages 1 & 2); Education Services Building |                    |   |
| <b>Address</b>     | 62-68 Ovens Street<br>WANGARATTA                                   | <b>Group</b>       | 008 Administration  |
|                    |  | <b>Category</b>    | 164 Council Chambers  |
| <b>LGA</b>         | Rural City of Wangaratta   | <b>Style</b>       | Late Twentieth Century Brutalist  |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1976-77 (Stage 1)<br>1979-80 (Stage 2)                             | <b>Theme</b>       | 7.0 Governing Victorians  |
|                    |  | <b>Sub-theme</b>   | 7.1 Developing Institutions of Self-Govern't                                    |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | Grahame Shaw & Partners (both stages)                              | <b>Builder/s</b>   | Noel Mealey & Associates P/L (1976-77)<br>Citra Constructions Limited (1979-80) |
| <b>Artist/s</b>    | Hans Knorr (1980 sculpture)  | <b>Engineers/s</b> |   |



*The former Education Services Building (1976-77)*



*The Rural City of Wangaratta Municipal Offices (1980)*



*Detail of Ovens Street (west) frontage, showing battered base*



*Rear (east)frontage of the complex*

|                                   |                            |    |                            |                                   |                            |       |                            |                              |                            |     |                            |       |   |  |  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|----|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----|----------------------------|-------|---|--|--|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b> |                            |    |                            | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b> |                            |       |                            |                              |                            |     |                            |       |   |  |  |
| AHC                               | <input type="checkbox"/> - | NT | <input type="checkbox"/> - | HO                                | <input type="checkbox"/> - | Study | <input type="checkbox"/> - | VHR                          | <input type="checkbox"/> - | AHC | <input type="checkbox"/> - | HO    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes |  |  |
| <b>Level of Significance</b>      |                            |    |                            | Not previously assessed           |                            |       |                            | <b>Level of Significance</b> |                            |     |                            | LOCAL |   |  |  |

## History

The origins of this complex of massive concrete buildings date back to the early 1970s, when the Education Department proposed that its various operations in Wangaratta (ie the district inspector's office, the special education section, the physical education section and the audio-visual section) might be consolidated in a single building. This had never been attempted in regional Victoria, and no less innovative was the department's unusual decision to entrust the project to the City of Wangaratta, rather than the PWD. A site was selected beside the existing (1962) municipal offices in Ovens Street, and, in collaboration with council, the project expanded into an ambitious proposal for the Wangaratta Centre for the Arts. Reportedly modelled on the *Maison de Culture* in Bourges, it was to be realised in three stages: the Education Services Building, new municipal offices, and the conversion of the existing municipal offices into an arts venue. It was later enthusiastically reported that "while none of these stages is unique in itself, it is their interlocking that is exciting". Melbourne architects Grahame Shaw & Partners were commissioned to undertake the project; tenders for Stage One were called in August 1976, and the contract awarded to the lowest tenderer, Noel Mealey & Associates Pty Ltd. The contract was signed in October, and, with completion slated for December 1977, construction began.

Problems emerged in early 1977 when it became apparent that sub-contractors had not been paid. Some tradesmen ceased working and, as the number of creditors increased, the ostensible completion date came and went. Optimistically, the council commissioned a plaque for the opening ceremony on 16 February 1978. However, a few days before, after one supplier had issued a writ to the contractor, the firm of Noel Mealey & Associates went into liquidation. With two weeks to completion, the City of Wangaratta took over the contract; new documents were prepared and most of the sub-contractors agreed to return. The official opening was rescheduled for 12 June 1978, to coincide with a visit to Wangaratta by the Premier, Sir Rupert Hamer. Notwithstanding the problems with the project (which, incidentally, prompted questions in Parliament about the appropriateness of engaging unverified private contractors on government projects), the City of Wangaratta proceeded with Stage Two, for new municipal offices, which were erected alongside and officially opened on 5 June 1980 by the Governor of Victoria, the Honourable Sir Henry Winneke. The same year, a carved wooden sculpture, entitled *Out of the Deep*, was erected beside the building – a major public work for German-born sculptor Hans Knorr (1915-1987), who had been artist-in-residence at the 1980 Wangaratta Colonial Festival.

In 2009, the City of Wangaratta built a new arts centre elsewhere, and the old municipal offices and Playhouse Theatre on the corner of Ovens and Ford streets were demolished. The former Education Services Building has since been remodelled as the Wangaratta Government Centre, and the front portion of the adjacent municipal office (which included new council chambers) is presently (2010) being gutted and refurbished for new uses.

## Description

The former Wangaratta Centre for the Arts (Stages 1 & 2) comprises a cluster of multi-storey buildings that, typical of the Brutalist style of the mid-1970s, are expressed as stark volumetric masses in off-form concrete. The Ovens Street frontage is still interpreted as two separate blocks, built right to the property boundary: the former Education Services Building (to the right) and the former municipal offices (to the left). The former building has a battered base plinth and a recessed ground floor level, which was originally open but has since (as part of the recent refurbishments) been partly infilled by a new window bay, clad with rusted steel plate. Above, the upper levels are contained with a huge and windowless projecting mass, delineated by a series of horizontal grooves. The adjacent municipal office is similarly expressed, with a recessed ground floor (providing space for an pedestrian ramp and steps to the off-centre foyer entry) and a projecting and windowless upper level. To the right side is a projecting double-height canted bay, which presumably contains a stairwell. The north-east (ie left) elevation of the building has a continuous bay of full-height windows (with dark-coloured anodised metal frames) and two large square window openings at the first floor.

The former Education Services Building and municipal office are separated by a recessed portion that defines a landscaped courtyard on the street. Its front wall also has continuous bays of anodised metal-framed windows at each level, and off-form concrete spandrels (where, for contrast, the marks of the timber formwork run horizontally, rather than vertically). There is a second and similar recessed wing to the left of the municipal office, with similar fenestration at the upper level and a double *porte-cochere* below, supported on square concrete columns. Hans Knorr's sculpture, in the form of a huge C-shaped piece of carved timber, stands to the left side of the double driveway. At the rear of the complex is a large multi-storey office block, with the same facade treatment of continuous window bays alternating with off-form concrete spandrels with horizontal board-marks.

