

Register of Significant Architecture

RSTCA No: R085

Name of Place: John Gorton Building and former Communications Centre

Other/Formal Names: Administrative Building, Parkes

Address/Location: Parkes Place, corner of King Edward Terrace, Parkes, ACT
Block 1 Section 35 of Parkes

Listing Status:	Registered	Other Heritage Listings:	CHL, RNE, Part of Parliamentary Vista.
Date of Listing:	15 December 1994	Level of Significance:	Regional
Citation Revision No:	2	Category:	Government
Citation Revision Date:	1 March 2017	Style:	Stripped Classical

Dates of Design:	1924, 1946, 1974	Designers:	G Sydney Jones/Robertson & Marks, Dept of Interior, Dept of Works & Housing
Construction Period:	1947-1956, 1977	Client/Owner/Lessee:	Commonwealth of Australia
Date of Addition:	1977	Builder:	1947 Concrete Constructions of Sydney

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The John Gorton Building resulted from the winning Academic Classical style design in a 1924 Federal Capital Advisory Committee architectural competition for an administrative building. Only the siting and general layout of that design were followed when the building was redesigned in 1946 in the Inter-War Stripped Classical style and completed in 1956. It is a rare large-scale example of a public office building in that style. Key indicators of the style displayed in the building include: symmetrical facades; divisions into vertical bays indicating classical origins; vestigial classical columns; simple surfaces and spandrels between storeys subdued to emphasize verticality. Good use of light wells allows internal office areas to be well lit by daylight. Design elements which retain a high level of integrity are the exterior, foyer, lift lobbies and central corridors.

The former underground Communications Centre, added in 1977, is a unique windowless secure environment for Government activities, with design elements, particularly in the foyer, evocative of the period – a mural, luminous ceilings, bright chrome pillars, curved walls, wall hangings by artist/weavers and plant containers.

The John Gorton Building contributes to the aesthetic quality of Canberra's Parliamentary Triangle, of which it is a major built element, with its siting and massing providing a balance to the Treasury Building across the land axis of the triangle.

DESCRIPTION

The John Gorton Building is one of the major structures in the Parliamentary Triangle. The building is six storeys high above ground and basically rectangular in plan with eight projecting wings. The facades are described as 'stripped classical'.

Externally the building is faced with polished red granite to ground floor and dressed sandstone ashlar blocks to the upper levels. Window and door frames are clear aluminium.

Internally, public areas are faced in either marble or terrazzo floors and marble, terrazzo or ceramic tile wall finish.

The building has been subject to a regular maintenance program throughout its life. Consequently, externally and internally the building is in good sound condition, although the fitout and services are in need of refurbishment.

a) Layout

The building plan is based around a 9 storey high rectangular core block (2 levels are below ground and the top level is plant). The main axis of this block runs east and west. Four 7 storey high (2 below ground) wings project perpendicularly to the buildings north and south face. A and D Blocks are located at each end of the Core block. B and C Blocks are symmetrically placed between them.

The principal building entry is centrally located on the western elevation at level one. Minor access is also available to the building centrally on the north, south and east elevations of the central core block at ground level. Aluminium faced porticos protect these entries from the weather. Total gross floor area of the building is 51,000 m². Nett usable area is 38,000 m².

b) Exterior

The John Gorton Building is a typical mid-twentieth century civic building. The ground floor is composed of a base of polished red granite to window sill level, above this smooth faced pink granite completes the ground level. Recessed string courses at approximately 400mm intervals give a strong horizontal line to the ground level facade and distinguish it from the 'body' of the building above. The base and body of the building are further defined by a granite scroll molding at level 1 window sill line.

Levels 1 to 7 of the building faced in dressed sandstone ashlar blocks. The parapet at levels 5, 6 and 7 is capped with a sandstone block.

The side elevations of the core block and the wing blocks are composed of regular vertical bands (from level 1 to 3) of sandstone or windows alternatively. The windows to the whole building are clear anodised aluminium casements, top and bottom fixed glazed panels. The spandrel panel between floor levels a polluted fluted clear anodised aluminium panel.

