

Identification and location

Name of place: **Footscray Fire Station Complex & palm**

Other Name

Address

067-071

Droon Street

Footscray

Place Identifier

32

Heritage Significance

Regional

Creation date(s)

1941-2

Map (Melway)

42 C3

Boundary description

The title land and buildings with emphasis on fabric from or near the construction date and MFB occupation.

Local Government Area

City of Maribyrnong

Ownership Type

Public

Description

Site Type:

Fire station

Physical Description

The Footscray Fire Station takes on the contemporary red brick and cement Georgian revival style, more commonly used for residences in the eastern suburbs. It contrasts with other stations of the era, designed in the Moderne/Modern style of the architects Seabrooke and Fildes in suburbs such as Brunswick and Windsor. Symmetry and stylised revival detail are essential aspects of this elevation. An additional engine shed has been added to the south in a sympathetic style during the 1980s. Because of changed operating methods the associated flats have become redundant and are now let out.

The palm is typical planting for the construction era and supports the period expression of the place.

Condition

Good (partially disturbed, well preserved)

Integrity

Substantially intact/some intrusions- generally externally original with an addition to the south.

Context

Isolated as a major utility building in a residential domain.

Threats:

Increasing development pressure, unrelated external changes.

History

This fire station and the associated altered residential flats were built in 1941-2 by Prentice Pty. Ltd. to the design of Stuart Calder. The memorial stone was laid by South Melbourne's former mayor and Port Melbourne M.L.A., Cr. James L. Murphy, and the proprietors were the Melbourne and Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) Board { Butler, 1989}. Calder designed other fire stations at Box Hill and elsewhere, following the tradition of long-term tenure for architects by the Board.

The brigade members resident there included Sam Parsons, Morris Logan, Walter Swingler, Joseph Jennings, Reg Wilcox, Thomas R. Naughton, Cornis McGennis, Ernest Ascott, and Thomas Allan. {D1945 } McGennis, Swingler and Parsons were among the long-tenure residents {D1950-55}.

Prior to 1941, the station was located at 7-9 Droop Street, under officer Edgar Shaw {D1935} and before that, S. T. Mauger {D1915-20, Mauger was probably a relation of the parliamentarian for Maribyrnong} and J.W. Holliday. {1900 } It is not surprising therefore that an early photograph shows the brigade `practising' on the nearby Royal Hotel. {FFOY:103 }

Thematic context

Australian Principal Theme Building settlements, towns and cities

PAHT Subtheme Supplying urban services

Local Theme(s) Establishing services

Cultural Significance

Footscray Fire Station & palm are significant to the western region because:

- the station complex is one of the region's more architecturally accomplished inter-war public utility buildings (Criterion F1);
- the station complex and palm have remained essentially unaltered from the street view and preserves the functional association of fire engine garages and firemen's accommodation plus the landscape setting (Criterion D2);
- the palm is relatively unusual for a utility building landscape in the City (Criterion B2); and
- it is a long term public utility well known by the community, representing the early days of station construction under the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (Criterion A4).

Comparative Examples:

Another near externally complete fire station (converted to other uses) is in Sunshine but otherwise early fire station design in the region is not well represented. Altered nineteenth century examples exist in Flemington and Yarraville (Yarraville fire station, which became St Nicholas' Greek Orthodox Church). Other comparable place type includes the ambulance

service buildings but the Footscray example has been demolished.

Recommendations

Heritage Victoria Register

Register of the National Estate:

National Trust Register:

Other Heritage Listings

Planning Scheme Protection

External Paint Controls Apply?:

Internal Alteration Controls Apply?:

Tree Controls Apply?:

Included on the Victorian Heritage Register under the Act:

Are there Outbuildings or Fences not Exempt?:

Prohibited Uses may be Permitted

Recommendations:

Conserve and enhance the identified significant fabric, with emphasis on fabric from the 1940s and the MFB occupation, with enhancement including reinstatement of missing original elements, colours and finishes.

Conserve the public view of the significant fabric.

Promote the continuing original use of the place and its amenity.

Continue historical research into the place and provide public access to the findings.

Assess the interior for significant elements.

Australian Heritage Commission Criteria

A4 Importance for their association with events, developments or cultural phases which have had a significant role in the human occupation and evolution of the nation, state, region or community.

a long term public utility well known by the community, representing the early days of station construction under the Metropolitan Fire Brigade

B2 Importance in demonstrating a distinctive way of life, custom, process, land-use, function or design no longer practiced, in danger of being lost, or of exceptional interest.

the palm is relatively unusual for a utility building landscape in the City

D2 Importance in demonstrating the principle characteristics of the range of human activities in the Australian environment (including way of life, custom, process, land-use, function, design or technique).

station complex and palm have remained essentially unaltered from the street view and preserves the functional association of fire engine garages and firemen's accommodation plus the landscape setting

F1 Importance for their technical, creative, design or artistic excellence, innovation or achievement.

the station complex is one of the region's more architecturally accomplished inter-war public utility buildings

Historic Places - Selected non-industrial significant places in former City of Footscray - not in the Planning Scheme

historical significance architectural significance social significance scientific significance

Documentation

References

Butler, Graeme 1989, City of Footscray Urban Conservation Study cites:
- the Foundation Stone 9/10/41;
- Browne, 1984 `Biographical Register of the Victorian Parliament 1900-84': 160
- Sands and MacDougall Victorian Directories (D)
- Footscray's First One Hundred Years (FFOY);
Barnard, J 2000. Maribyrnong Heritage Review Volume 2 Environmental History City of Maribyrnong.

Data recording

Assessed By:

Assessed Date: