

### Streetscape

With the 1924 neo-Grec office additions, the former town hall contributes to a notable classical revival civic streetscape.

### Significance

Architecturally, the design falls in the mould of the Italian High Renaissance or French Renaissance styles used in earlier municipal offices such as at North Melbourne, Fitzroy, Collingwood and Northcote (incomplete). However, Gill's distinctive over-sized corner tower adds that touch of grandeur which evokes more of the boom era in which it was built than the more conservative if highly successful designs of the other examples.

Historically, it is the earliest municipal complex in the city and as such has been the vehicle for many of the area's most momentous decisions and civic occasions as well as its social role as an entertainment centre.

Significant 1891 spaces include the former public hall and communicating passages, stair hall, foyers and tiled entry loggia. The court and magistrates rooms, despite their c1925 ceilings, retain general finishes and forms sufficient to provide for historical expression of the presumed numerous events it has housed.

### Architecturally Insignificant Areas or Buildings

Spaces of no obvious architectural or historically representative merit include:

theatrette (former backstage)

bookmobile dock

supper room (1960 plan)

annexe (1960 plan)

kitchen (1960 plan)

Similarly, whole building stages considered to be unimportant include: the 1948 (?), 1953, 1958-9 and 1963 wings.

### Management

The 1891 building, in contrast, was best appreciated from the north and western viewpoints, austere red brickwork taking over from highly ornamented stucco on the east and south faces. Irwin & Stevenson's 1925 backstage entry addition is both unusually stylistically advanced for the date (anticipating the streamlined Moderne of the 1930s) and contextural, given the use of face brickwork in response to the substantially brick character of the Inglesby Road elevations. Similarly, the faceted plan shape also echoes that of the adjacent 1925 council chambers. Subsequently, the painting of the brickwork has induced another unforeseen layer of visual conformity. Demolition of the 1958-9 building

between the backstage area and former council chamber would greatly enhance the relationship between both buildings.

### Camberwell City Offices, 370 Camberwell Road



Study Grading: A

Precinct: 32.00 Streetscape: 1

Construction Date: 1924

First Owner: Camberwell City Council

Architect: Irwin & Stevenson

### History

(Refer to former Boroondara Shire Hall) Albert Hocking, mayor of Camberwell, laid the foundation stone for these offices, in 1924, commencing construction of a design by young architects, Leighton Irwin and Roy Stevenson. The presiding town clerk was R.W. Smellie.

The next offices built for the city were to replace both town hall and office annexe when opened in 1978.

### Description

Typically for the period, neo-Grec or a stripped Greek revival style was chosen: the austere classicism and stucco finish providing a sympathetic and discrete neighbour to the more ornate town hall. Five bays of Tuscan pilasters and a single acroterion accompany sparse detail such as the saltire cross motif, used in the door lights, the entry top-light, the wrought iron balconette, and multi-paned casement windows. The link with the earlier building is achieved successfully with a regressed low-level section of the facade which adjoins flanking pavilions to the main facade.

### Interior:

Most spaces are surprisingly near intact, including joinery, fittings and finishes. The council chamber also has an early (if not original) colour scheme

and is a notable and uniquely formed space, particularly given the surviving Adamesque Greek Revival ornament, joinery and original carpet remnants. Another notable aspect is the surviving stained and varnished doors, architraves, partitions and counters.

#### Comparative Examples

The following sites may be compared with this site: the Camberwell masonic hall, Emily McPherson school of Domestic Economy, the Police Hospital Administration block St. Kilda Road and school assembly halls such as at Essendon High school, designed under E E Smith.

#### Integrity

Windows (upper) have been reglazed and various air-units installed; a sign box has been added and a chimney cornice removed. Remnants of formal shrub planting survive in the front garden.

#### Streetscape

A successful stylistic and physical complement to the 1890-1 former town hall and, together, a distinctive civic streetscape.

#### Significance

Given the unusually near intact state of the 1924-5 office block, this integrity factor alone gives both architectural and potentially historical significance to the whole building. As well there is the notable streetscape contribution to the earlier building which in turn is evocative of the profession's concern with context at that time<sup>2</sup>

Significant individual spaces commence with the council chamber, main foyers and passageways (both levels) and stairway. Secondary areas are the historically representative only office spaces, with the general office area (under chamber) the most significant among them. Toilet areas are also significant because of their high integrity to their construction period ie. white tiles, marble urinal slabs.

#### Management

Externally, the 1925 offices suffer most from additions in Inglesby Road. The building's symmetrical plan and elevations, intended to be seen from at least three sides, is now visible only from Camberwell Road and even that view is compromised by the 1953 eastern addition. This should be remedied

### House, 396 Camberwell Road



Study Grading: B

Precinct: 41.00 Streetscape: 2

Construction Date: 1930

First Owner: Holland, Rueben and Henry

Architect:

Builder: Holland, Rueben

#### History

Reuben Holland, a builder, already resided at 400 Camberwell Road, when Henry Holland, a retired contractor and builder of long standing in Camberwell, had 396 Camberwell Road built for his own use<sup>3</sup>. R. Holland (Henry's son?), was listed as the builder in the permit application<sup>4</sup>. The cost of the five room brick house was estimated at £1,100<sup>5</sup>.

After frequent attendance of picture shows held in the town hall, (near this site), Henry Holland is said to have been inspired to launch Camberwell's first picture theatre, in 1914, on a site in Burke Road. He was backed by David Lewis of the Prahran retailers, Love and Lewis, and undaunted by competition from McLeish's Rivoli cinema, he leased his building to Hoyts Theatres Ltd. in their first venture at Camberwell. Holland died in 1932; his theatre being subsequently leased as a G.J. Coles store.

Henry Holland was a key figure in local social and political life. He was involved in local progress associations and took an interest in garden displays. He apparently put on films for local groups and may have been behind the open-air film nights in Canterbury Gardens and provided films for fund-raising for group like the Boy Scouts in Camberwell. The house is a reminder of the influence of a few men like Holland in shaping the

1 blackwood?  
2 see emergence of RVIA Street Architecture Medal in the late 1920s  
3 BA 1930, 1595  
4 ibid.  
5 ibid.