

# NR & NEW INTERNATIONAL SELECTION DOCUMENTATION MINIMUM FICHE

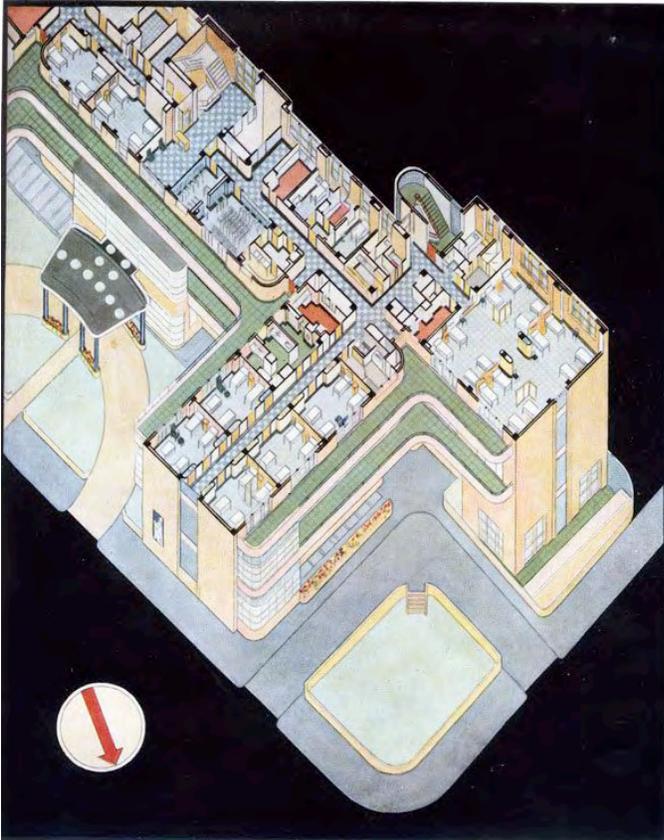
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**Figure 1: King George V Memorial Hospital for Mothers and Babies**



Source: King George V Memorial Hospital for Mothers and Babies Commemorative Booklet

## **1 Identity of building/group of buildings/urban scheme/landscape/garden**

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1.1	current name of building	King George V Memorial Hospital for Mothers and Babies, part of Royal Prince Alfred Hospital
1.2	variant or former name	King George V Memorial Hospital for Mothers and Babies
1.3	number & name of street	Missendon Road
1.4	town	Camperdown, Sydney
1.5	province	NSW
1.6	zip code	2050
1.7	country	Australia
1.8	national grid reference:	n/a
1.9	classification/typology:	Double TT plan Block Hospital/Intermediate Maternity Hospital
1.10	protection status & date:	Protected in the Local Environmental Plan of the City of Sydney

(a municipal level listing)

## 2 History of building

- 2.1 original brief/purpose: Designed and built as a maternity hospital in a period when hospital attendance for child birth was growing rapidly. It was an intermediate hospital, constructed as way to get middle class women who could not a private hospital room and were ineligible or disinclined to attend a charitable institution to attend hospital for birth. It was planned as part of a great hospital campus connected to the Royal Prince Alfred hospital immediately to the west of the University of Sydney campus and alongside its still quite new medical school.
- 2.2 dates: commission/completion: 1939-1941
- 2.3 architectural designers: Architects: Stephenson, Meldrum & Turner. The leading Australian hospital architects from the 1930s to the 1960s. The firm's forceful leader was A.G. Stephenson, an influential figure in hospital design globally in the 1930s and 1940s as a regular contributor to leading trade publications such as the Chicago-based *Modern Hospital* and Stuttgart-based *Nosokomeion*. Stephenson received a gold medal from the RIBA for his contribution to hospital design internationally. Artists: a) Andor Meszaros Hungarian sculptor who created the series of statues in the forecourt depicting *Maternity*, *King George V* and *The Surgeon*. b) Otto Steen, the Danish sculptor who created the frieze sculptures against della Robbia blue tiles either side of the main entrance, evoking the link to Florence's famous founding hospital with its celebrated decorative frieze sculpture by Andrea della Robbia.
- 2.4 others associated with building: Herbert Schlink, gynecologist and leading hospital administrator in NSW in the 1930s and 1940s. He envisaged a kind of health city alongside the University of Sydney campus. The vision was only partly realized but it nevertheless became the most prominent teaching hospital in Australia's largest city. He edited *The Australian Modern Hospital* (1949-1956) and was perhaps the leading advocate for the modernization of Australia's hospital facilities from 1930 until about 1960.
- 2.5 significant alterations with dates: The boiler house has been demolished and replaced  
(date unknown)
- 2.6 current use: Hospital

2.7 current condition: Generally speaking the condition of the hospital is very good and many important details which provide evidence of design intent are still intact.

