

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Cultural Artefact

Entry ID: AWE0597

Storey Hall

(1887 -)

Born 18870101, Swanston Street, Melbourne Victoria Australia

Occupation Meeting Place

Summary

Built by the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society as a meeting hall in 1887, the building now known as Storey Hall, located on the Swanston Street campus of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) in Melbourne, Victoria, has a long, colourful history that includes its importance as a site for women's social and political protest. Notably, during World War I, the venue was leased to the Women's Political Association, who scheduled public meetings and rallies. The organisation's purple, white and green flag was hoisted on the roof of the building 'as a symbol of the sisterhood of women.' Various International Women's Day Functions have been held at the venue subsequently.

In honour of the building's importance to Victorian feminist activism, The Ashton Raggatt McDougall renovation in the 1990s made a feature of the feminist colours.

Details

The green and purple colours of Storey Hall bring to mind the hall's earlier life as a place for feminist debate and Catholic activism. Built by the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society in 1887 'Hibernian Hall', as it was then called, played a significant role in the organisation of St Patrick's Day processions in Melbourne. By 1903 it was known as Guild Hall and Dureau Memorial Hall. During World War I the building was leased to a feminist pacifist organisation, the Women's Political Association, and was the venue for many of Melbourne's largest anti-conscription public meetings and rallies. Before being purchased, in 1957, by the Victorian Education Department, the building was owned at various times by the Eagle and Globe Steel Company of Sheffield, Melbourne Legacy and architect Bernard Evans, who later became Lord Mayor of Melbourne. In 1958 the hall was remodelled and named after Sir John Storey, an industrialist and member of the College Council for 15 years. Following the 1994 refurbishment the Royal Australian Institute of Architects judged RMIT Storey Hall 'of architectural significance'. The building received several awards and commendations in 1996-1997 including the RAI National Architecture Award (Interior Award), Victorian Architecture Medal, William Wardell Award (Institutional) and Marion Mahony Award (Interior Category).

Published resources

Resource Section

Storey Hall, Ruwoldt, M L, 2001,
<http://www.rmit.edu.au/heritage/bldg16.htm>

Storey Hall, RMIT Building 16,
<http://www.rmit.edu.au/about/heritage/bld16>

Book

Radical Melbourne : a secret history, Sparrow, Jeff and Sparrow, Jill, 2001

Author Details

Anne Heywood

Created 14 October 2003

Last modified 12 January 2009