

Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture

RSTCA No: R004

Name of Place: Sydney and Melbourne Buildings

Other/Former Names:

Address/Location: Bounded by London Circuit, Northbourne Avenue, Alinga Street, West Row and East Row CIVIC 2601

Block Section 1, 48 of City

Listing Status:	Registered	Other Heritage Listings:	
Date of Listing:	1984	Level of Significance:	National
Citation Revision No:	1	Category:	Commercial
Citation Revision Date:	November 1985	Style:	Mediterranean

Date of Design:	1926	Designer:	John Sulman & J Hunter Kirkpatrick, DE Limburg (Architects Office FCC)
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Construction Period:	1926-46	Client/Owner/Lessee:	
Date of Additions:		Builder:	individual

Statement of Significance

The buildings are of historical significance in Canberra's Civic Centre as the first buildings constructed by private enterprise in Canberra, and as focal points in the townscape design. The buildings were constructed strictly to control drawings, while individual owners built each section of the building filling in the interior space to client's needs. The buildings were erected progressively to an overall plan in 1926-7 and 1941-6, as individual buildings with party walls: a nationally significant aspect, and symbolic of the control of Canberra's development. Designed by two significant architects - John Sulman who designed the buildings in sketch form, John Hunter Kirkpatrick developed their design as Design Architect to FCC. Sulman's broad concept of arcaded loggias is derived from Brunelleschi's Foundling Hospital and the cloisters of the Church in San Lorenzo in Florence. They establish the character and scale of the city's retail and business area, the loggias providing sheltered pedestrian paths, and the uniformity of the buildings linking the city across a main arterial road.

Description

A symmetrical pair of commercial buildings, constructed of stuccoed brick with ground floor columnar arched arcades and open upper-floor verandahs, now mostly glazed. The Beaux Arts interpretation of rhythmical Classical design highlights the mouldings, projections and embellishments. A recent restoration along West Row has opened verandahs, showing the architect's original intent. All other verandahs have been enclosed. The buildings combine a pitched Roman tiled roof, with a flat (originally asbestos cement) roof in the centre, and are embellished with cast roundels, shields and consoles on the arcaded facades (ranges). These solid elements with pedimented parapets and central arches divide the pattern of the arcades into appropriate lengths. The buildings surround service courtyards planted with a row of trees, and accessible from the northern and southern ranges.

Condition and Integrity

Varied. Buildings have been altered and added to for commercial purposes.

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