

do \_ co \_ mo \_ mo \_

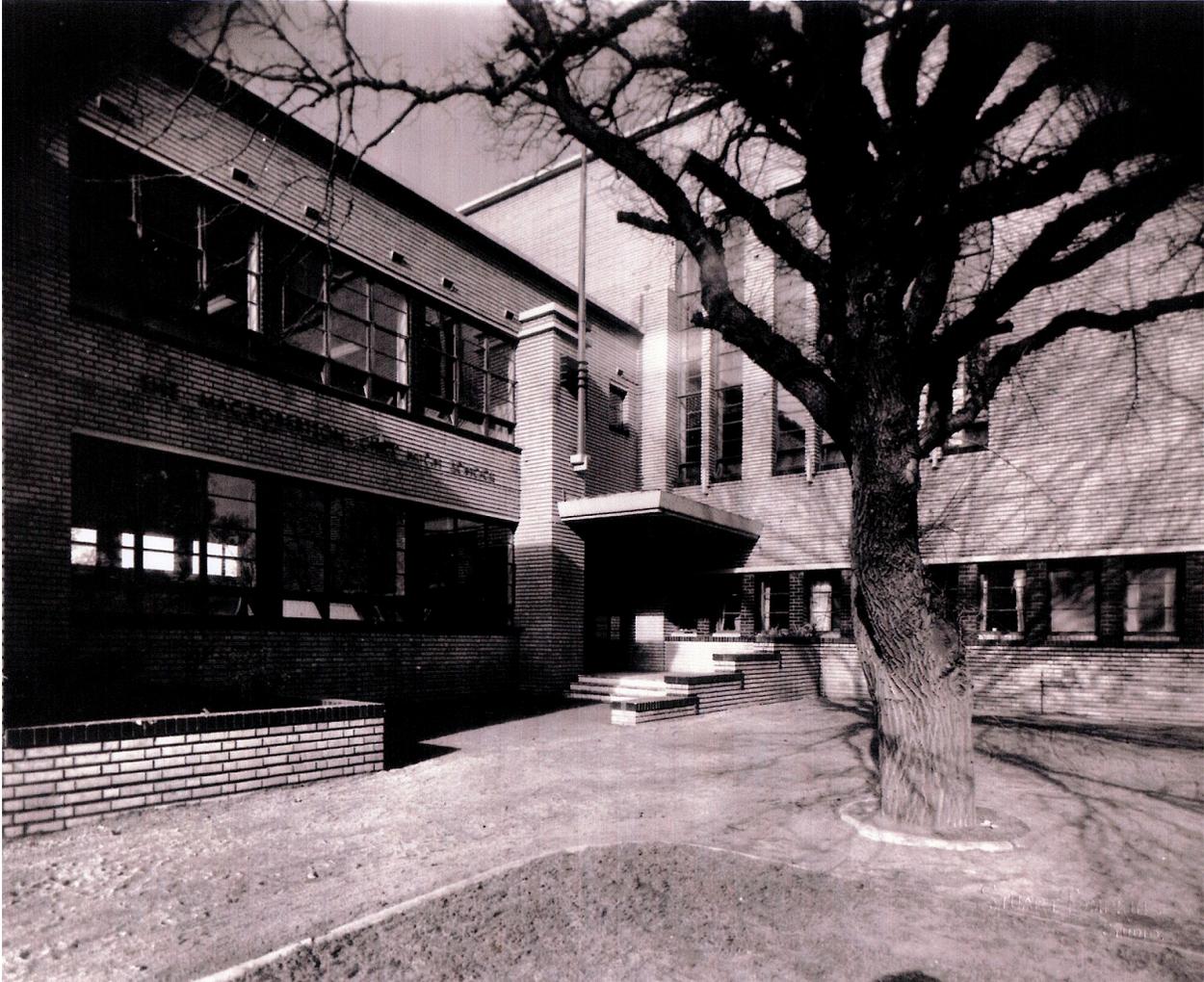
**Minimum Documentation Fiche**

International working party for  
**documentation and conservation**

of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the  
**modern movement**

composed by national/regional working party of: Australia

**0.1**



depicted item: Mac. Robertson Girls' High School  
source: Mac. Robertson Girls' High School Archives  
date: 1934

