

King George V Memorial Hospital for Mothers & Babies

Address Missenden Road, Camperdown, NSW, 2050

Practice Stephenson & Turner

Designed c1938-41 Completed 1941

History &
Description

King George V Memorial Hospital for Mothers & Babies at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital is an excellent example of the Inter-War Functionalist style of architecture in Australia & exemplifies Stephenson's resolve to adapt European functionalism to hospital design, expressed in the building's clean lines, the efficiency of its form, & the massing around a distinctive entrance forecourt facing Missenden Road. The six storey steel & concrete framed building is clad in face brick with areas of terracotta facing. The plan consisted of north & south T-shaped wings about a central service core, including a basement & roof top plant room. The free form entrance porte-cochere was designed with dome lights & blue enamelled metal columns reflected in wall murals by artist Otto L Steen (inspired by the Della Robbia roundels on the Foundling Hospital in Florence). Internally the planning was determined by the functional relationship between the wards, services areas & circulation with a wide spread use of colour & purpose designed furniture. Although no longer used as a maternity hospital, the building has maintained much of its integrity and its adaptability to changes in hospital care. The landscaping, designed by Professor Waterhouse & planted after 1941, incorporated three statues by sculptor Andor Meszaros; Maternity (1944); the Surgeon (1945); & King George V (1947).

Arthur Stephenson travelled to Europe & America in 1932-33 to study hospital design. Whilst in Finland he visited the just completed Paimio Sanatorium (1929-33) by Alvar Aalto & was greatly impressed. On his return to Australia, his design language showed this influence. The Mercy Hospital, Melbourne, 1935, was the first hospital to be designed after this tour & it employed the features of Paimio. It is reasonable to assume that Stephenson kept in contact with Aalto as the porte-cochere to King George V is similar to Aalto's entry to Villa Mairea, 1938.

Stephenson was awarded the RIBA Gold Medal in 1954, he was knighted in 1954, & awarded the RAIA Gold Medal in 1964. He was honoured by the American Institute of Architects & a number of hospital bodies in the US for his innovations & achievements. The hospital was awarded The Sulman Award in 1941.

(Refer NSW SHR database #3540006; Shaw, *Sir Arthur Stephenson Australian Architect*, 1987; Apperley et al. *Identifying Australian Architecture*, 1989; and www.sydneyarchitecture.com. Machines for Healing)

Statement of
Significance

King George V Memorial Hospital is an excellent example of the Inter-War functionalist style of architecture in Australia with its clean lines & the efficiency of its form & massing designed by one of Australia's notable architects Sir Arthur Stephenson. Its elegant, well-controlled lines were enhanced by fine detailing & the design quality of its interior public spaces. Designed with long horizontal cantilevered balconies, rounded corners, metal framed windows, stairs that gave vertical emphasis, a distinctive porte cochere, & combined with the landscaping, artworks & sculptures, the hospital is an impressive element in its urban setting. Stephenson pioneered modern architecture in Australia either side of the World War 11 & this is an important work in his career.

Criteria
Applicable

N1. Significant heritage value in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or period of design
N3. Significant heritage value in establishing a high degree of creative achievement
N5. Having a special association with the life or works of an architect of significant importance in our history



Entrance elevation facing
Missenden Road c.1941
(Source: Stephenson & Turner)



Nurses Station c.1941
(Source: Stephenson & Turner)



Nurses Station c.1941
(Source: Stephenson & Turner)