

Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture

RSTCA No: R007

Name of Place: Ainslie (Primary) School

Other/Former Names:

Address/Location: Facing Donaldson Street (within Doonkuna/Elder/Donaldson Streets and Limestone Avenue Block) BRADDON 2612

Block 1 Section 31 of Braddon

Listing Status:	Registered	Other Heritage Listings:	
Date of Listing:	1984	Level of Significance:	Local
Citation Revision No:	3	Category:	Educational
Citation Revision Date:	October 1985	Style:	Art Deco

Date of Design:	1936	Designer:	Dept of the Interior Works & Services Branch EH Henderson (Chief Architect) C Whitely (Design Architect)
Construction Period:	1938	Client/Owner/Lessee:	
Date of Additions:		Builder:	

Statement of Significance

A fine example of a symmetrically-composed school building of the late 1930's Art Deco style, with a central 2-storey section, stepping up to the vertical entrance element. The formal composition of the facade closes the vista from Goren Street opposite. Claimed to be the first primary school in Australia to be planned with a library, needlework room, and lecture room with tiered seats. Characteristics of the Art Deco style are apparent in the details of the facade and interior, and as represented by the library mural and entry foyer. The well-treed grounds and front landscaping link the building to the related infants building and site. The building is of particular historical and social importance to North Canberra.

Description

The building was originally planned with separate 2-storey wings for girls and boys facing Donaldson and Elder Streets, linked by a central assembly hall. Only the Donaldson Street wing was built to the 1936 plan. The structure is rendered brick with a red brick base, with a well-articulated facade, which has recesses and projections to achieve verticality at the entrance, aided by a variety of parapet heights along the flat roof. Art Deco details and styling include arrow-like ventilators and fluted elements externally and internally. In 1938, the library was presented with a remarkable mural and 3 other paintings by Canberra artist Mrs J. Nielson.

The brief from the Department of Interior also required a generous allowance for classroom size, and for the school to take over all functions of primary schooling from the adjacent infants school, while providing complimentary facilities.

Condition and Integrity

Good.

Background/History

Analysis against the Criteria specified in Schedule 2 of the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991

(i) a place which demonstrates a high degree of technical and/or creative achievement, by showing qualities of innovation or departure or representing a new achievement of its time

(ii) a place which exhibits outstanding design or aesthetic qualities valued by the community or a cultural group

(iii) a place which demonstrates a distinctive way of life, taste, tradition, religion, land use, custom, process, design or function which is no longer practised, is in danger or being lost, or is of exceptional interest

(iv) a place which is highly valued by the community or a cultural group for reasons of strong or special religious, spiritual, cultural, educational or social associations

(v) a place which is the only known or only comparatively intact example of its type

(vi) a place which is a notable example of a class of natural or cultural places or landscapes and which demonstrates the principal characteristics of that class

(vii) a place which has strong or special associations with person, group, event, development or cultural phase which played a significant part in local or national history

(xi) a place which demonstrates a likelihood of providing information which will contribute significantly to a wider understanding of natural or cultural history, by virtue of its use as a research site, teaching site, type locality or benchmark site

References

Other Information Sources