## Condition and Intactness

Externally, the complex is substantially intact, although the recent (2009-10) refurbishments have made a number of obvious changes. The original 1962 municipal offices at the corner of Ovens and Ford streets, have been demolished and replaced by a new double-storey wing, which now forms the principal public entry point to the complex. This wing, with its vertical bays of clear glazing, rusted metal plate cladding and fixed louvres mounted on projecting metal frames, represents a lively (and not entirely inappropriate) contrast to the stark concrete of the 1970s building. Similar detailing has been incorporated the new infill on the ground floor of the former Education Services Building. The adjacent municipal office is virtually untouched externally, although it is currently (2010) being gutted internally. The building's principal frontages to the street, and to the rear, retain their original (and quite distinctive) unpainted off-form concrete finishes and dark-coloured anodised metal0-framed windows.

## Comparative Analysis

Aesthetically, the building can be considered as good and (at least externally) a relatively intact example of the Brutalist style that was widely popular in Victoria for about ten years from the late 1960s. Its extensive use of rough off-form concrete finishes and its expression as a series of large windowless volumes that project over recessed bays is entirely typical of the style. The battered plinth of the former Education Services Building is perhaps a somewhat less common detail, while the contrasting horizontal and vertical board markings on the concrete also produces an interesting effect. However, the complex certainly pales when compared to more celebrated examples of this controversial style, such as the Plumbers & Gasfitters Employees in Melbourne (Graeme Gunn, 1970), which, with its expressed open staircases and splayed volumes, exhibits a far more sculptural use of off-form concrete. The former Wangaratta Centre for the Arts does not stand up as Brutalist building of significance at the state level, especially when there are other more notable examples – such as the remarkable former Western Regional office of the MMBW in St Albans Road, Sunshine North (A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall, 1977) that have yet to be assessed in more detail.

Otherwise, the complex is of architectural and historical interest for its associations with an ambitious and innovative scheme for a regional “Centre of the Arts” that was reportedly inspired by a counterpart in France. The unusual background to the project – as a collaboration between the Education Department and the City of Wangaratta that was undertaken through the private sector rather than the PWD – is also of some interest. These associations, however, are strongest at the local or regional level, and do not equate with a case for state significance. Although recently altered and no longer used for entirely its original purposes, the complex remains as a prominent feature in central Wangaratta and is thus considered to be of heritage significance at the local level.

## References

- “Builder goes bust”, *Wangaratta Chronicle-Despatch*, 15 February 1978, p 1.
- “Crash hits a City in the Centre”, *Age*, 25 May 1978, p 4.
- “Premier voices support for proposed Arts Centre”, *Wangaratta Chronicle-Despatch*, 12 June 1978, p 1.
- “Adopted son unveils city's new complex”, *Wangaratta Chronicle-Despatch*, 6 June 1980, p 1.



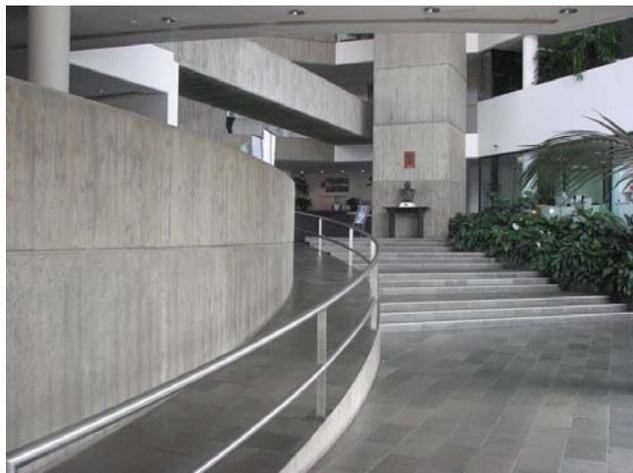
|                    |  |   |
|--------------------|--|---|
| <b>Identifier</b>  | City of Monash Civic Centre            | <b>008-012</b>  |
| <b>Other names</b> | City of Waverley Civic Centre (former) |   |
| <b>Address</b>     | 293 Springvale Road<br>GLEN WAVERLEY   | <b>Group</b> 008 Administration   |
|                    |  | <b>Category</b> 164 Council Chambers  |
| <b>LGA</b>         | City of Monash                         | <b>Style</b> Late Twentieth Century International   |
| <b>Date/s</b>      | 1982-84                                | <b>Theme</b> 7.0 Governing Victorians   |
|                    |  | <b>Sub-theme</b> 7.1 Developing Institutions of Self-Govern't   |
| <b>Architect/s</b> | Harry Seidler & Associates             | <b>Engineers/s</b> W L Meinhardt & Partners (structural)<br>Peter Knowland & Associates (acoustics)<br>Claude Engle (lighting consultant) |
| <b>Builder/s</b>   | Civil & Civic Pty Ltd                  |   |
| <b>Designer/s</b>  | Michael Johnson (tapestry)             |   |



General view, showing sculptural front wing and round pool



View from north, showing projecting stairwells



Entrance foyer/atrium, showing elevated walkway and lift shaft



Top-lit Council Chamber, with original chairs and granite bench

|                                    |                          |    |                          |    |                                    |       |                              |     |                              |     |                              |    |                              |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|----|------------------------------------|-------|------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|----|------------------------------|
| <b>Existing Heritage Listings</b>  |                          |    |                          |    | <b>Proposed Heritage Listings</b>  |       |                              |     |                              |     |                              |    |                              |
| AHC                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | NT | <input type="checkbox"/> | HO | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes       | Study | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | VHR | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | AHC | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | HO | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <b>Level of Significance</b> Local |                          |    |                          |    | <b>Level of Significance</b> STATE |       |                              |     |                              |     |                              |    |                              |

## History

Proclaimed in 1961, the City of Waverley occupied modern premises in Springvale Road for another two decades, when it was moved that a new and larger building was needed. The Civic Centre Sub-Committee first met on 18 May 1981; within seven months, council had engaged Civil & Civic Pty Ltd, Australia's leading building contractors and project managers, to prepare sketch plans for a \$5.5million building. The choice of Civil & Civic was no doubt spurred by the firm's recent success with another municipal project, the Karralyka Theatre at Ringwood, which won the 1980 RAI (Victorian chapter) Bronze Medal. This was built on a project management basis, where, as part of the package, Civil & Civic engaged an architect as their own consultant: esteemed Sydney-based modernist Harry Seidler, whose fruitful association with Civil & Civic went back over two decades (starting in the late 1950s with such projects as *Blues Point Tower*). Engaged to build the Waverley Civic Centre, Civil & Civic turned again to Seidler to provide architectural input.