### 3 Description

3.1 general description: Planned as a 263 bed hospital the seven storey building(above the basement) contained its own central kitchen, the first mother's milk bank in Australia, as well as spaces devoted to ante-natal and pre-natal instruction and treatment. It was connected to the old Royal Prince Alfred hospital on the other side of Missenden Rd by an underground tunnel and power for the building was supplied by a central power plant. The overall form of the building in plan is two connected t's – TT. The distinctive elevational treatments were typical of Stephenson and Turner's work in the period with generously proportioned white balconies wrapping around the surface of the building, which is a buff brick colour. The entrance is characterized by a large *port cochère* with a sensuous curve reminiscent of the one found on the rooftop solarium at Alvar Aalto's tuberculosis sanatorium at Paimio in Finland, a building Stephenson had visited on a research trip in the early 1930s. The operating theatres were particularly notable. Stephenson noted at the time that "provision made for students in the operating theatres is unique in Australia – the use of the Walter Operating Vault, first used and patented in Paris by Andre Walter" and utilized by his brother, prominent hospital architect, Jean Walter in the Beaujon Hospital, outside Paris. It consisted of a semi-ellipse of polished metal covering the whole of the operating room ceiling. The vault acted as a reflector to a light which is outside the room and shines through a glazed window into the vault, with the idea that the light would be diffused evenly throughout the space avoiding dark shadows on the patient. The light could be controlled from the operating table and adjusted by the surgeons as needed. Students could sit directly over the operating table and outside the vault observing the operation through viewing slots. The surgeon's comments were heard by means of a speech amplifying system.

3.2 construction: Steel reinforced concrete frame with concrete floor slabs and bitumen covered concrete roof, face brick external cladding and terra cotta facing.

3.3 context: The hospital is part of an extensive health campus that includes a group of buildings by the same architects including Gloucester House (1936), a six-story intermediate hospital, the 12 story Queen Mary Nurses' home (1956) and The Paige Chest Pavilion (1953) a 10 story former Tuberculosis hospital as well a small shop now a café that was originally known as the Boutique.

Other significant buildings on the campus include the remaining section of the original stacked pavilion wards of the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (1879) The wider context includes the University of Sydney campus and surrounding inner city areas, including Newtown, Glebe and Redfern, areas of mostly one and two story terrace housing with a mixture of larger multi-unit dwellings.

## 4 Evaluation

### 4.1 technical:

Technically the hospital was very advanced thanks to A.G. Stephenson's extensive knowledge of world's best practice. The hospital is characterized by extensive use of large triple-hung sash windows which enabled the movement of patients onto the extensive balcony areas. Reticulated services, unusual in hospitals prior to World War II, became standard in Stephenson's hospitals in the 1930s and could be found in wards as well as surgical areas of the King George V Hospital.

### 4.2 social:

The hospital is socially significant as a place that provided advanced care for maternity patients in a period when hospital childbirth moved away from the stigma of the old charity and lying in hospitals towards an idea of rigorous hygiene and scientific observation. For tens of thousands of Sydney's inhabitants the hospital is closely associated with the life changing events and memories surrounding childbirth.

### 4.3 cultural & aesthetic:

The hospital is culturally and aesthetically significant as the pre-eminent surviving hospital building by hospital specialists and leading Australian modernists Stephenson & Turner. Australian architectural culture was unusual for the extent to which hospital design was one of the principal conduits through which a rigorous, functionally-oriented modernism arrived in the country. King George V stands as a powerful emblem of institutional and aspiration and social transformation from a period in which technical rationality and social progress became beacons for leading architects.

### 4.4 historical:

As above

### 4.5 general assessment:

As above

## 5 Documentation

### 5.1 principal references:

'Two Meritorious Architecture Awards', *Architecture*, April, 1943, 57-69

Philip Goad, Rowan Wiken, Julie Willis, *Australian Modern: The Architecture of Stephenson and Turner*, (Miegunyah Press: Carlton, 2004)

## 5.2 visual material attached

Figure 1. Contemporary view of entrance porte cochere. Photograph: Cameron Logan, 2008

Figure 2. Contemporary view of Maternity Wing and balconies. Photograph: Cameron Logan, 2008

Figure 3. Original operating theatre interior, c.1941. Source: RPA Museum and Archives

## 5.3 rapporteur/date

Cameron Logan, July 2012



Figure 1. Contemporary view of entrance porte cochere. Photograph: Cameron Logan, 2008



**Figure 2. Contemporary view of Maternity wing and balconies. Photograph: Cameron Logan, 2008**



**Figure 3. Original operating theatre interior, c.1941. Source: RPA Museum and Archives**