
Former Hosies Hotel & Richard Beck Mural



B6455 Hosies Hotel

Location

1 - 5 Elizabeth Street and Cnr Flinders Street,, MELBOURNE VIC 3000 - Property No B6455

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

State

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2094

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 27, 2008

Hosie's Hotel, designed by Mussen Mackay & Potter, and completed in 1956, is important at the State level for architectural and historic reasons.

Hosie's is architecturally important for its use of varied volumetric forms, and use of colour, for which it is practically unique amongst central city high rise of the early post war era. In distinction to the then emerging modernist office block, which invariably took the form of a large single rectangular form, clad in a variety of lightweight curtain walls, Hosie's Hotel employs two distinct overlapping and interlocking forms, in the best pre-war European modernist tradition. The curtain wall panels and masonry walls are all clad in a variety of unusually colourful finishes, mainly the pale pinks and greys (now seen as very 1950s), topped off by an even more

colourful mural facing the Elizabeth Street tram terminus.

Historically, Hosie's is notable as amongst the very first of the new wave of high-rise construction in the city following the lifting of construction restrictions in 1953, in striking contrast to the pre-war, largely 19th century development that provided its context. It was one of the few commercial projects especially built in anticipation of the Olympics, an event seen as catapulting Melbourne into the modern post war era. It was one of only two new hotels in the city at this time, the other being the less architecturally inspired Graham Hotel on Swanston Street. Hosies Hotel Classified: "State" 06/09/1999.

The Richard Beck mural on the eastern exterior wall of the former Hosies Hotel is significant at the regional level. The work is the first major abstract mural produced in Melbourne and occupies a most prominent, though sadly neglected city corner. In many ways it is a pre-cursor to the current government-sponsored program to integrate public art into the city streets and buildings. The mural forms an early example of an artist successfully re-interpreting the Art/Architecture relationship in the age of mechanical building techniques and the functionalist theory of architecture.

The mural presents a group of clean and strong shapes integrating well into the hotel design. It has its own unmistakable presence as an artwork, but at the same time Beck has taken full account of the building and its location in creating the work. It operates very well with the light, machine-like structure the building suggests. Unfortunately, recent renovations have made it harder to see this important aspect of the work, but in spite of this, the general quality of the relationship has been maintained.

Mural Classified: "Regional" 18/08/1993

Revised:"State" 03/09/2001

File Note: The Mural has been classified by Heritage Victoria.

Hermes Number 64836

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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