For his own part, Seidler was pleased to be working again in Victoria. Of the Waverley job, he later said: "In New South Wales, I have always fought with local government . . . but in Victoria, this local council wanted only the most progressive architecture." Because of Seidler's high profile in the Australian (and international) architectural scene, several leading consultants became involved in the project, including Sydney-based acoustic designer Peter Knowland (best known for his work on the Sydney Opera House) and prominent American lighting designer Claude Engle (who worked with Seidler on the Australian Embassy in Paris). Typically, Seidler specified expensive imported materials (eg Norwegian quartzite, Indian granite) and designer furniture, including black leather armchairs by Otto Zapf, GF chairs by David Rowland, and Wassily and Cesca chairs by architect/designer (and Seidler's former employer) Marcel Breuer. Local talent was represented by a raw wool rug by Pat Jarrett and a tapestry by award-winning Sydney-based artist Michael Johnson.

The new Waverley Civic Centre was officially opened by the Governor of Victoria, Rear Admiral Sir Brian Murray, AO, on 22 November 1984. The building was well received by the citizens of Waverley and the architectural community, and was published in local and overseas journals. Like its earlier counterpart at Ringwood, it received kudos from the RAI (Victorian chapter), winning the Merit Award for Outstanding Architecture (Institutional Building) in 1985. The building remains a much-loved local landmark; when the new amalgamated City of Monash was created in 1994, it adopted a logo based on the curved roofline of the council chamber. The 25th anniversary of the official opening was celebrated in November 2009, with some specially-commissioned public art installed in the building's circular pond.

## Description

The Waverley Civic Centre comprises a three-storey block on a canted L-shaped plan, with a projecting two-storey wing at the corner. The rear block, containing two office wings flanking a central atrium, has an exposed concrete frame (delineating floor and parapet lines) infilled with fawn-coloured split concrete block. Windows are screened by large fixed vertical concrete louvres, with rainwater spouts at the base. At the end of each office wing is a projecting enclosed fire stair. The two-storey front wing comprises an elevated volume, clad in white ceramic tile, which projects outward, supported at the end by a single central column that rises from a circular pool. This undercroft forms a *porte cochere* to the main entry, with a circular driveway around the pool. The parapet of the elevated wing comprises two quadrant-shaped walls, forming a semi-circular vault to admit light into the council chamber through a semi-circular skylight. This striking feature (described in one journal as being "reminiscent of Veronese battlements") incorporates a boldly projecting rain-spout at the base of the quadrant walls, which drains into the pond below. The main approaches to the building, from east and west, are marked by gate-like elements with large concrete-framed blockwork panels, raised on columns; the path from Springvale Road also incorporates one of Seidler's trademark crinkle-crankle walls.

Internally, the main building is dominated by an atrium defined by a grid of plain columns with stark white-painted walls, large areas of glazing and a grey quartzite floor. A long curved ramp leads up from the main entry to a raised reception area, where access to the upper levels is provided by a freestanding lift shaft and an open staircase of sculptural form, while an elevated walkway extends back across the atrium to the council chamber. All of these elements (along with balustrade walls to the ramp, stairs, mezzanine balconies and walkways) are of rough off-form concrete. The council chamber is rectangular, with roughly rendered walls and a funnel-shaped element at the far end, which rises up to support the semi-circular and turret-like skylight, infilled with translucent glazing. The curved bench, of dark brown Tamin granite from India, is original, as are the black leather Otto Zapf chairs. The gallery seating, however, has been replaced. Most of the office areas still have their original white laminate partitions with glazed highlights, while even the public toilets retain matching laminate partitions, with original grey and white tiling and granite benchtops.

## Condition and Intactness

Not surprisingly, given its relatively recent date of construction, the Waverley Civic Centre remains in excellent condition and a highly intact state. Indeed, it has been scrupulously maintained (and virtually unaltered) since its completion in 1984. When seen from outside, the building closely resembles the images published in the 1980s. It is regrettable, however, that new multi-storey buildings to the north and south of the site have compromised its original context.

The building's interiors also remain notably intact. With the exception of some partition reconfiguration in the open-planned office areas, much of the interior remains as it was in 1984. Even the public toilets retain original tiling, partitions and granite benches to vanity units. The atrium/foyer and council chamber are also intact, although some of the original designer furniture has gone, including the GF chairs (council chamber) and the Wassily Chairs (foyer). The tapestry by Michael Johnson and the wool rug by Pat Jarrett have also been removed from the foyer, although the former (and some of the Wassily chairs) is known to currently be in storage in the City of Monash Art Gallery.

## Comparative Analysis

Often cited as Australia's greatest (and most internationally recognised) architect, Harry Seidler began practice in Sydney in 1949 and, over more than five decades thence, designed buildings across New South Wales, in Canberra and Queensland, and around the world (Hong Kong, Mexico, France, Austria). However, he only designed few buildings in Victoria, of which some – eg schemes for the Chevron Hotel (1969) and the Grollo Tower (1995) – were not built. His five extant projects in Victoria comprise the Karralyka Theatre in Ringwood (1980), the Waverley Civic Centre (1982-84), Shell House in Flinders Street (1985-89) and the Exhibitions Gallery in Waverley (1990). Despite their chronological proximity, the four buildings are quite different and demonstrate contrasting aspects of Seidler's design approach. Of the four, the gallery (designed also for the City of Waverley) is probably the least notable, not only because it was conceived as the first stage of a larger development that did not eventuate, but also because it has recently been extended to the design of other architects. Shell House in Flinders Street, which is Seidler's best-known local project, stands as a fine and typical example of his distinctive approach to the design of high-rise towers. The Karralyka Theatre is rather less typical in Seidler's *oeuvre*; as Norman Day observed in 1980, the building exhibits “a softening of Seidler's harsh aesthetic” and, “marks a new phase for him”. This same tendency can be observed in some of Seidler's later buildings of the 1980s and '90s.

By contrast, the Waverley Civic Centre stands out as the most *quintessential* Harry Seidler building in Victoria, in the sense that it illustrates, in one single building, many of the forms, themes, finishes and details that recur throughout the architect's best work from the 1950s to the 1970s. The use of an exposed concrete frame with block infill recalls projects such as the Victoria Apartments at Potts Point (1962), while overscaled vertical sun-louvres recall the Meller House at Castlecrag (1950) or Seidler's own offices in Milson Point (1971-73). The elevated pedestrian bridge and freestanding lift shaft recall the Housing Commission flats at Rosebery (1964-67), while the Brutalist off-form concrete and boldly sculpted rainwater spouts echo Seidler's own house in Killara (1966-67). Other key aspects of the design, including the complex atrium space, projecting fire-escape stairs, textured wall surfaces (ie council chamber), polished marble and granite, beige-coloured split concrete block, European designer furniture, integrated public artwork and low curving walls to define pathways and landscape areas, are all recurring motifs in Seidler's earlier (and subsequent) works.