The top level 3 is defined by a continuous band of sandstone, with a sandstone coping. Windows on the upper levels are expressed as individual elements separated by blades of sandstone. These blades are slimmer than lower levels with a subsequent widening of windows. Levels 6 and 7 are set back from the lower levels.

The end elevations of the wing blocks, (A to D) are stronger in composition and presence than the side elevations. The central a third of the elevation is a three level high three bay wide window. Each bay off of windows is separated by a semi-circular polished granite column. Centrally located on the ground floor below the window panel is a single window. The perimeter of the elevation from levels 1 to 3 is faced in sandstone.

The principal building entry is expressed very strongly in the elevation. A three storey high sandstone faced portico (from first floor level) is located centrally to the elevation. The sides of the opening are defined with semi-circular columns capped with a lintel. The opening is equally divided with 2 oval columns. All of the above elements are constructed of polished granite.

The roof of the building was originally documented as a built up membrane, protected by concrete paving slabs. It appears that the slabs were some time replaced with flat copper sheets made to a minimal fall. In 1984 a colourbond zincalume traydeck roof support structure was constructed over the copper roof. The fall of the roof is approximately 5°. Parapet gutters and all rainwater goods are constructed from copper.

c) Interior

(i) Foyers

First Floor West: Having been designed as the principal entry, this foyer is more formal than the other entries. The foyer is a two-storey space with a second floor balcony over the rear third. The floor finish is polished white marble (1946 documentation specifies Terrazzo). Walls are faced in a polished red marble to first floor level and a grey marble to level 2. The east wall of the foyer at level 2 is faced in travertine panels. The exposed edge of the second floor slab is faced in white marble.

A fluted clear anodised aluminium cornice defines the top of the site walls. The foyer ceiling is a profiled fibrous plaster design. The soffit of level two slab is a plain fibrous plaster ceiling.

Lighting to the foyer is restricted to Deco style wall washers at level 2. The external wall is composed of aluminium framed fixed glazing at level 2 and aluminium framed doors and fixed lights at level 1.

Other Ground Floor Foyers: The other foyers at this level are single storey spaces. Walls are faced in grey marble. The floors were a polished white marble. The floor to the central foyer is now carpeted. Ceiling finish is a flush jointed fibrous plaster, paint finished. Recessed circular deco style light fittings illuminate the foyers.

(ii) Lift Lobbies Levels 1 to 7

Walls to lift lobbies are faced in approximately 150 x 50mm ceramic tile. The tiles are laid out in large rectangular pattern which appears to mimic the stone facings of the lower level foyers. The wall of the lift face is clad in a grey marble to a line approximately 600 mm below ceiling level. Above this line the wall is faced in the ceramic tile. The lift car doors and reveals are polished stainless steel. The eastern wall of most lift lobbies is the wall of a light shaft. The centre of this wall is a floor to ceiling aluminium framed fixed glazed window in which the glass has been lightly sandblasted. On some levels this window has been obscured by a flush jointed plasterboard infill panel.

Lobby floors were faced in white marble. Most lift lobbies have been carpeted.

Ceilings to the lift lobbies are a flush jointed fibrous plaster, paint finished. A panel of the ceiling directly in front of the lift doors is recessed. This panel contains three recessed circular Deco style lights.

(iii) Central Passageways

The planning of the central block of John Gorton Building provides a wide central passageway along the full length of its long axis. Minor passages run perpendicular to this at the west end of the lift lobby. The walls of these passages are tiled to door head level in the same ceramic tile as the lift lobby. Above the door head the walls are rendered and painted. The entry to the passage from the lift lobby is expressed with an aluminum framed doorway composed of fixed glazed sidelights to door head and an open grille over the doorway. The centre of the grille contains a clock. These clocks are linked to a master clock located near the level one western foyer.

Floors to the passageways were originally tallowwood faced with a rubber sheeting overlaid. All passageways are now carpeted.

Ceilings to the passageways are paint finished flush jointed fibrous plaster.

The colour of the tiles and length of the main passageway creates a clinic or tunnel like atmosphere, not overly suited to the environment.

(iv) Toilets

Wall facing to 1800 mm above floor level, toilet partitions and floor facing to the toilets are terrazzo slabs. The finish above the terrazzo is finished as painted render.

