
Harold Holt Memorial Swimming Centre



B7021 Harold Holt Memorial Swimming Pool

Location

1409-1413 High Street and cnr Edgar Street,, GLEN IRIS VIC 3146 - Property No B7021

Municipality

STONNINGTON CITY

Level of significance

State

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0069

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 6, 2006

The Harold Holt Memorial Swimming Centre, designed by local architects Kevin Borland and Daryl Jackson, is of State architectural, historical and social significance.

Architecturally, the Harold Holt Memorial Swimming Centre is amongst the most notable non-residential structures influenced by the then locally emergent concrete Brutalist movement in Victoria, and represents the aesthetic, as well as ethical imperatives of the style.

Aesthetically, the bold articulation of forms in textured off-form concrete, concrete blocks and glass, provide a

sculptural imagery which is fundamental to Brutalist architecture. In addition, natural lighting has been maximised to be effective dramatic chiaroscuro, as well as providing transparency through the entire site.

Ethically, the Pool represents the absolute centrality of the user in dictating the form, and an honesty or transparency in its presentation of purpose, materials and structure. In particular, this is found in:

the enlarged circulation (the use of expressed ramps and stairs);

the valuation of its materials "as found" (eg, textured off-form concrete, and industrial glazing); the formal legibility of the plan and the clear exhibition of structure (though the main timber trusses have been obscured);

articulating the constituent parts of the functional systems - ramps, skylights, service ducts, mezzanine observation deck;

and its overall clarity as an integrated complex of building pool and gardens which seek to collectively reinforce one object within an urban streetscape. Environmental concerns have been considered, in particular siting and the retention of existing planting.

Historically, the Swimming Centre is of significance to Australian architectural history, being an early and expressive example of the then locally emergent Brutalism. It was also the work of two important local architects, Kevin Borland and Daryl Jackson. Kevin Borland is noted for his co-design of the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Pool, and the inventive Clyde Cameron College (1977). Daryl Jackson is considered an important Australian proponent of Brutalism, for projects such as the YWCA, Fiji (1970), the M.L.C. Resources Building, Kew (1973), and the highly articulated Canberra School of Music (1976), and received the R.A.I.A. Gold Medal in 1987. The Harold Holt Memorial Swimming Centre was also claimed to be the first metric plan design in Australia.

Socially, the place is significant at the National level, as the first - and probably most well known - memorial to the late Prime Minister, Harold Holt. At the Local level, the site is important for providing aquatic recreation for the south-eastern suburbs from the construction of the original Malvern Baths in 1926. The place retains the planted banks of the previous pool, as well as the square of parkland fronting High Street.

Classified: 08/11/1999

Other Names Harold Holt Swim Centre,

Hermes Number 66601

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.

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