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## Statement of Significance

### *What is Significant?*

The Waverley Civic Centre at 293 Springvale Road, Glen Waverley, is a flat-roofed building comprising a three storey L-shaped wing (with expressed concrete frame, fawn-coloured split blockwork infill and fixed vertical louvres) and a smaller projecting two-storey wing (clad in white ceramic tile, with a distinctive curved parapet). The interior is dominated by a large double-height atrium with quartzite floors and an open staircase, freestanding lift shaft and elevated walkway in rough off-form concrete, while the council chamber (contained in the projecting front wing) is a unique top-lit space, with granite benches, leather Otto Zapf armchairs, and a funnel-shaped feature that supports a turret-like semi-circular clerestory at the far end. Erected in 1982-84 by leading contractors/project managers Civil & Civic, the building was designed by esteemed Sydney-based modernist, Harry Seidler, as one of his few forays into Victoria.

### *How is it Significant?*

The Waverley Civic Centre is of architectural and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria

### *Why is it Significant?*

Architecturally, the civic centre is significant as a notable example of the work of Harry Seidler, often cited as Australia's greatest (and most internationally recognised) architect. The building is intrinsically rare as one of only four buildings in Victoria ever erected to the design of this prolific (but Sydney-based) designer. Of these four, it stands out as the most quintessential Seidler building in Victoria, as it incorporates many forms, themes elements that recur throughout the architect's finest work from the 1950s to the 1970s. These include the use of an expressed concrete frame with brick or block infill, overscaled fixed vertical sun louvres, highly sculptural forms (exhibited here by the expressed fire escape stairs and the council chamber parapet), crinkle-crankle landscape walls, complex atrium spaces, elevated walkways, freestanding lift shafts, roughly textured internal wall surfaces (ie council chamber interior), off-form concrete, polished marble and granite (atrium floor and benches to council chamber, toilets, etc), imported designer furniture and integrated artwork (some of which has been removed)

Aesthetically, the civic centre is significant as an outstanding example of Late Twentieth Century International Style architecture, designed by Australia's leading exponent of that idiom. The building is illustrated in *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture* as a quintessential example of Late Twentieth Century International, exhibiting no fewer than eight of the twelve "style indicators": cubiform overall shape, expressed structural frame, overhang for shade (ie *porte cochere*), plain wall surfaces, sun control devices (ie fixed louvred), assertive cantilever (ie front wing), contrasting non-rectangular shape (ie curved parapet) and contrasting texture (ie the use of split blockwork). The atrium, by contrast, combines elements of the International Style (plain columns, white walls) with some fine Brutalist details (ie off-form concrete balustrade walls, freestanding lift shafts, open stairs and elevated walkways) to striking effect; the space must be considered as one of the best (and certainly best-preserved) Brutalist interiors in Victoria. The International Style character of the interior is also exhibited by the use of expensive high-quality finishes and items, including the quartzite flooring to the atrium, the granite benches, and the remnant designer furniture.

## Proposed Extent of Registration

The entire building and environs (pool, pathways, gates and crinkle-crankle walls), with a curtilage extending to Springvale Road. All of the original designer furniture and integrated artwork should be included in the registration, even in those cases (eg Michael Johnson tapestry and Wassily chairs) where it is currently being stored off site. The framed RAI award certificate from 1985, presently displayed in the upstairs committee room, should also be included.

## Proposed Policy Guidelines

The original furniture and artwork in the foyer (Wassily chairs, tapestry and raw wool rug) should be reinstated.

## Proposed Permit Exemptions

New kitchen and toilet fitouts

Partition alterations in the open-planned office areas (provided that original partitions are retained and re-used)

## APPENDIX: Biographical Data on Architects and Firms

A number of places documented in this study represent the work of architects or firms whose careers are not well documented in readily-available secondary sources. The following provides a brief biographic and professional overview of these architects:

- Douglas Alexandra
- Gerd & Renate Block
- Charles Duncan
- Bernard Evans (Evans Murphy Berg & Hocking)
- Godfrey Spowers Pty Ltd
- A C Leith & Bartlett
- A K Lines MacFarlane & Marshall
- Muir & Shepherd
- Grahame Shaw & Partners
- Horace Tribe
- G Stuart Warmington
- Robert G Warren

Except where otherwise acknowledged, biographical information contained in the above citations has been drawn from private research files maintained by Simon Reeves; many of the citations themselves have been condensed from expanded versions included in the on-line *Dictionary of Unsung Architects*, maintained by Built Heritage Pty Ltd.

Biographical citations on the following architects or firms were not provided here, as these are considered to be sufficiently well-known (or at least well-documented) through monographs, journal articles, websites or other readily available sources.

- Buchan Laird & Buchan
- Gregory Burgess
- Chancellor & Patrick
- Denton Corker Marshall
- Don Hendry Fulton
- David Godsell
- Jennings Industries Ltd
- Mockridge Stahle & Mitchell
- Harry Seidler
- Dr Enrico Taglietti
- Yuncken Freeman Pty Ltd

## DOUGLAS ALEXANDRA

The son of a Greek cafe proprietor, Douglas Alexandra (*ne* Diomedes Alexandratros) was born in Shepparton in 1922. He joined the Australian Army at the age of nineteen years and, after serving for eight months, transferred to the RAAF. In January 1944, Flying Officer Alexandratros embarked on a Lancaster mission to Berlin but never returned; he spent a year as a POW in Germany before being repatriated to London in May 1945. Discharged in 1946, he anglicised his name and gained his Bachelor of Architecture at the University of Melbourne, being admitted as an ARAIA in 1950.

