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# Mercy Private Hospital



B7062 Mercy Private Hospital

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## Location

145-161 Grey Street, cnr Clarendon Street,, EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002 - Property No B7062

## Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## Level of significance

State

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1954

## Heritage Listing

National Trust

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 15, 2008

The Mercy Hospital designed by Stephenson and Meldrum, and built in two stages in 1934/5 and 1939, is of State level significance for historical and architectural / aesthetic reasons.

Historically, this is considered one of the earliest modernist buildings in Victoria, and the earliest major building to display the influence of the European 'International style'. The machine-like aesthetic, with its stark white finish, rectilinear volumes, 'open air' balconies, and lack of adornment heralded a new functionalism in architecture, distinct from the Dutch inspired brick volumes of other modernist works such as the MacRobertson Girls High School, and the streamlined moderne of commercial architecture. The seminal position of the Mercy was recognised by later critics, particularly Robin Boyd in his 'Victorian Modern' of 1947.

Architecturally, it is a particularly stylish and subtly modelled example of early modernism. The horizontal balconies with their curved corners and wider section supported by expressed angled concrete beams, is contrasted by the vertical services tower, and the inset windows of the main facade. To the rear, more horizontal balconies dominate a pleasant courtyard and end in highly modelled external stairs. The simpler Nurses Home lacks the striking balconies, but is also uncompromisingly modern, with blocky massing, rear sunrooms, and horizontal detailing.

The Mercy is also seen as the first in a series of important modernist hospitals designed by the firm of Stephenson & Meldrum (Stephenson & Turner after 1937) who dominated hospital design in Australia for the next 20 years. Designs such as the Freemasons, East Melbourne, and the King George Memorial in Sydney, culminating in the Royal Melbourne Hospital buildings in Parkville, 1936 - 41 introduced 'functionalist' architecture on a huge scale to this country. The firm are also credited with introducing the modern architectural practice, with efficiency and modern innovation in the office as well as in their architecture, and was the largest in the country for many years.

Classified: 05/02/2001

Hermes Number 65127

Property Number

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*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*