

Gloucester House, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital
Sydney, Australia

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New International Selection
Full Documentation Fiche 2003

International working party for
documentation and conservation
of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the
modern movement

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composed by national/regional working party of: AUSTRALIA

0. Picture of building/ group of buildings/ urban scheme/ landscape/ garden



depicted item: Gloucester House, contemporary published view.
source: State Library of NSW
date: mid 1930s.

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1. Identity of building/ group of buildings/ group of buildings/ landscape/ garden

1.1 Data for identification

current name:	Gloucester House
former/original/variant name:	not applicable
number(s) and name(s) of street(s):	Gloucester House Drive, off Missenden Road
town:	Camperdown, Sydney
province/state:	NSW
post code:	2050
block:	lot:
country:	Australia
national topographical grid reference:	
current typology:	Hospital
former/original/variant typology:	Hospital
comments on typology:	within the grounds of an existing pavilion hospital

1.2 Status of protection

protected by: state/province/town/record only	State Government Agency Section 170 Register
	recommended for listing on the State Heritage Register.
	National Trust Register
	RAIA 20 th Century Buildings
grade:	not applicable
date:	
valid for: whole area/parts of area/building	whole hospital complex
remarks:	

1.3 Visually or functionally related building(s)/site(s)

name(s) of surrounding area/building(s):	Royal Prince Alfred Hospital
visual relations:	Gloucester House is constructed within the landscaped grounds of a late nineteenth century pavilion hospital.
functional relations:	The building takes advantage of the centralised hospital facilities.
other relations:	The hospital is a teaching hospital, associated with the adjacent University of Sydney.

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2. History of building(s) etc.

2.1 Chronology

Note if the dates are exactly known (e) or approximately estimated = circa (c) or (±)

commission or competition date:	mid 1930s
design period(s):	mid 1930s
start of site work:	unconfirmed
completion/inauguration:	1936

2.2 Summary of development

commission brief:	Gloucester House was commissioned by Herbert Schlink
design brief:	to construct a modern hospital building, for private patients
building/construction:	Reinforced concrete, terracotta lumber (in floors) non load bearing brick external skin.

completed situation: Associated with the private ward block, Gloucester House were the drive, the central sculpture of an Egyptian god and the landscaped garden to the north east of the building, visible from the wards. Existing mature trees were retained.

original situation or character of site: existing late nineteenth century pavilion hospital

2.3 Relevant persons/organisations

original owner(s)/patron(s):	Royal Prince Alfred Hospital
architect(s):	Arthur Stephenson of Stephenson, Meldrum and Turner, later Stephenson & Turner
landscape/garden designer(s):	unknown

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other designer(s): Stephen Pokara (artist)

consulting engineer(s): Unknown

building contractor(s): H. G. Whittle

2.4 Other persons or events associated with the building(s)/site

name(s):

association:

event(s):

period:

2.5 Summary of important changes after completion

type of change: alteration/renovation/restoration/extension/other: renovation

date(s): 1990s

circumstances/ reasons for change

The RAI notes that the '*building is in a sound condition and is largely intact. Externally, in terms of planning the courtyard and entry spaces of the building are substantially unaltered. Internally many of the original hard finishes and joinery remain, while some of the internal spaces suffer minor alterations to accommodate modern hospital use, in particular two floors rearranged for the oncology department during the mid 1990s.*' [State Heritage Register nomination form]

effects of changes: see above

persons/organisations involved: Central Sydney Area Health Service

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3. Description of building(s) etc.

3.1 Site/building character

The RAI A nomination form notes that: "*Gloucester House was constructed as a five storey addition to the existing Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and was intended as hospital accommodation for the paying middle class. The building is located in the south east corner of the hospital grounds and directly adjoins St Andrews College grounds. The ward had separate access via a concrete drive (Gloucester House Drive) and was also directly connected into the hospital proper with a corridor running into building D.*

The style of the building can broadly be described as being Streamlined Art Deco, however the planning and the treatment of the [garden court] façade shows the influence of the Modern Movement. The planning was configured in an L to maximise the solar access to the wards and to produce a rational layout for circulation and the provision of medical services. The inside of the L shape contains a planted courtyard and wards are oriented to this space. A feature of the building is the long steel strip windows located on the inside face of the L. These elements provided solar access to the wards and views over the adjoining hospital grounds. Also located on the inside face of the plan are continuous cantilevered balconies, 10 ft wide, leading directly from the wards. At the eastern end of the plan is a solarium, framed in steel framed glazing. Light is also brought into the building via the glass block infill to the external wall of the main access stairway.