Opening his own office, Alexandra promptly emerged as one of Melbourne's first post-war modernists. One of his earliest projects, for a pair of maisonettes on a narrow site in Meyer Road, Burwood (1951) was published in the *Australian Home beautiful* the following year, lauded for the way in which it "breaks away from the old familiar features of this type of dwelling .. by the pleasantly simple design". His Klotzman House in Ringwood (1953), expressed as an elevated box, was published even more widely and was considered Melbourne's answer to the Rose Seidler House in Sydney. Such slick modernist dwellings formed the mainstay of Alexandra's practice in the 1950s, and they frequently appeared in journals (notably *Architecture & Arts*), the property column of the *Herald* newspaper, and slim monographs such as *New Australian Homes* and Beryl Guertner's *200 Home Plans*. Amongst the projects thus published were the Middleton House in Auburn (1954), the Hattam House in Kew (1955), the Stockdale House in Toorak (1959), the Reidy House in Kew (1959) and the Kauffman House in Beaumaris (1961). Alexandra undertook relatively new non-residential commissions during the 1950s; noted examples including kindergartens at Burwood (1957) and Beaumaris (1955). During this key period, he also found time to lecture in design at the University of Melbourne.

In 1963, Alexandra entered into partnership with fellow Melbourne University lecturer Raymond Berg (1913-1988), established their office in *Chelsea House*, Flemington Road, North Melbourne. The firm, styled as Berg & Alexandra, went on to design a string of major municipal projects in regional Victoria, including the Shepparton Civic Centre, the Mildura Arts Centre, the Hamilton Art Centre and Regional Library and the Traralgon City Hall and Theatre. They also designed the Raymond Priestly Building on Melbourne University's Parkville campus (in conjunction with staff architect Rae Featherstone) as well as projects for the Commonwealth Bank, the Church of England Home for the Aged and the Mildura Base Hospital. There were relatively fewer residential commissions during this period, although standout examples included houses at Balywn, Surrey Hills and Croydon, along with Alexandra's own house on the Boulevard at Ivanhoe (1963), overlooking the Yarra River flats

Ray Berg, who received the RAIA Gold Medal in 1974, retired in 1983 and died five years later. Douglas Alexandra, who wrote Berg's obituary in *Architecture Australia*, died in 2000.

## BLOCK, GERD & RENATE

Born in Germany, Gerd Block (born 1926) and his wife Renate (1926-84) met while studying architecture at the Karlsruhe Technical University. After graduation and marriage in 1950, the couple migrated to Australia, with their infant son, in 1951. They gained local experience in the office of H A & F L Norris while designing and building a house for their own use in Montmorency. Completed in 1955, the house was published in both the *Age* newspaper and the *Australian Home Beautiful*. By that time, the Blocks had already commenced their own home-based architectural practice, specialising in residential projects. The Biancardi House at 20 Yarra Street, Kew (1960), with its striking triple-fronted facade clad in basket-weave brick panels, was published locally (most notably in Neil Clerehan's *Best Australian Houses*) and internationally (in the German journal *Baumeister*). The couple went on to achieve greater fame for some much-publicised non-residential projects, including the new Australian headquarters of Siemens Pty Ltd, in Church Street Richmond (1964), which received a commendation in the General Buildings category in the 1964 Victorian Architects Awards. The following year, they won first prize in a design competition (against Chancellor & Patrick, Berg & Alexandra, Howlett & Bailey and others) for the new Nunawading Civic Centre; the building was completed in 1968.

In 1972, Gerd Block completed a Ph D on industrial building, which was said to be the first time in Australia that a doctorate in architecture had been awarded for a subject not connected with history. Block himself taught at Melbourne University until 1974, when he accepted the Foundation Chair of Architecture at Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand. The couple remained in New Zealand for about a decade, during which, in addition to Dr Block's academic duties, he and his wife maintained a private practice, designing several houses in Wellington.

## CHARLES DUNCAN

Born in 1933, Charles Duncan matriculated from Melbourne Grammar School in 1951 and then completed his Diploma of Architecture at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology between 1951 and 1959. During and immediately after that time, he gained experience in several prominent city architectural offices, including L Hume Sherrard, Chancellor & Patrick, Eggleston McDonald & Secombe, Peter Jorgensen, McGlashan & Everist, and Hassell & McConnell, before opening his own office in July 1962. His first commission for a new house, designed and built for the Williams family in Glenard Drive, Heidelberg, was completed in 1963. This striking dwelling, with planar walls of blue clinker brick, full-height glazing and a stepped flat roof with clerestory windows and stained timber fascias, won the Victorian Architectural Medal in 1965 and was still much admired ten years later, when it appeared in Norman Day's book, *Modern Houses: Melbourne*. Its earthy Wrightian character became a hallmark of Duncan's subsequent output, which consisted almost entirely of single dwellings in the leafy outer eastern suburbs (Heidelberg, Eltham, Lower Plenty, etc). His design for the Eltham South Kindergarten – a rare non-residential commission – was included in an exhibition of recent work by Melbourne architects under the age of 35 years (curated by the Young Members Committee of the Victorian Chapter of the RAI), and was subsequently published in *Architecture Australia* in October 1967.

During the later 1960s and early 1970s, Charles Duncan's houses often appeared in magazines and daily newspapers. One especially notable project, the Tozer Homestead at Beaconsfield (1964) won him another architectural award and was published in the *Age*, the *Australian Women's Weekly* and *Architecture Australia*. Several other residential designs, including the the Walsh House in Heidelberg (1967) and the Okalyi House at Lower Plenty (1968), received *Age*/RAIA citation awards, while others, such as the Knott House in Heidelberg (1969) and the Lovering House in Kew (1971), were profiled as "House of the Week" in the *Australian Women's Weekly*. Duncan's reputation as a producer of fine organic houses saw him engaged, along with Daryl Jackson, Graeme Gun and McGlashan & Everist, to design the houses at the award-winning Merchant Builders estate of *Elliston*, at Rosanna (1969)

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## BERNARD EVANS

Born in Manchester in 1905, Bernard Evans migrated to Australia with his family when he was eight years old. Evans began his professional career under his father, a builder, for whom he worked for four years while studying at the Prahran Technical Art School. He went on to work for MMTB architect George Monsborough (1926-29) and then for Box Hill timber merchants A E Weston Ltd (1929), for whom he designed low-cost timber dwellings. Evans commenced his own practice around 1930, concentrating initially on residential projects. He designed a number of apartment blocks including several on the fringe of the CBD (Queens Road, St Kilda Road and Royal Parade), in a variety of eclectic styles including Moderne and Tudor Revival. Some of these were built for Western Australian property developer Claude de Bernales, who subsequently retained Evans to remodel several properties in Western Australia, to design the *London Court Arcade* (1937) in Perth, and even his firm's London headquarters, *Westralia House* (1938). Registered as an architect (somewhat belatedly) in 1940, Bernard Evans enlisted with the AIF and served at Tobruk and El Alamein, discharged with the rank of Brigadier.

