
Melbourne Town Hall - Organ & Napier Waller Murals



B1305 Melbourne Town Hall



B1305 Melbourne Town Hall Interior



B1305 Napier Murals



B1305 Napier Murals

Location

90-130 Swanston Street, MELBOURNE VIC 3000 - Property No B1305

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

State

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0001

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - October 4, 2006

Town Hall Statement of Significance

An impressive example of Venetian Renaissance facade architecture used for a public purpose. Included are all buildings and the portico. Buildings interiors excluded.

First classified: 13/02/1964

Classified: 02/09/1971

Pipe Organ Statement of Significance:

An imposing organ case in Queensland maple, designed by Stephenson & Meldrum in a beaux arts style and made by E Newman & Son, of Kew, incorporating elaborate carving, filigree bronze grilles made by the Alloy Casting Co., of South Melbourne, and facade pipes covered in spotted metal with gilt mouths. This is the most imposing extant organ case designed and constructed in Australia and was made for the 1929 Hill, Norman & Beard organ, the pipework of which has been rearranged on new mechanisms and subsumed into a large contemporary instrument.

Classified: 28/07/1983

Murals Statement of Significance:

The Melbourne Town Hall Murals by Napier Waller are historically significant at the State level and are significant at this level for their context with Napier Waller's oeuvre. They are part of an overall new decorative scheme for the Melbourne Town Hall Auditorium which was redecorated after a fire in 1925. Apparently there were painting in the previous Hall.

The classical and mythological figures in the murals blend in well with the contemporary 1920s decorative scheme of the Melbourne Town Hall Auditorium and give a pleasing background to the variety of functions for which this hall was to be used over the years: ie concerts, balls, and public meeting of all kinds. At that time the Melbourne Town Hall would have been one of the few very large public halls available in Melbourne and would have been needed to be used for a wide variety of functions.

The classical and mythological figures outlined in sepia with benches of Nile Green (turquoise) and drawn directly onto the acoustic tiles, give the effect of artists' cartoons squared up for a larger work, and have stood the test of time well. Even though they were done in conjunction with Messrs Oliver & Sons, the architects and decorators, it is worthwhile remembering that Napier Waller won a special prize for anatomy as a student at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1913. An article in The Art Student of June 1932 states "given a free hand in the decoration of the Town Hall, he combined simplicity and dignity with good effect."

Classified: State Level: 17/11/1993

Hermes Number 65693

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/>