

# Melbourne Museum

Address 11 Nicholson Street, Carlton 3053

Practice Denton Corker Marshall

Designed 1993

Completed 1996

History &  
Description

Amid great public outcry at the time, the new Melbourne Museum was constructed in the historic Carlton Gardens, directly beside the World Heritage listed Royal Exhibition Buildings. The complex is planned like a small town, with two parallel 'boulevards' running east-west structuring the spaces and the public circulation, ensuring clarity and legibility. Museum fatigue is a principal planning concern, and the public spaces are made simple and orthogonal so that visitors can easily chart their own routes through the complex and always return to the boulevard, understanding where they are. Each department is identified by having its own unique design character.

Externally, the complex is formally held together by a structuring grid. Within the grid, the IMAX cinema and Touring Exhibition Hall are expressed as dynamic, tumbling, metal-clad boxes breaking out of the framework. The Children's Museum and Aboriginal Cultural Centre, smaller in scale, are also expressed as eccentric forms lodged within the grid. The structural grid and the symmetrical order of the front elevation give way at the back, facing Carlton Gardens, to an irregular sculptural composition of forms that is held in by tension by the dramatic cantilevered blade.

Won in a national wide competition, the Museum is arguably one of the best of a number of important DCM commissions during the 1990s which included 101 Collins Street (1990), MEC (1996), Adelphi Hotel (1990), Melbourne Gateway (1999), Australian Embassy in Tokyo (1990) and in Sydney, the Museum of Sydney and Governor Phillip and Macquarie office towers (1995).

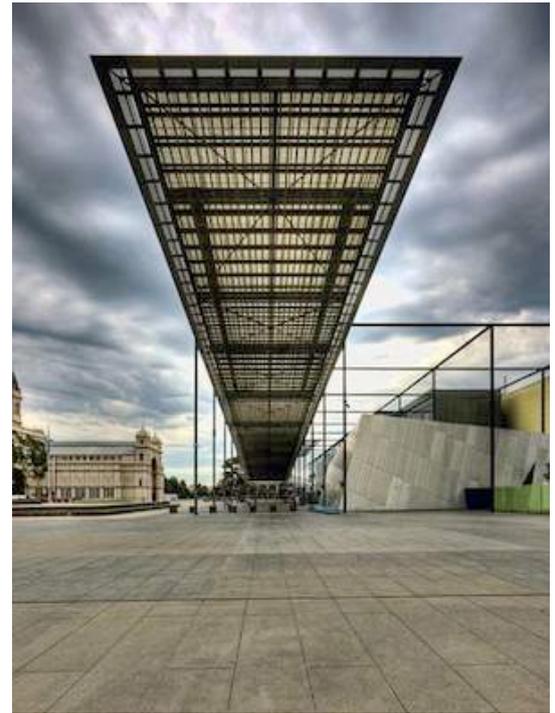
Statement of  
Significance

The Melbourne Museum was one of the largest new museums constructed in Australia at the time. It broke new ground in museum design with its radically different organisational approach, its use of discrete identities for each of the Museum's various sections, and its general planning. The building reflects exceptionally high standards of design and creative achievement at all levels.

It is an important example of the work of Denton Corker Marshall. It won the RAIA (Vic Chapter) Victorian Architecture Medal and the National Award for Public Buildings in 2001. John Denton, William Corker and Barrie Marshall were each awarded RAIA Gold Medals in 1996.

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.



One of the two entry blades, photo flickr.com



The outer 'boulevard', photo Melbourne Museum



The front entrance glass wall, photo ABC.net.au



Shows the grid that holds the elements together, photo by Alex Saito 2009