Hand basins, toilet suites and urinals are all white ceramic construction. The hob to the urinals is a terracotta tile finish.

Ceilings are flush jointed fibrous plaster, paint finished.

(v) Tea Rooms

The Tea Rooms are sparsely finished. Walls are paint finished render. Floor finish is tallowwood with linoleum sheeting, and skirtings were 50mm radius timber quad. The bench unit has painted timber doors, a stainless steel sink and a vinyl benchtop. A three course high ceramic tile splashback borders the bench.

(vi) Light Wells

To help bring light into the central office areas, there are 13 light courts in the central east-west block. The light wells extend from the roof down to level one, and are located adjacent to the east and west walls of the wing blocks. Glazing to the light well is generally provided by aluminium framed casement windows with bottom hung baselights.

(vii) Office Space

The original planning of the office spaces was solely cellular office divisions. The partitioning was full height.

The floor finish was polished tallowwood laid into the concrete slabs. Circulation areas were faced in sheet rubber; office areas were finished in linoleum. Floor finish to office areas is now carpet.

The layout and finish, by current standards, would be considered austere and inefficient. However in its day it would have been state of the art.

d) Setting

The northern edge of the John Gorton Building site has an expanse of lush lawns up to the original plantings on King Edward Terrace. It is understood that the original tree planting design set out was by Thomas Weston.

The site planning as constructed placed the western facade of the building close to Parkes Place, where it has a strong presence. The forecourt adjacent to the entry stairs is concrete paved. Paths to the side of the stairs provide access to the ground level entry. To the north and south of these parts are expanses of lawn.

The road edge is defined to the perimeter of the site with concrete paving.

The northern edge of the site is a large expanse of lawn. The lawn extends to the building face with two rows of formal trees along the street edge. The building is set back quite a distance from the roadway on this frontage.

An exposed aggregate concrete driveway and car park provides access to the northern entry of King Edward Terrace. A row of deciduous trees defines the edge of the driveway. The minimal soft landscaping in this area creates a rather austere environment.

The eastern facade of the building is also set back a distance from the roadway. The forecourt to the building is an open expanse of lawn.

The John Gorton Building's southern frontage has an extensive car parking area. The extensive concrete paving to the entry forecourt extends along the road edge. The perimeter of the wing blocks has been planted with low-level shrubs and groundcover in a band approximately 4 meters wide. This treatment softens what would otherwise be a very harsh environment.

(e) Former Underground Communications Centre¹

The basement foyer under the car park on the southern side of the building was part of the interior design of the Foreign Affairs underground Communication Centre which was completed in 1977. As it was a windowless office there was extensive effort made to make the facility as people friendly as possible. This was achieved by a quality of fitout, including the foyer and artwork.

In a design report of 1974 Schmaeling and Associates Sydney architects who were consultants to the Department of Housing and Construction said:

"The entry foyer has been planned as a blend of natural and mechanical forms. It is an 'exterior' area which is also to have the friendliness of a living room and the efficiency of a modern commercial interior. The wall hangings would be commissioned works to leading artist/weavers and would be in rich colours and heavy natural wool. The bright chrome pillars would reflect the hangings and give the effect of movement as people walk past them. The furniture would be chrome and leather. The plants would be in fibreglass containers and would probably need periodic exchange. ... The carpet in the waiting area to be thick pile, the curved walls lined with felt. Luminous ceilings composed of metal leaves illuminated from above with changing light effects are to be used in the reception and recreation areas."

The remainder of the former communications centre was a windowless office building and extensive effort and innovation was undertaken to make the environment friendly by the use of art including a graffiti wall. (refer history for more details)

¹ Eric J Martin, John Gorton Building Access, *Heritage Significance Assessment*, June 2002.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY²

In the 1920s it was decided that many government departments were to move from Melbourne, then seat of the Commonwealth Parliament, to Canberra, which was the intended permanent home of the Parliament. In order to accommodate these departments, office buildings were needed in Canberra and a competition was held in 1924 for the design of an administrative building which was to house about eight departments. The building was to be the first in the Parliamentary triangle and its design was considered important because it would influence future buildings in the triangle.

