

Mac Robertson Girls High School

Address 350 Kings Way, Albert Park 3206

Practice Seabrook and Fildes

Designed 1933

Completed 1934

History & Description The Mac Robertson Girls High School at Albert Park, South Melbourne, was built in 1934 with funds donated by Sir MacPherson Robertson as a gift to the state of Victoria, celebrating the Centenary of its foundation. The building provided a permanent home for the former Melbourne Girls' High School, which was renamed in honour of its benefactor.

The bold modern design, which had taken first prize in a strongly contested architectural competition for the new school, was prepared by the young architect Norman H Seabrook, at that time recently returned from working in Britain. Its design was clearly informed by Seabrook's first hand knowledge and experience of the work of leading contemporary Dutch architect Willem Dudok and his followers on the Continent and in Britain, was revolutionary locally at this time and was influential in the introduction of the modern modes of design, and the growth in their acceptance, in the 1930s.

The planning of the school was refined in terms of its conceptual clarity, its traffic efficiency, and the skillful zoning of the various activities within the school, and established a new standard to be emulated in the many schools produced in the following decades.

Robin Boyd described "MacRob" as the building that announced 'the evolution of modern Architecture' in Australia.

Statement of Significance

The MacPherson Robertson Girls High School is significant as one of the first and most convincing introductions to Australia of the cream brick de-Stijl architecture of Dutch modernist Wilhem Marinus Dudok. The flat roofed, cream brick design, with its steel framed windows painted vermillion and its glazed blue sill bricks and its composition that relied on sophisticated arrangements of interlocking form, was almost certainly inspired by Dudock's Hilversum Town Hall (1927-31).

The building is also significant for its impact on the development C20th school design in Australia.

(extracts from VHR# H1641 and Philip Goad, *Melbourne Architecture*)

Criteria Applicable

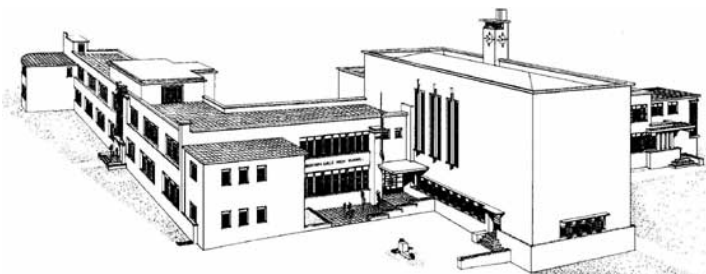
N1 - Significant Heritage value in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or period of design
N2 - Significant heritage value in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.
N3 - Significant heritage value in establishing a high degree of creative achievement.



Tower [Chris&Steve, Flickr.com]



North East Entrance [Chris&Steve, Flickr.com]



Perspective view from North [RVIA Journal]



View from West [Chris&Steve, Flickr.com]