After the War, Evans re-established his Melbourne office as Bernard Evans & Associates, which became one of the largest post-war firms in Victoria. It was responsible for many multi-storey buildings in the CBD, including the Legal & General building (1956) and CRA House (1965), both on Collins Street, and London Assurance House on Bourke Street. He built many more on St Kilda Road: an office block at No 505 (1959), the *Sheridan Court* flats at No 485 (1959), the Stanton Flats at No 622 (1960) and the impressive class-walled VACC headquarters at No 464 (1962). During this period, Evans was also well-known for his innovative ideas; he pioneered of strata-title legislation in the 1950s, and was an early champion of the West Gate Bridge and City Square projects. He served as a councillor on the Melbourne City Council for more than 25 years (from 1948 to 1971), with a stint as Lord Mayor (1958-60). He was knighted in 1962.

In 1971, Bernard Evans, retired from architectural practice to devote himself to public activities. His firm continued under the name of Bernard Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking (with Evans still serving as a consultant) until it ceased four years later. Evans suffered a mild stroke in 1978, and died in February 1981.

## **GODFREY & SPOWERS PTY LTD**

The firm of Godfrey, Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb grew from a partnership formed by W S P Godfrey (1872-1953) and H H Spowers (1872-1933) in 1901. After the latter's death, and the entry of the former's son, W P Race Godfrey (1908-1983), the office began to reject its historicist leanings for the more progressive Moderne style, typified by the 3AW radio studio at 382 Latrobe Street (1934) and the Bank of NSW premises at 368 Collins Street (1934) – the latter winning the 1936 RVIA Street Architectural Medal. By the end of the decade, the firm had embraced a starker Functionalist style, as seen at the South Yarra Club (1938) and Race Godfrey's own flat-roofed house at Frankston (1939), both of which featured in Robin Boyd's *Victorian Modern* (1947). Around that time, the elder Godfrey retired, and the firm was restructured with some younger staff admitted to partnership: Geoffrey Mewton (lately in partnership with Roy Grounds), Eric Hughes (of Hughes & Orme) and John Lobb (ex-Stephenson & Turner). Re-badged as Godfrey, Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, the firm subsequently became well-known for fine modern houses. A series of flat-roofed timber dwellings, such as the Bridgford House in Black Rock (1949) and the Satchell House in Beaumaris (1950), were designed by Mewton in a style evocative of W W Wurster. By the mid-1950s, the firm had expanded into larger-scale projects such as the Freemasons' Home for the Aged in Prahran (1955), a warehouse for Green-McCandish in West Melbourne (1955), and factory complexes for British Australian Tobacco at Bentleigh (1956) and Silcraft Industries at Notting Hill (1957). One of the firm's most noted projects during this period was a new multi-storeyed curtain-walled office building in Collins Street for Allans & Co, music publishers (1956), which resulted in further high-rise city commissions including the Bank of Adelaide in Collins Street (1959), AFG Insurance and Hilton Hosiery in William Street (both 1960), and National Mutual at 447 Collins Street (1963-65). The last, erected on the former Eastern Market site and incorporating a large forecourt, was one of the most published projects of the day.

During the firm's heyday of the 1950s and '60s, its staff included a number of younger associates who were part of the emerging generation of post-war architects, including Sisakraft scholar John Davidson, pioneer female architect Babs Delaney (and her husband W W Delaney), Ken Hardcastle and Norman Payne. By the mid-1970s, Davidson, Delaney and Hardcastle all become directors of the firm alongside a septuagenarian Race Godfrey (whose accolades by that time included the 1967 RAI Gold Medal and an OBE for services to architecture). Godfrey retired in 1979, followed by Lobb in 1982 and Mewton in 1985. Although this marked the end of an era, the firm nevertheless continued, and it remains in operation to this day under the name of Spowers Architects.

## **A C LEITH & BARTLETT**

Arthur Cedric Leith (1897-1975) came from a family of architects. His Scottish-born father, George Brown Leith (1858-1937) settled in Melbourne in 1879 and worked as a builder for twenty years before turning to architecture. A long-time resident (and one-time mayor) of Essendon, he designed many houses and shops in Melbourne's northern suburbs. In 1912, he was joined by his eldest son, George Burridge Leith (1888-1969), who won a Bronze Medal for measured drawing in 1905, and the two men practised as G B & G Burridge Leith until 1922, when the latter became Chief Architect of the State Savings Bank. By the end of the decade, George Burridge's half-brother, Arthur Cedric, had begun his own practice under the name A C Leith & Associates. Towards the end of 1934, he was joined by Harold Edward Bartlett (1902-1994). The first diplomate from Geelong's Gordon Institute of Technology, Bartlett had undertaken "extensive experience abroad" during the 1920s and early 1930s before being invited back to his *alma mater* in 1933 to head its architecture school. However, Bartlett held the post only briefly before joining A C Leith in partnership.

A C Leith had undertaken municipal projects as early as 1927, when he designed a shire hall at Ringwood. However, his firm's subsequent commission for the new Heidelberg Town Hall (1934-37) won such acclaim (including the 1939 RVIA Street Architecture Medal) that the practice of A C Leith & Bartlett was soon in demand as Victoria's leading specialists in the design of local government buildings. The office went on to design municipal offices at Morwell (1936), Wycheproof (1937), Numurkah (1938), Mirboo North (1938) and elsewhere, and to remodel or rebuild countless other. This trend continued well into the post-war era with such projects as the Kew Civic Centre (1959), the Lilydale Town Hall (1961) and the municipal complex at Burnie in Tasmania (1973). During the post-war period, Leith & Bartlett also completed many significant non-municipal projects, including a several high-rise Collins Street office developments: a building for Underhill Investments Pty Ltd (1959), the ANZ head office (1960) and, in conjunction with Godfrey, Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, the ambitious National Mutual complex (1963-65). The office also maintained a fruitful association with the Victorian Racing Commission, designing its headquarters at 418 St Kilda Road (1958) as well as grandstands at the Flemington (1956) and Moonee Valley (1959) racecourses.

## A K LINES, MACFARLANE & MARSHALL

The prominent post-war firm of A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall grew from the inter-war practice of Albert Keith Lines (1897-1981), whose career began before 1916 as an articled pupil of Claude Merritt. After wartime service, Lines returned to Melbourne to work for Morewood & Rogers, a prolific house building firm, for whom he designed and supervised many commercial, retail and residential projects. In 1923, Lines opened his own office and, five years later, took on a teenaged Jessica MacFarlane (1911-95) as an articled pupil. The prestige of the small firm increased during the 1930s with a stream of large-scale residential projects in the prosperous middle-class suburbs of Balwyn, Camberwell and Kew. Several houses (some designed and supervised by MacFarlane) were published in the *Australian Home Beautiful*. The practice was briefly suspended during the Second World War, but re-opened in 1945 with MacFarlane as a full partner. Three years later, they were joined by Bruce Marshall, ex-RAN, who was himself elevated to partnership in 1952. Although MacFarlane left the office in 1954 (when she married and moved to South Australia), her surname was retained in the firm's title.

Much of the subsequent output of A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall was guided by Bruce Marshall, whose expertise was in larger-scale commercial and industrial work. This new direction was evident in such projects as the factories for Ruston & Hornsby at Dandenong Road, Clayton (1954), and Yakka Overalls Pty Ltd at Ballarat Street, Brunswick (1955). From the late 1950s, the firm also became one of Victoria's leading specialists in the design of municipal offices. This trend had actually begun just before the War, when Lines & Marshall (as it was then known) designed the new Eltham Shire Offices (1941). After restrictions on building activity were relaxed in the 1950s, the firm was commissioned to design a new modern headquarters for the Shire of Benalla (1958-59). For more than three decades thence, the provision of council offices and related municipal buildings formed the mainstay for the office of A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall, with notable examples being built at Oakleigh (1962), Myrtleford (1967), Ringwood (1970) and elsewhere.

Albert Lines retired in 1967, but his firm continued, and remains in operation to this day.

## MUIR & SHEPHERD

John William Muir (born 1911) was born in Ballarat, where he commenced his own architectural practice in 1933 and subsequently undertook a number of small-scale local projects including the rebuilding of the Jubilee Sunday School and the remodelling of the premises of Greenfields Pty Ltd, auctioneers. Muir later moved to Melbourne, where he joined the office of the top-drawer modernists Stephenson & Turner; by the end of the decade, he had risen to the position of Senior Draftsman, working on such projects as the pathology block at the Women's Hospital (1937-39) and the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute (1939) at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. Also employed by Stephenson & Turner at that time was a younger architect, Arthur Redmond Shepherd (1914-1999). As was typical of the time, the careers of both men were interrupted by the Second World War. Shepherd enlisted in 1943 and served with the 2/1 Field Company before being discharged in 1946 with the rank of Captain. He and John Muir then entered into partnership as Muir & Shepherd. The office began (and evidently remained) a small one, with three young employees: Ted Gillies, Richard Allen and James Earle (the last of these later to become a well-known Melbourne architect in his own right)

Residential commissions comprised the bulk of the firm's output during the 1950s; several were published in popular housing journals of the day, such as the Jacobson House in Brighton (1953) and the Pickering House in Ivanhoe East (1956). Probably the firm's best-known residential project was the home of G W Fraser in Balwyn (1956), lauded by the *Australian House & Garden* as "a modified contemporary home – that is, a house which combines the good ideas in modern architecture with the softer finish of the traditional". A simple gable-roofed cream brick dwelling, this presented a fully-glazed north-facing facade to the street, with full-height glass sliding doors opening onto a paved terrace with eggcrate pergola, and a projecting flat-roofed bay with matching eggcrate window wall. A slightly later and more purely modernist dwelling was the Hunt House at 439 Beach Road, Beaumaris (1960), which was published in the *Herald* property column. With its volumetric massing, inward-sloping skillion roof and balustraded sun deck, this steel-framed brick-veneer beach house remains a landmark on the esplanade. Research to date has identified few non-residential projects carried out by Muir & Shepherd. The funeral home for W G & Apps & Sons (1952-53) is certainly the most notable of these; others appear to have been more prosaic, such as the tenancy fitouts for Brighter Homes and Downyflakes Donuts at the new Chadstone Shopping Centre (1960).

The firm of Muir & Shepherd ceased in 1980, although John Muir did not retire fully for another seven years thence.

## GRAHAME SHAW & PARTNERS

The son of a nurseryman from Geelong, Grahame Richard John Shaw (1928-1985) obtained his Diploma of Architecture from Gordon Institute of Technology and later travelled to London, where he worked in the office of Riches & Blythin. Returning to Melbourne, Shaw obtained a position with the Housing Commission of Victoria and was elected as an ARAIA in 1960. Shaw subsequently developed an interest in town planning and landscape architecture; he became the first graduate in the new Bachelor of Town & Regional Planning course (B TRP) at the University of Melbourne, and later became an associate of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA).

In 1967, while still employed by the Housing Commission, Shaw worked on the preparation of a planning scheme for the City of Footscray in conjunction with architects Earle & Partners. At the conclusion of the project, he accepted Jim Earle's offer to join the firm permanently. Earle's practice, founded in 1954, was then best known as designers of single residences and ecclesiastical buildings. With his expertise in town planning and landscape architecture, Grahame Shaw steered the firm in an entirely new direction, introducing larger-scaled multi-dwelling projects such as the Cross Street townhouses in Carlton (1970-71), which was Melbourne's first co-operative housing development. Shaw left Earle's office in 1972 to form a partnership with two recent Melbourne University graduates, John Denton and Bill Corker, who, two years later, would team up with Barrie Marshall to form Denton Corker Marshall. Shaw then established his own office, styled as Grahame Shaw & Partners, and went on to complete such projects as the Wangaratta Arts Centre (1976-80) and the much-published World Trade Centre on the bank of the Yarra River (1981). In 1985, the year of his sudden death, Shaw was working on an ambitious (but ultimately unimplemented) master plan for Royal Park.