In 1924, G Sydney Jones won the competition. Jones died in 1927 and the Sydney architects Robertson and Marks continued the project. Work started in 1927 and the foundations were completed in 1928. However, work was stopped at this point because of the Depression. There were then many delays as a result of the Depression and later World War Two.

The design of the proposed building was modified in 1946, apparently by Commonwealth Government architects. The new design was for a larger building which was based on Jones' original design. Construction started again in 1947 and the new design required the demolition of the original foundations. The building was substantially completed in 1956.

The building is claimed to have been the largest Australian office building when completed.³ The building was the fourth major structure in the Parliamentary triangle after the Provisional Parliament House and East and West Blocks which were all completed in 1927.

Other major buildings of the period include the Sydney and Melbourne Buildings (1926-46) and the Patent Office (1941) which was the only other major government office building constructed between 1927 and 1956. The building has some historic interest as the accommodation for a number of Government Departments since 1956.

The John Gorton Building, the former Communications Centre and the Parliament House vista have been separately entered in the Commonwealth Heritage List.

Construction and Occupational History of the John Gorton Building:⁴

Jun 1923 The Federal Capital Advisory Committee (FCAC) proposes the construction of two substantial temporary administrative buildings on either side of the main axis of the Parliamentary Triangle, near the site for the temporary Parliament house. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works ("the Public Works Committee") recommends instead that two permanent buildings should be erected and that an architectural competition should be held to select designs for them.

Aug 1923 The Federal Government adopts both of the Public Works Committee's suggestions: a competition is to be held for a corresponding pair of permanent administrative buildings in the Parliamentary Triangle. The more easterly of the two structures is to be general administrative building, while the other is to house Government Printing Office. It is soon agreed that, as the proposed Parliament House would only be a temporary structure, competitors need not take its appearance into account in drafting their designs for the administrative buildings.

Apr 1924 On the recommendation of the FCAC, the government accepts that its office requirements for 10-15 years would be met by one building instead of two. The government decides therefore that the competition would be limited to the design of one building only, but it was to retain the right to use the same design for the erection in stages of a corresponding building for the Printing Office on the other side of Parliamentary Triangle. The proposed single building would house perhaps eight government departments. The cost of the construction was estimated at £320,000.

At the same time, FCAC was concerned that the erection of the Administrative Building on the site originally selected for it and of the Printing Office on the opposite side of the main axis on a site further to the north would result in an unbalanced architectural effect. The Committee proposed - and the government accepted - that the site for the Administrative Building should be

² Australian Heritage Database, Commonwealth Heritage List, Listed Place, John Gorton Building, *Description*.

³ Philip Cox, Richardson, Taylor and Partners Pty Ltd, *Administrative Building Parkes: Conservation Plan*, November 1992, p 18

⁴ Cox, Philip, Richardson, Taylor & Partners Pty Ltd; *Administrative Building Parkes: Conservation Plan*; November 1992; Pgs 9-19, except where other references added.

moved to a new position immediately to the northeast of the original location. A forty feet deep gully ran through the new site, necessitating filling with material from the excavations for the temporary Parliament House.

Jun 1924 The competition for the design is announced and is limited to architects resident in Australia. The guidelines for the competition advises competitors that, as the building was to be the first permanent structure in the Parliamentary Triangle, the design warranted more than usual thought. Competitors needed to be well aware that the design would influence “more or less” the external expression of all future buildings in the group. They were expected to formulate a design that would “carry to tradition a scholarly example of architectural thought prevailing in Australia” at that time. The competition organizers, while recognizing that changes in architectural styles would occur “over generations”, for a design that possessed “those elements of the style adopted which may be expected to remain essential in any exposition of that style in every age”.

The organizers believe there was a need for the Administrative Building and the successive “great buildings” in the parliamentary triangle to assert themselves in the broad expanses and distant vistas of Canberra’s natural landscape. To achieve this, they felt that, once a decision had been made on the type of material to be used for the external walls of the building, the lightest possible colour of that material should be chosen. Accordingly, the FCAC favoured a dark-stone base for the building, with the whole upper part to be faced in glazed terracotta; for the main building material, the Committee preferred reinforced concrete, as it was both fire resistant and cheap. The competition organizers envisaged that the materials selected for the external walls would be uniformly used in the later buildings, in accordance with the view that the Administrative Building would set the pattern of later structures in the parliamentary triangle.

