
Preston Town Hall



B6624 Preston Town Hall

Location

Cnr High & Gower Streets,, PRESTON VIC 3072 - Property No B6624

Municipality

DAREBIN CITY

Level of significance

Local

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - December 10, 2007

A town hall complex of local architectural, historic and social significance. The complex has a strong social significance as a venue for functions as special events, for example, with a role in housing relief programs for the unemployed during the Great Depression. It has also housed meetings to discuss contentious issues of the day, such as conscription. It served as the 7 Fighter Sector Headquarters during the Second World War, was the venue where television was broadcast during the 1956 Olympic Games, and housed large citizenship ceremonies in the 1960s and 1970. The hall became a focus for community spirit and pride.

The Preston Town Hall complex was built in stages, each of which has some significance. The first section was designed by the architects Birtwistle and Scanlan in 1893, and completed in 1895. It was a small but extravagant scheme, very much in Birtwistle's distinctive style, which combined Queen Anne, Elizabethan and French Second Empire influences to produce highly animated and picturesque compositions. The projected tower which would have completed this scheme was unfortunately never built. The design included a small hall, which was complemented by a much larger City Hall added in 1929, and designed by the City architect. Front rooms and a

facade were added to this hall in 1934. Designed by prominent architect A L Leith and Associates, the facade complemented that of the earlier building though it was more ordered and classical, and provided an imposing termination to the Gower Street elevation. The freestanding War Memorial in the High Street side garden area was commenced in about 1921 and was also built in a style which complemented that of the main building, but with some Edwardian variations. In 1975 the original 1893 Birtwistle and Scanlan office building was greatly extended to the north, effectively doubling its length. This was executed in a style exactly matching the original (sans mansard roofs). Having been started in the extravagant boom years of the early 1890s and continuously expanded in complementing styles, the Preston Town Hall complex has long been the most prominent civic building in the north-east suburbs, and has been a focus for areas beyond the council boundaries.

Classified: 05/02/1996

Hermes Number 65435

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/>