

Victorian Heritage Database place details - 13/2/2012

1888 BUILDING, PART OF FORMER MELBOURNE TEACHERS COLLEGE



Location:

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, 156-292 GRATTAN STREET PARKVILLE, MELBOURNE CITY

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number: H1508

Listing Authority: VHR

Extent of Registration:

All of the place known as 1888 Building, Part Of Former Melbourne Teachers College, the University of Melbourne 156-292 Grattan Street Parkville.

Statement of Significance:

The 1888 Building was built as a residential teacher training institution for the Victorian Education Department. It is sited on the University of Melbourne reserve, on a section of land which had remained undeveloped by the university in the 1880s. In 1876 Charles Henry Pearson was appointed Commissioner of Education to enquire into the provision of teacher training institutions. He reported to parliament in 1878 recommending a block of nine acres on the corner of Swanston and Grattan Streets. The land, comprising four acres, was finally gazetted for the new Melbourne Training College in 1887. The new building was to replace its predecessors, the National Board's Normal Institution (1856-59) and Board of Education Central Training Institution (1870-1889). In October 1887 Charles Topp, the new principal, wrote to the Education Department suggesting training colleges be contacted in Britain for ideas relating to planning of training colleges.

The 1888 Building was constructed in three phases between 1889 and 1892 to Public Works Department

designs. The plans were prepared by architect GBH Austin under the supervision of JH Marsden. The main facade of the tuck-pointed red brick structure is a clear expression of the English Queen Anne style, although flanking wings are more restrained and Elizabethan in character. The building comprises a central block with main entrance, lecture halls and library, and is flanked by dormitory wings to the east and west to form an E-shaped plan. Male students were located in the west wing and female students in the east wing. Lecture rooms were also segregated.

The principal south facade is symmetrically arranged around the main entrance and porch, which includes a third floor added during the 1940s. This is the most elaborate facade, with three storey mansard roofed towers, rendered quoins, deep moulded cement cornices, ionic pilasters, urns and prominent Dutch gables. The main entrances are all treated in a similar fashion, consisting of elliptical arches decorated with rusticated blocks finished with pressed cement floral decoration. Griffins adorn the parapet.

During the 1890s the building had a short period of closure and operated as a private boarding school. It later resumed its training function and was known as the Melbourne College of Education and then later as the Melbourne State College. It was amalgamated with the University in 1989. The exterior of the building is intact but with modern additions to the rear.

The 1888 building is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

The 1888 building is architecturally significant as a distinctive example of the Queen Anne style, one of the oldest buildings of its style in Victoria. The style drew on the development of the Queen Anne style in England from the 1870s to the early 1900s, particularly among London Board Schools. The 1888 building also appears to draw directly on the formality and planning of training establishment precedents in England from the same period, notably the co-educational Homerton College in London. The use of the full range of Queen Anne devices appears unmatched in public buildings in the State. The survival of the principal interior spaces demonstrates its original function as a segregated residential college.

The 1888 building is historically significant in the development of educational training in Victoria. The building reflects the new commitment to teacher training, apparent within the government during the late 1880s. The building is significant for its associations with several of Victoria's leading nineteenth century educationalists, notably Charles Henry Pearson and Charles Topp. Both Pearson and Topp are believed to have been heavily involved in the planning and design of the new building.

Heritage Study	
Year Construction Started	1888
Architect / Designer	Austin, GBH
Architectural Style	Victorian Period (1851-1901) English Queen Anne Revival
Heritage Act Categories	Heritage place
Municipality	MELBOURNE CITY
Other names	MELBOURNE TRAINING COLLEGE, Secondary Teachers' College
History	