The competition guidelines also supplied directions on the internal structure and size of the building. The competition organizers had a preference for a two-storey building, providing two full stories of office space, together with an upper storey, “possibly of less area”, for staff recreation and refectory, caretaker’s quarters and perhaps some ‘subordinate’ offices. The plan for the ground and first floors could be the same. The organizers are to be possible that the building had a half sunk placement, both to give height to the ground floor and to provide space for records storage. Strong rooms, accommodation for paint and, if any space remained, additional offices in the best lit areas. They suggested that, as the current tendency was to conduct departmental work in large open rooms, the best internal arrangement would be one of the subdivision by partitions into large and small areas served by corridors. Adequate natural lighting for the working areas was essential, while maximum natural air ventilation was highly desirable for large working areas. It was envisaged that, after allowance had been made for staircases, lift wells, light areas, corridors and lavatories, the building should provide about 170,000 square feet of usable floor space. The overall dimensions of the building were not to exceed 430 x 200 feet.

Late 1924 Sydney architect, George Sydney Jones, wins the competition and £500 prize from 92 other entrants. Jones also wins one of the minor prizes of £100 for a second design, which he personally preferred. The competition assessors were Sir John Sulman, Professor Leslie Wilkinson and the Government Architect, J.S. Murdoch.

Jones’s design, based on a unit of 11 by 10.5, comprised a rectangular central block with eight projecting bays, four on each side of the building. The bays were separated from each other by six external light courts designed to give ample light, ventilations and sunlight to all office spaces. Jones followed the competition guidelines in providing two main floors and a basement, but introduced a mezzanine floor between the ground and first floors. To facilitate communication and reduce cost, a single corridor ran almost the entire length of the building, with staircases, lifts and lavatories concentrated at three points. Conscious of the need to cater for government departments that would vary in size and number over the years, Jones aimed for great flexibility, allowing “reduction of departmental floor area horizontally and extension of floor area either horizontally or vertically or both as desired, independently of other floors or associated with other floors...” The cost of the project was put at £631,819.

Jones aimed overall in his design for simplicity of form, dignity, reasonable economy and a scale commensurate with the importance of the structure. He thus hoped that his building would reflect ‘the sane ideals of the British race’ and express something of the spirit of Empire,

meaning the British Empire, which he claimed, spelt “freedom and fair treatment to every nation and every individual”.

- Jan 1927 Jones dies suddenly, before the working drawings are complete. The solicitors for the executors of Jones’s Will propose that the Sydney architectural firm of Robertson and Marks take over the project, This is accepted and George H Godsell from Robertson and Marks assumes the role of supervising architect for the building.
- Oct 1927 The Federal Capital Commission, anxious to expedite construction of the building, lets a contract of £50,783 to Hutcherson Brothers of Sydney for the laying of the foundations, the work to be completed within eight months. The whole building is expected to be finished by 1934.
- Apr 1928 The foundations are complete. Soon afterwards, the government decides for financial reasons not to proceed immediately with the building of the superstructure, the agreement with Robertson and Marks then lapses. Coincidentally at this time, it is discovered by accident that some 631 tons of cement have been omitted from the concrete used to build the foundations. A Committee of Enquiry is formed.
- Feb 1929 The Committee reports that, while the concrete used in the foundations was very variable in strength and quality, the foundations were nevertheless amply strong enough to support the building, which could be erected “with complete security”.
- Early 1930s Tests are carried out on the foundations.
- Jan 1934 A new report on the foundations finds that they would not be strong enough to support the building.
- 1935-6 With the worst of the Depression passed and economic conditions improving, the project is resurrected. The Works and Services Branch of the Department of the Interior, takes over the preparation of plans for the building.
- 1937 After one year’s work by six departmental officers, the government again postpones the project.
- 1941 The Public Works Committee urges the government to complete either the Administrative Building or the Melbourne Building.
- Jun 1943 The Minister of the Interior authorizes the revival of the project, when a post-war programme for Canberra’s development is drawn up.
- May 1946 The Minister for Works and Housing announces a new scheme for much larger building, based on Jones’s original design. The new building measures 425ft long by 212ft wide by 100ft high and includes a full basement, a lower ground floor and five other floors. Total floor space in the revised plan would amount to about 450,000 square feet. The building is to be constructed mainly of reinforced concrete, with brick infilling and concrete floors throughout covered with timber. The external walls are to be faced with granite at the base and freestone above. The cost of construction is estimated at £1,425,128. The Minister hopes that a corresponding building will be erected according to the same basic plan on the other side of the parliamentary triangle. Because of the changes to the plans and the increased cost, the government refers the new scheme to the Public Works Committee for a detailed assessment.
- Oct 1947 The government accepts the report of the Public Works Committee. Owing to the greater size of the building, the decision is made to replace the original foundations. This will also give more space in the basement. The building is to be constructed in three stages, beginning with the two western bays and their connecting areas (Block A) continuing with the four central bays (Block B) and concluding with the two eastern bays and their linking areas (Block C). On the advice of the Public Works Committee, the government is keen to use as much Australian material as possible in the construction, Hawkesbury sandstone is to be used for the upper external facing of the walls, with red granite below. The western entrance of the building and surrounds of lifts are to be in Australian marble. The government anticipates that the whole project would be completed within four years from the start of work, with the first stage ready for occupation by the end of 1949. On completion, it was expected to accommodate 3,000 public servants and have room for 30 cars and 1,000 bicycles in the basement.

