

7 Elizabeth Street

Address 7 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, NSW, 2000

Practice Emil Sodersten

Designed Completed 1940

History & Description

7 Elizabeth Street was designed to contain fifty four flats and when completed incorporated the 'Normandie' restaurant in its basement and two shops at ground floor level, placed on either side of a wide central entry. The building was framed in steel with reinforced concrete floors. Green painted steel framed windows contrasted with the planes and decorative accents of the pale brick façade. The ground floor level was clad with the proprietary structural glass called 'Carrara' above a black tile skirting. An awning, stepped in the middle above the main entrance, shaded the shopfronts and protected visitors. The rest of the façade above was clad with cream bricks. Steel framed windows painted green. A flagpole extended above the facade.

The main ground floor vestibule was paved with terrazzo in a buff and green chequerboard pattern while the black tile skirting. The walls of the foyer were given a sand finish and coursed, while the ceiling was painted a rich red 'wine colour' and cornices were gilded. Within was an 'inner' vestibule that was finished in a similar fashion to the foyer. It contained an inquiry desk, an office, a directory board and the letter boxes for the apartments above. There were six flats on each of the upper levels, accessed by carpeted corridors with regularly spaced panels of glass bricks to give light from the light well at the side of the building.

A relatively large amount of the building remains as it was when completed. Those parts of the building that have been altered include steel framed windows replaced with aluminium framed sashes; the shopfronts have been altered; the ground floor exterior has been reclad with travertine and the interior of the building has suffered through an insensitive upgrading for fire safety. (Text and research by Roy Lumby)

Statement of Significance

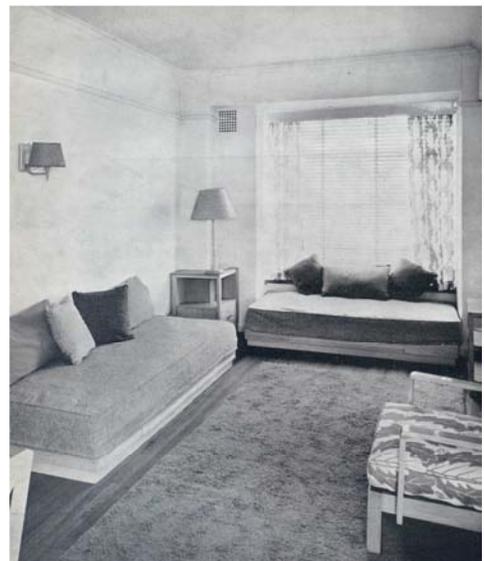
7 Elizabeth Street is historically significant because it is the only block of flats constructed in the City of Sydney during the 1930s to have survived and still fulfils its function as a residential building. The building is aesthetically significant because of its associations with two prominent and influential designers, architect Emil Sodersten and interior designer Marion Hall Best. Famous for the residential flat buildings that were designed in his office, this is the only one known to have been constructed in the City of Sydney and shows the influence of modernist European architecture on Sodersten's work. Its interiors were an early and well publicised example of the work of Marion Hall Best, who went on to exercise a great influence on interior design in NSW during the three decades after World War II. Although it has suffered modifications the building has retained a relatively large amount of original building fabric. Original furniture is also known to exist within the building, and it is also understood that some furnishing fabrics are still extant. (Text and research by Roy Lumby)

Criteria Applicable

- N1.** Significant heritage value in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or period of design
- N2.** Significant heritage value in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics



Front view (Source: *Building* (April 1940))



Bed-sitting room in typical flat, c.1940 (Source: *Decoration and Glass* (June 1940))