do \_ co \_ mo \_ mo \_

ISC/R members update 2003

*for office use only*

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

	db code
<b>1. Identity of building/group of buildings/urban scheme/landscape/garden</b>	
1.1 current name of building: Mac.Robertson Girls' High School	3
1.2 variant or former name: -	4
1.3 number & name of street: 350-370 Kings Way,	5
1.4 Town: Melbourne	6
1.5 Province/state: Victoria	7
1.6 zip code: 3004	8
1.7 Country: Australia	9
1.8 national grid reference:	10
1.9 classification/typology: Education (school)	11
1.10 protection status & date: Heritage Victoria, National Trust of Victoria,	12
<b>2 History of building</b>	
2.1 original brief/purpose: Public Secondary Girls' School.	13
2.2 dates: commission/completion: 1933-1934	14
2.3 Architectural and other designers: Norman Seabrook (1905-1979).	15
2.4 Alan Fildes (1909-1956) was the building superintendent and later became a partner to Seabrook, establishing the practice of Seabrook and Fildes.	16
2.5 significant alterations with dates: 1954: a caretaker's residence was erected on the flat roof of the east wing as well as a prominent mural to the entry foyer and double glazing introduced to the east wall windows. 1961: a new balcony was added to the assembly hall designed by Leith & Bartlett as well as a new access staircase and extra classrooms including a music room. This extension was made sensitively to match the original fabric in both its materiality and language. 1970: A new senior library was built which greatly altered the appearance of the building. This extended from the original rooftop library around the top of the north wing to meet the assembly hall. Again, this extension was made sympathetically, adopting similar detailing and character but the overall composition of the building was adversely affected. 1978: The science laboratories were refitted and repainted, curtains added to the windows of the assembly hall and the original 'schoolhouse' light fittings were changed.	17
2.6 current use: secondary girls' school	18
2.7 current condition: Good	19
<b>3 Description</b>	
3.1 The building is comprised of a series of interlocking cubic forms of differing heights, offset by a tall vertical clock tower. The school is constructed from cream brick using a Flemish bond, with raked joints to emphasise its horizontal streamlined aesthetic. Its colours embrace a De-Stijl palette with its cream brick forms, red steel framed hopper windows and deep blue glazed tiles. Internally, its colours are softer, employing shades of red, blue, yellow, black and green.	20

	The school's functionalist plan was a radical departure from previous Australian school designs. It rejected a Palladian plan type, popular with contemporary Australian school designs, instead embracing a Modernist strategy of zoning the various functions into four main branches, grouping the class rooms, science rooms, art rooms and cookery rooms into clearly defined sections.	
3.2	Brick construction	21
3.3	The building was constructed on a large site within the Albert Park reserve in Melbourne's inner south.	22
<b>4</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>	
	Technical: The school incorporated modern building and servicing products, celebrating technology in line with Modernist ideologies. It boasted the latest materials, fittings and furnishings including a modern heating device known as the 'Oil-o-matic', bakelite fittings and steel tubular chairs. The school also incorporated a sophisticated clock system, designed by Seabrook in conjunction with a local clock maker, which consisted of thirty-six clocks throughout the classrooms and the main hall.	
4.1		23
	Social: The building was constructed as a result of a substantial gift made to the government for its centenary anniversary, by local philanthropist and chocolate manufacturer, Sir Macperson Robertson. It was officially opened by the Duke of Gloucester on 7 November 1934, as part of the state's centenary celebrations.	
4.2		24
	Cultural & Aesthetic: The building was the first Modernist school to be constructed in Victoria, and possibly Australia. It received enormous public attention and was a radical departure from previous school buildings in its functionalist planning and celebration of form where contemporary schools tended to adopt a variety of styles from Gothic collegiate to Georgian revival. Its cream brick, also, had been rarely used to this extent in a public building in Victoria and had previously been limited to smaller applications such as in polychromatic brickwork. The school also pioneered open-air schooling in Australia, in tune with progressive theories on education that had been emerging trans-nationally.	
4.3		25
4.4	Historical	26
4.5	general assessment : The building is an important example of Australian Modernist architecture.	27
<b>5</b>	<b>Documentation</b>	
5.1	principal references: Mac.Robertson Girls' High School Archives; Christine Phillips, <i>Planting the Seeds of Modernism: The work of Seabrook and Fildes, 1933-1950</i> , Masters Thesis, University of Melbourne, 2007; Bryce Raworth, 'The MacRobertson Girls' High School Conservation Plan', Heritage Victoria, 1996.	28
5.2	visual material attached	29
5.3	rappporteur/date: Douglas Evans/July 2007	30

## 6. Fiche report examination by ISC/R

name of examining ISC member:

date of examination:

approval:

Wp/ref. no:

NAI ref. no:

**d o \_ c o \_ m o \_ m o \_**

ISC/R members update 2003

*for office use only*

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

comments:

**do ■ co \_ mo ■ mo \_**

ISC/R members update 2003

*for office use only*

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