
Parliament House & Bertram Mackennal Relief Sculptures



B0069 Parliament House Melbourne



B0069 Parliament House



B0069 Parliament House Upper House



B0069 Parliament House Bertram Mackennal Sculpture



B0069 Parliament House

Location

110-160 Spring Street,, EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002 - Property No B0069

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

State

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1722

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - March 20, 2007

Parliament House, Spring Street, was erected in stages as follows; two Houses, 1856-57; Library, 1858-60; Queens Hall and Vestibule, 1878-79; West Front, 1885-90; Refreshment Rooms, 1930. The side and rear facades and the dome have not yet been realised. The main rooms and existing facade were probably designed solely by Peter Kerr, J.G. Knight and later the Public Works Department (P.W.D) supervised the works. The West Front is constructed of Stawell stone on a bluestone plinth.

Even in its incomplete state, this is Melbourne's grandest building. It evokes the splendour of Imperial Rome and embodies the highest ideals of nineteenth century civic architecture. The design and craftsmanship displayed throughout are of the highest standard found in Australia.

The overpowering doric facade which culminates in a monumental colonnade is a most complex architectural composition and uses decorative features that are unique in this country. The principal monumental spaces comprise the finest interiors in Australia.

Parliament House, Spring Street, Melbourne, is intact and in excellent condition.

Classified: 22/05/1958

Bertram MacKenna Relief Sculpture. The Stawell free-stone reliefs on the Victorian Parliament House are a result of the first public sculpture commission obtained by the internationally famous Melbourne-born sculptor, Sir Bertram MacKenna.

While in England, as Head of the Modelling and Design Department at Coalport Potteries in Shropshire, MacKenna received an invitation to submit a design, in a closed competition, that he won. He returned to Australia in late 1887 and commenced work on the reliefs in 1888. The deeply cut, over-life-sized allegorical reliefs represent the attributes often associated with 19th century polity and civilization. One relief represents Knowledge, Literature, Music and the Visual Arts. The other represents the Medical, Agricultural and Mineral Sciences. The reliefs have full bodied and robust proportions in the figures. Obviously, they are indebted to Classical Greek and Greco-Roman sculpture as well as to French second Empire style public sculpture. The reliefs are essential to the embellishment of the front facade, being the only major sculptural decoration of it. They indicate the humanising and civilising vision that the government was expected to have in the later 19th century.

Classified: 17/11/1993

Hermes Number 65599

Property Number

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/>