

Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture

RSTCA No: R066

Name of Place: East Block Government Offices

Other/Former Names:

Address/Location: Corner Kings Avenue and Queen Victoria Terrace PARKES 2601
Block 1 Section 51 of Parkes

Listing Status:	Registered	Other Heritage Listings:	
Date of Listing:	1986	Level of Significance:	National
Citation Revision No:	2	Category:	Government/ Diplomatic
Citation Revision Date:	November 1987	Style:	Stripped Classical

Date of Design:	1924	Designer:	JS Murdoch (FCAC) design, HM Rolland (FCC) administration
Construction Period:	1925	Client/Owner/Lessee:	Commonwealth of Australia
Date of Additions:		Builder:	

Statement of Significance

Camp Hill is part of the Parliamentary Triangle. In his concept for the Parliamentary Triangle, W B Griffin determined that a Camp Hill Parliament should form the climax for a group of Government Buildings. East and West Blocks are located in this area; they were designed by J S Murdoch, Chief Architect and Director General of Works and display the character of Federal Capital architecture of the time. Together with the Provisional Parliament House they form a group of well balanced planning and site layout, complementing one another in architectural character. In social and historical terms they housed early Parliamentary functions in Canberra.

East Block is historically significant because it originally housed the Canberra GPO, Telephone Exchange, and offices of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Original pneumatic tubes system for passing telegrams and cables to Parliament House still functions.

Description

The building is symmetrical in plan, with a 3-storey central section and 2 storey blocks on each side. It has a brick base with a painted rendered finish above ground floor level. The fenestration has a strong pattern of vertical proportions and a symmetrical distribution. Arcaded entrance screens to the centre block form a dignified courtyard arrival point to the building. A strong cornice line defines the two storey blocks with parapets above, articulating the separation between the 3 storey section and the outer wings of the complex.

Although alterations and replacements to original fabric have taken place the integrity of the building is still of a high order externally, and the building is well maintained.

Condition and Integrity

Good. Post Office altered and rebuilt in 1950's.

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