

# Olympic Swimming Stadium (former)

Address 10-30 Olympic Boulevard, Melbourne 3000

Practice Kevin Borland, Peter McIntyre, J and P Murphy

Designed 1952

Completed 1956

History &  
Description

Of the three international competitions held in 1952 to provide stadia for the 1956 Olympic games, this was the only one to be eventually built. The original site selected was at Fawkner Park, South Yarra. However, due to a public outcry, this was later moved to Yarra Park. The new location was by the river on a picturesque triangular site, bounded on two sides by an avenues of mature elms and was within convenient walking distance of the MCG.

The winners of the competition were a young group of relatively inexperienced architects Kevin Borland, Peter McIntyre, John and Phyllis Murphy and their engineer Bill Irwin. Their design incorporated an unusual structural design that minimised the total volume of building by utilising a 'V' shaped trussed structure tied down to the ground by a row of steel rods on each side. Access stairs were left open to the elements and expressed boldly under the structure, providing additional visual interest to the elevations. With a high band of windows running down each side and large areas of curtain wall glazing at each end, the building was bathed in natural light. Construction began in October 1954 and the building was completed in early 1956.

The building continued to be used for many years after the Olympics as the state's swimming venue. However the pool tank eventually failed due to the inherent instability of the ground conditions and was filled in. In the 1980 Borland Brown were commissioned to convert the building into a performance venue called the 'Glasshouse'. In 1999 these additions were removed and it is now used as a sports centre for the Collingwood Football Club.

Statement of  
Significance

The former Olympic Pool is significant as an early and influential landmark in the development of Structuralist architecture in Australia during the post-war period. The winning competition entry was acclaimed at the time as a brilliant and original design which would be influential in Australia and overseas.

The complex was a major focus of activity for the 1956 Olympics and as such was used extensively in Games promotion. Over time the building came to symbolise their memory and also emerging modernism in 1950s Australia.

The former Olympic Pool is of technological significance as an early example of post-tensioned steel frame construction.

Criteria  
Applicable

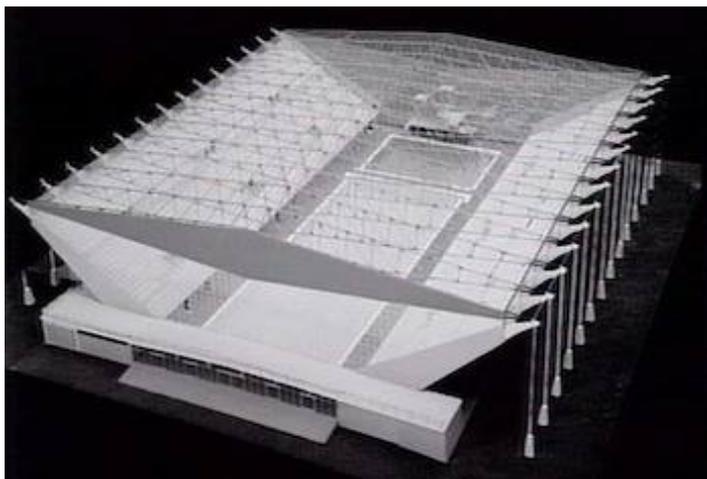
- N1 - Significant heritage value in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or period of design.
- N4 - Significant monumental and symbolic heritage value to the development of architecture and its history.
- N6 - Significant heritage value in demonstrating a high degree of technical achievement of a particular period.



External stairs 1956, photo by Wolfgang Sievers [SLV]



Western glazed wall 1956, by Wolfgang Sievers [SLV]



Model showing structural system 1956, photo by Lyle Fowler [SLV]



West elevation 1956, photo by Wolfgang Sievers [SLV Picture Collection]