

Comparative Examples

The following Camberwell sites may be compared with this site but only in a chronological sense.

2, BERWICK STREET, 1859
 19, CANTERBURY ROAD, 1860
 9, BARNSBURY ROAD, 1861
 18, BALWYN ROAD, 1863
 8, AIRD STREET, 1870
 35, PROSPECT HILL ROAD, 1873-4

This school was considered elaborate compared to its contemporaries¹ and is noted as '..exceptional, even unique among Common schools, with its mansard roof and ecclesiastical Gothic fenestration. Gothic of any kind was rare in the Common school era...'. The Canterbury Molesworth Street school is comparable to the Edwardian additions

External Integrity

The 1868 wing roof has been tiled and rooms added to the west, south and south-east, albeit using sympathetic materials. Details only have been altered in the visible parts of the remaining wings. The yard fence has gone (picket).

Streetscape

A large, prominently sited complex which has unusual visual cohesion, despite its long period of development, and links to the other civic buildings adjoining via materials, form and style.

Significance

Architecturally, a prominent complex which possesses visual cohesion, despite a long development period, and contains two individually notable stages; one for its early prototype role in Victorian school design (polychrome, Gothic revival, considered 'unique') and the other for its obscured but noteworthy Edwardian free adaptation of Tudor precedents and fine cement detailing: of State importance.

Historically, an early surviving public building in Camberwell and one of a small group of surviving Common Schools in the state: of local importance and regional interest.

Camberwell Court House and Police Station, 311- 317 Camberwell Road



Study Grading: B

Precinct: 32.00

Construction Date: 1938-9

First Owner: Victorian Govt. Crown Lands D.

Architect: Everett, Percy (Chief Architect Public Works Dept.)

Builder: Medbury, W A

History

Hawthorn police station served this area from the 1860s until a constable was stationed at Hartwell. By 1875 a station was established on the west side of Burke Road near the junction. Three years later there were more ratepayer demands for better protection.

The station was in Fairholm Grove until 1888, when it moved to the south side of Riversdale Road: there it was joined by the fire station. Meanwhile the court house was established as part of the 1891 Shire Hall complex (see Boroondara Shire Hall citation).

The Crown Law Department requested a building permit for a police station, court house, residence and lock-up, in 1938: all for the estimated cost of £8,500. The builder was W.A. Medbury and the design came from the Public Works Department under Percy Everett².

Set on an angle on the site, the main building contained an entry flanked by offices for the clerk of courts and barristers, the main court room and the magistrate's chamber beyond it. Service areas were located on the east side. Appearing to be two-storey, the building was in fact just one, with a clerestory window strip on the upper wall. By its mere massing, it served the purposes of justice well.

The contract plans (signed 20 May 1938 by Medbury) showed the 'future sergeant's residence' adjoining on the west and, its mirror-image, the

¹ Burchell, *Victorian Schools*, p.86
² BA 1938, 9878A

'future police station' on the east side¹ At the rear of the site was the cell block (4 cells) with central exercise yard, garage and storage areas for blankets, stolen goods and bicycles².

The next contract was let in June 1938 to the same builder to complete the complex. The residence was two-storey, flat-roofed and very Modern looking, containing lounge, kitchen, and wash house on the ground-level and three bedrooms and a bathroom on the upper³. The station building had rooms for women police, senior constables, and the sergeant. There were also the muster room and watch house in the north-east corner. Upstairs the inspector's office, mess room, interrogation and detective rooms, the district sub-office and a long L-shape corridor were the main elements, each strategically located for their use.

Camberwell historian, V. Alexander Allan noted that when it opened in July 1939, it was '...one of the finest Court buildings in the metropolitan area...'. A similarly fine complex was constructed in Wangaratta during 1938 and another (renovation) at Geelong in the same period.

Description

Symmetrical about a diagonal axis, the design has many Percy Everett trademarks. Patterned brickwork (brown heelers against red bricks and manganese for the entry) provides visual emphasis to the entry and enhances the contrived horizontality of the ground-level which forms a podium for the contrasting masonry volumes above. These in turn differentiate the police station and court house functions within the complex. Parapeted, two-storey forms dominate the flanks of the composition whilst a centre pivot is implied by the hipped roof, visible above the entrance block. Curved volumes supplement the streamlining already achieved by the contrasting string-moulds.

Symmetry is extended to the clipped privet shrubbery, flanking the entry, although the mature cypress, which appears to be from the construction period, lends a rather ragged pivot to the garden.

Comparative Examples

The following Camberwell site may be compared with this site.

Church of Christ Scientist, 41 Cookson Street.

Comparison may also be made to Everett's Angliss School, Lonsdale Street (1941), his public offices, Ballarat (1941) and the RMIT Buildings 5 and 9 (1937-8).

External Integrity

The building is generally original.

Streetscape

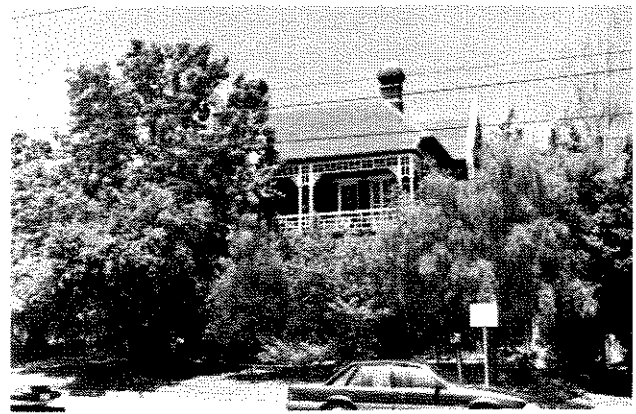
A design which recognizes its corner site by the diagonal plan axis and elevation treatment, although otherwise isolated as architecture but within the civic subprecinct of the study area.

Significance

Architecturally, skillfully massed and brick-clad, the complex utilizes fully and intelligently the latest stylistic fashions of the period (streamlined Moderne), is near to externally intact and successfully utilizes its corner site: of regional importance.

History, it is related by its proximity and scale, to other nearby public buildings: of local interest.

Wesleyan Manse, former, 316 Camberwell Road



Study Grading: B

Precinct: 32.00 Streetscape: 1

Construction Date: 1890

First Owner: Methodist Church

Architect: Reed Smart & Tappin

History

Early Methodist services were held at the house of Isaac Brooks in 1863 and, five years later, under trees on a reserve granted to the Wesleyans, next to the Common School. Today's church, now so sadly altered, was the second Methodist church at the junction, replacing the first wooden St. John's of 1871, in 1885.

¹ PWD contract drawings 1937-8, 724

² *ibid.*

³ PWD contract drawings