

Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture

RSTCA No: R032

Name of Place: Barton Conference Centre

Other/Former Names:

Address/Location: Brisbane Avenue & National Circuit BARTON 2600

Block 1 Section 13 of Barton

Listing Status:	Registered	Other Heritage Listings:	
Date of Listing:	1986	Level of Significance:	Local
Citation Revision No:	2	Category:	Commercial
Citation Revision Date:	February 1989	Style:	Organic

Date of Design:	1965	Designer:	Enrico Taglietti
Construction Period:	1966-67	Client/Owner/Lessee:	Associated Chamber of Manufacturers Australia
Date of Additions:		Builder:	AV Jennings

Statement of Significance

Designed by internationally recognised architect Enrico Taglietti. The building is an unusual example of the architect's work in Canberra, emerging from the surrounding scene of regular architecture as a free expression of individual design. The innovative design solution, a result of a difficult and small site left over from another building, places most of the conference hall below ground level, and the portion above the ground, composed of horizontal lines and battered slopes, appears as a sculpture. The pond and fountain on the flat roof provides an innovative technical solution to insulate the building, and cool water for the air conditioning plant. The pool was intended to reflect the surrounding landscape and contributes to the successful integration of the building and the site, although in contrast to the surrounding buildings.

Description

Designed as the conference centre for the Associated Chamber of Manufacturers of Australia, whose federal headquarters adjoin. The design solution also allowed the building to be comfortably quiet and free from visual distraction, by locating the portion of the building containing the conference chamber below ground level. The building is divided into two components - the area at ground level, which contains the main foyer, kitchen and rest rooms, and the underground section which includes the discussion chamber, and intermediate lobby, plant and store rooms. Viewed from the surrounding areas the exposed elements of the building are distinctive, strong profiles, boldly sculptured. There is a small landscaped courtyard between the conference centre and the headquarters. The underground conference chamber is a tanked structure of reinforced concrete. The roof structure comprises a reinforced concrete slab spanning between outer walls and a single mid-span beam, stiffened at the perimeter by an integral beam featuring splayed sides. The roof slab cantilevers beyond the walls and is turned up to contain the pond. The fountain in the pool is a series of diminishing tiers. The structure at ground level is brick construction. External finishes combine board marked concrete to the pool surround and end walls of the lobby area, while tyrolean render to retaining walls, and oiled western red cedar fascias. Six large timber panels display the coat of arms of each State of the Commonwealth, designed by the architect. The architect was involved in the design of all the fittings and furniture for the building, except the chairs. This included tables and light fittings.

Condition and Integrity

Adjacent office building demolished in 1986 and replaced by new building, but the integrity of the Conference Centre was preserved. The entry and ground floor foyer have been amended.

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