

Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture

RSTCA No: R061

Name of Place: Monaro Mall

Other/Former Names:

Address/Location: Bounded by Ainslie Avenue, Bunda Street, Petrie Plaza and City Walk
CANBERRA CITY 2601

Block 1 Section 51 of City

Listing Status:	Registered	Other Heritage Listings:	
Date of Listing:	October 1986	Level of Significance:	
Citation Revision No:	3	Category:	Commercial
Citation Revision Date:	February 1987	Style:	Stripped Classical

Date of Design:	c.1960	Designer:	Whitehead & Payne Architects
Construction Period:	17 July 1961-1963	Client/Owner/Lessee:	Lend Lease
Date of Additions:		Builder:	Civil & Civic

Statement of Significance

The design of the building was advanced for its time as the first enclosed shopping centre in Australia. The innovative design solution produced by Whitehead and Payne after studying overseas trends, provides for an internal focus rather than the traditional rows of shops facing streets. It also provides a controlled internal environment and encourages a social climate indicative of earlier market squares. Slim pillars 9.15m high faced with S.A. granite support an arched roof with a significant mosaic tile design by Frank Hinder on the soffit. The building's construction techniques were advanced a flat plate slab design, precast wall panels, an unusual technique of precasting planks for the basement retaining walls, and the design of the roofing to allow for expansion and contraction over a large area of roof sheeting. Historically and socially important to Canberra, and particularly Civic Centre the building was opened by R G Menzies on the 6th March, 1963 and double the retail shopping floor area then in the ACT.

Description

A rectangular box, covering the whole site of 92m square with an internal central space of three storeys. The building was originally encircled by roads, and is now flanked on two sides by pedestrian malls, in effect changing the front entrance facades. The building is of flat slab design, with beams introduced to take abnormal load conditions for lifts and escalators, and a basement retaining wall of precast concrete blanks locked in place by a perimeter beam. The pitched roof of the building, of hip and rafter truss construction, is sheeted in aluminium decking treated to reduce glare, and detailed to accommodate the movement caused by Canberra's extremes of temperature. The building originally contained 3 major and 58 smaller shops. Small arched canopies shelter the pavement display windows, and above large areas of wall add to the building's scale and rhythm. The walls are finished in grey Italian marble, Imperial black granite from S.A. and Japanese and Italian mosaic tiles. On the first floor is a geometric abstract mural 6m long and 3.35m high covering one wall, also by Frank Hinder. An interesting revolving sculpture designed by Hazel Hinder hung from the roof above the central concourse, but has since been removed. Constructed of welded tubular steel and powered by its own motor in the ceiling, it turned slowly all the time and sparkled with reflected light.

Alterations

Escalator condemned by Department, July 1977, new escalator installed in 1978. The building has been significantly altered since the citation was produced in 1987.

Condition and Integrity

Excellent.

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