The layout has the entry, lifts, nurses observation posts and services located at the junction of the two wings and at the time of construction the building contained such facilities as flower preparation rooms and a hairdressers.

The building has a reinforced concrete frame and terracotta floors. The external skin of the building is non load bearing brick with horizontal banding composed of articulated brickwork, a feature of the external elevations. These elements in combination with the windows and the balconies facing the courtyard produce a strong horizontal expression to the building. A precast awning identifies the entry, located at the external face of the junction of the two wings...The main doors are stainless steel framed.

3.2 Current use

of whole building/site: Hospital

of principal components (if applicable): Hospital wards

comments: The building is no longer used for private patients, it now contains a number of clinics and hospital departments.

3.3 Present (physical) condition

of whole building/site: The buildings are generally in good condition.

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of principal components *(if applicable)*:

of other elements *(if applicable)*:

of surrounding area *(if applicable)*:

comments:

3.4 Note(s) on context, indicating potential developments

At present the building continues to be used for hospital purposes.

4. Evaluation

Give the scientific reasons for selection for DOCOMOMO documentation

Intrinsic value

4.1 technical evaluation:

Gloucester House was the first modern hospital designed by the internationally recognised Australian Architects: Stephenson, Meldrum and Turner (later Stephenson & Turner). The building incorporates innovative planning and services. The air conditioning and sterilisation services at the time of construction were innovative, as was the sound isolation of the lift shaft.

4.2. social evaluation:

The building has been assessed as being a “landmark for its excellence as an example of interwar hospital design” and is associated with the development of public health infrastructure in NSW. It has been used continuously for health care since its construction in 1936, part of the larger hospital complex that was commenced in the 1880s. It is an early example of the construction of separate hospital buildings to house the private wards, marking the decline of caring for wealthy patients in their own homes.

4.3. cultural and aesthetic evaluation:

Gloucester House is an excellent example of an interwar hospital, exhibiting a distinctive external form and character, high quality finished, innovative planning and services. The building marks a transition from the streamlined moderne to the Modern Movement.

Comparative significance

4.4 canonical status (local, national, international)

Gloucester House is an early example of the application of modern hospital planning in Australia, based on the designs of northern European sanatoria. The private wards were designed and documented by Stephenson, Meldrum and Turner, a leading Australian firm still in practice today. The firm is recognised for their excellence in design of health facilities, particularly in the middle third of the Twentieth Century. They designed major hospitals in a number of Australian cities. The design of Gloucester House, and

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subsequently King George V hospital, at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital clearly shows the influence of the works of Alvar Aalto, in particular the Paimio Sanatorium visited by Stephenson shortly after its completion.

"The building and the medical facilities were considered at the time of construction to contain the most recent innovations from around the world, and to be a leading example of hospital design in Australia. The building was widely published both overseas and in Australia." [RAIA]

4.5 historic and reference values:

The building also shows the extent to which Nightingale principles of ward layout had been abandoned and marks a change in approach to the design of hospital buildings at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, an approach continued with the larger King George V hospital, also designed by Stephenson and Turner.

The work of Stephenson and Turner influenced many designers of hospitals, thus changing the character of the major metropolitan hospitals from predominately two storey pavilion hospitals, to multi storey hospital complexes.

5. Documentation

5.1 archives/written records/correspondence etc. (state location/ address):

Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Conservation Management Plan, DPWS Heritage Group

unpublished report c. 1997

The hospital maintains an archive which includes presentation drawings of the hospital.

5.2 principal publications (in chronological order):

Stephenson & Turner, *Stephenson & Turner, 1920 – 1970*, published by Stephenson & Turner, Sydney, 1970.

Shaw, John, *Sir Arthur Stephenson, Australian Architect*, published by Stephenson & Turner, Sydney, 1971

RAIA nomination form for the State Heritage Register.

5.3 visual material (state location/ address)

original visual records/drawings/photographs/others:

presentation drawings held by the hospital.

recent photographs and survey drawings:

film/video/other sources:

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