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## HORACE J TRIBE

Horace James Tribe (1908-1992) began his career in 1924 as an articled pupil of H W & F B Tompkins. In 1930, he transferred to the office of Stephenson & Meldrum, where he worked on large interstate hospital and industrial projects as well as the *Spirit of Progress* fitout. During this time, he also worked as a relieving draftsman for Oakley & Parkes (and married Percy Oakley's only daughter, Florence, in 1935) and Hudson & Wardrop. In 1933, the young Tribe won a design competition for a house to cost £850; the following year, he narrowly missed out on winning the inaugural Robert & Ada Haddon Travelling Scholarship. In late 1938, he went into partnership with prominent society architect Marcus Martin (1892-1981). Styled as Marcus Martin & Tribe, the firm initially specialised in the sort of high-class residences (mostly in Toorak and South Yarra) that characterised Martin's pre-War career; four fine examples later appeared in George Bier's *Houses of Australia* (1948). Martin & Tribe also fostered an interest in buildings for social welfare, and specifically an association with the Free Kindergarten movement. This began with a commission to design the prototypical Lady Gowrie Childcare Centre in Carlton (1939) and led on to several other suburban kindergarten projects. The partnership was interrupted by the Second World War, during which Tribe served with the RAAF then worked as a technical adviser to the Commonwealth Directorate of Housing before re-joining Martin in private practice.

The partnership of Martin & Tribe was dissolved in mid-1949, when Horace Tribe left to start his own practice. Outstanding commissions that had been received by the partnership were subsequently divided amongst the two men, who completed them under their own names: Martin finished off the Boys' Home in Highett and two kindergartens in Burwood and Fitzroy, while Tribe carried on with the Robert Cochrane Kindergarten in Auburn and some additions to the Ware Holiday Home in East Ringwood. Tribe maintained this kindergarten association in his sole practice, designing examples at Swan Hill (1953), Korumburra (1954), Ringwood (1955) and elsewhere. In 1955, it was noted in *Architecture & Arts* journal that Horace Tribe maintained "an extensive practice in pre-school and preventive health services, good quality domestic work and industrial buildings". Projects from this phase of his career included a house in Springvale Road, Mitcham (1950), an office/warehouse for J C Hutton Pty Ltd in High Street, Preston (1954) and a block of flats in Pleasant Road, Hawthorn (1960). During this time, he also served as architect to the South Melbourne City Council, where he designed a children's play centre (1955), remodelled the Trugo Club premises (c.1958) and undertook various other projects.

Horace Tribe retired from practice in the early 1970s, but retained his registration until his death in 1992.

## G STUART WARMINGTON (PTY LTD)

Gordon Stuart Warmington was born in 1922 in Sunshine, where his father, a second cousin of industrialist H V McKay, had settled (after migrating from Ireland to take up a position in McKay's Sunshine Harvester Works. The family later moved to Rosanna, where Stuart Warmington (as he preferred to call himself) matriculated from Ivanhoe Grammar School in 1939 and then commenced the architecture course at Melbourne Technical College. His studies, however, were interrupted by World War II (during which Warmington served with the 42 ALC Company of the Royal Australian Engineers), and he did not complete his qualifications until 1948. Warmington then entered the office of Frederick Romberg, whom he cites as a key influence in his subsequent career. In Romberg's employ, Warmington worked on a number of significant projects, and prepared the working drawings for the important (but since demolished) *Hillstan* flats on the Nepean Highway. After leaving Romberg's office, Warmington went overseas with some other young graduates; they visited the Festival of Britain in London and travelled through Spain, France and Sweden. On his return to Melbourne, Warmington was briefly associated with John & Phyllis Murphy, whose office he ran while the couple were busy with working the Olympic Swimming Stadium project.

Around 1953, Warmington established his own sole practice. One of his first projects was a house that he designed for himself at Greensborough, which, inspired by the simple timber-clad dwellings he had recently seen in Scandinavia, was published in the *Australian Home Maker*. Soon afterward, Warmington was approached by the then recently-proclaimed City of Sunshine to undertake a minor project in the absence of the council's usual architects, Armstrong & Orton, whose office had been depleted when several staff travelled overseas. Warmington was subsequently retained by the Sunshine City Council for over twenty years, during which time, he recalls, he worked more than thirty projects for local government and community buildings. This culminated in a master plan for the civic centre, which was realised in several stages between 1962 and 1967. He also undertook a few non-municipal projects in the area, notably the new funeral parlour for Nelson Brothers (1966-67). Such was Warmington's long and fruitful association with the thriving western suburb that he was once loftily described by the local newspaper as "the Burley Griffin of Sunshine".

## ROBERT G WARREN

Born in Somerville, Robert George Warren (1920-2002) matriculated from Huntingtower College in 1936 and enrolled in the Diploma of Architecture course at the Melbourne Technical College. Concurrent with his studies, he spent 3½ years in the office of Leslie M Perrott & Partners, during which time he mostly worked, by his own admission, on industrial and hotel projects (the latter, presumably, including Perrott's celebrated Hotel Australia in Collins Street). In 1941, Warren enlisted in the Australian Army and served with the Royal Australian Engineers for the next five years. After studying at the School of Military Engineering in Sydney for four months, he became a commissioned officer and spent 18 months in the Pacific Islands and three years in Australia, during which time he was involved with "constructional work of all kinds", including camps, hospitals, bridges and roads. Discharged in September 1945 with the rank of Lieutenant, Warren returned to Leslie Perrott's office in Melbourne and continued working there until at least April 1946. By March 1947, he had opened his own office in Black Rock. Relatively little is known of Warren's practice during this period, although he is known to have designed group housing developments at Sandringham, Beaumaris and St Albans.

In the early 1950s, Robert Warren and his wife, Joyce, moved to Canberra, although he maintained his registration as an architect in Victoria until 1961. In 1954, Warren's office was one of six architectural firms (along with Grounds Romberg & Boyd, Fowell, Mansfield & Maclurcan, Hassell & McConnell, Borland Murphy & McIntyre and Mockridge Stahle & Mitchell) invited to prepare schemes for the new Academy of Science building at Canberra. Although the commission was ultimately awarded to Roy Grounds, who proposed a bold circular building with shell-concrete dome, Warren was one of two other competitors (along with Borland Murphy & McIntyre) who proposed buildings of similar form and structure. For his part, Warren remained interested in shell concrete domes for some time; a few years later, in 1958, he prepared a scheme for St Phillip's Church of England in the Canberra suburb of O'Connor, which included a circular domed chapel of a blob-like form that "suggests the tense balance of drop of water on a flat surface". The structure, although published on the cover of *Architecture & Arts* in January 1959, was never built. Warren had more success in 1961, when he revived the dome idea for the council chamber at the Altona Civic Centre – his last known project in his home state of Victoria. Warren went on to undertake a number of significant projects in the ACT, notably the Queanbeyan Recreation & Leisure Centre (1960-61), where shell-concrete domed structures were once again featured. In 1969, he (temporarily) left Canberra to work as a consultant on a low-cost housing development in Indonesia.