- Nov 1947 Concrete Constructions Pty Ltd of Sydney wins the contract to erect the building. L.R. Weidner from the Department of Works and Housing is appointed Project Architect.
- Early 1948 The original foundations are gelignited to allow the laying of deeper and stronger foundations.
- 1948-9 Work proceeds slowly because of amendments to plans, the acute shortage of labour in Canberra and competing government priorities in the era of post-war reconstruction. All facets of the building programme are strictly controlled to avoid a repetition of the earlier problems with the foundations.
- Early 1953 The government decides to let contract for Blocks B and C. It is estimated that the work of construction is still three years from completion. Plans to build a corresponding building on the opposite side of the main axis are abandoned. The Administrative Building is described as "A Monument to Cost Plus".
- Sep 1955 A Senate Select Committee appointed to inquire into Canberra's development reports that the building is still two years away from completion. With modifications to the plan, the building's dimensions are now 483ft long by 227ft wide by 102ft high. It is claimed that, on completion, it will be Australia's largest building, occupying a site larger than that bounded by Martin Place and George, King and Pitt streets in Sydney.
- 6 Feb 1956 The first part of the building is at last occupied. The Australian News and Information Bureau, a branch of the Department of the Interior, moves into the ground floor of Block A. The building is substantially finished at this point, although minor works continue right up until 1960.
- 1965 The greater part of the book collection of the National Library is housed in the basement of the building.
- 1977 A secure bunker beneath the car park of the then Foreign Affairs building, this unique space to was designed to provide a secure environment for Government communications activities. The area was used between 1978 and 1996 and is significant for its association with Australia's Cold War activities⁵ and its innovative windowless environment.
- 1980-1 The NCDC upgrades accommodation in the Administrative Building and improves the surrounds. It constructs a porte-cochere at the official entrance to the Department of Foreign Affairs on the northern side of the building. The design aims to retain the established character of the building, while the materials used were chosen to blend with the existing finishes.
- 1989 The Department of Administrative Services upgrades and refurbishes the southern entry to the Administrative Building. It constructs a lobby using curved glazing in natural anodised aluminium framing with stone clad blade wall columns and door archways. This cladding is to match the existing cladding. In order to direct traffic to the entrance, modifications were also made to the landscaping in the forecourt.
- 1999 The refurbished building renamed John Gorton Building on 30 June 1999 by Prime Minister John Howard.⁶
- 2000-3 Former underground Communication Centre refurbished by Daryl Jackson Alastair Swayn Architects and opened up as energy efficient office space.⁷

ANALYSIS AGAINST THE CRITERIA PURSUANT TO S.10 OF THE HERITAGE ACT 2004

The following analysis is only against criteria that are considered relevant to the nomination.⁸

(b) it exhibits outstanding design or aesthetic qualities valued by the community or a cultural group;

⁵ <http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/commonwealth/act.html#joh>

⁶ <http://www.flickr.com/photos/archivesact/6145707283/sizes/m/in/photostream/>

⁷ <http://www.djas.com.au/userfiles/file/Project%20Sheets/Australian%20Greenhouse%20Office%20-%20Dept%20of%20Environment%20&%20Heritage.pdf>

⁸ Cox, Philip, Richardson, Taylor & Partners Pty Ltd; *Administrative Building Parkes: Conservation Plan*; November 1992; Pgs 59,60.

The John Gorton Building contributes to the aesthetic quality of Canberra's Parliament House Vista, of which it is a major built element, with its siting and massing providing a balance to the Treasury Building across the land axis of the triangle. The design of the building makes good use of light wells to allow internal office areas to be well lit by daylight.

The design elements of the former Communications Centre foyer, added in 1977, are evocative of the period— a mural, luminous ceilings, bright chrome pillars, curved walls, wall hangings by artist/weavers and plant containers.

(f) it is a rare or unique example of its kind, or is rare or unique in its comparative intactness;

The John Gorton Building is a rare large-scale example of a public office building in the Inter-War Stripped Classical style. Key indicators of the style displayed in the building include: symmetrical facades; divisions into vertical bays indicating classical origins; vestigial classical columns; simple surfaces and spandrels between storeys subdued to emphasize verticality. It is comparatively intact, with design elements which retain a high level of integrity, such as the exterior, foyer, lift lobbies and central corridors.

The former Communications Centre addition to the building is a unique 1970s underground windowless secure environment for Government activities. It was used by the Department of Foreign Affairs until 1996 and has been made more energy efficient for office use in recent years, while remaining comparatively intact.

Prepared by Eric Martin & Ken Charlton

REFERENCES

Cox, Philip, Richardson, Taylor & Partners Pty Ltd; *Administrative Building Parkes: Conservation Plan*; November 1992.

Australian Heritage Database:

http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=place_detail;search=place_name%3Djohn%2520gorton%2520building%3Btown%3Dparkes%3Bkeyword_PD%3Don%3Bkeyword_SS%3Don%3Bkeyword_PH%3Don%3Blatitude_1dir%3DS%3Blongitude_1dir%3DE%3Blongitude_2dir%3DE%3Blatitude_2dir%3DS%3Bin_region%3Dpart;place_id=19128

Commonwealth Heritage Places in the ACT, Communications Centre, John Gorton Building, Parkes:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/commonwealth/act.html#joh>

Daryl Jackson Alastair Swayn Architects Pamphlet:

<http://www.djas.com.au/userfiles/file/Project%20Sheets/Australian%20Greenhouse%20Office%20-%20Dept%20of%20Environment%20&%20Heritage.pdf>

Dedication Plaque:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/archivesact/6145707283/sizes/m/in/photostream/>

Interim Heritage Places Register, Administrative Building, Citation:

<http://www.m2cms.com.au/uploaded/18/ClassifiedPlaces/CIT.10.admin.pdf>

ATTACHMENTS

Original Drawings and Photographs



Figure 2

Source: Rodney Garnett, DSEWPaC



Figure 3

Source: Rodney Garnett, DSEWPaC



Figure 4

Source: Mark Mohell, DSEWPaC, 2005



Figure 5

Source: Mark Mohell, DSEWPaC, 2006



Figure 6

Source: Mark Mohell, DSEWPaC, 2006



Figure 7

Source: Rodney Garnett, DSEWPaC



Figure 8

Source: Mark Mohell, DSEWPaC, 2006



Figure 9

Source: Mark Mohell, DSEWPaC, 2006



Figure 10

Source: Mark Mohell, DSEWPaC, 2005



Figure 11

Source: Mark Mohell, DSEWPaC, 2005



Figure 12

Source: Rodney Garnett, DSEWPaC



Figure 13

Source: Mark Mohell, DSEWPaC, 2006



Figure 14

Source: Eric Martin & Associates, August 2007