



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



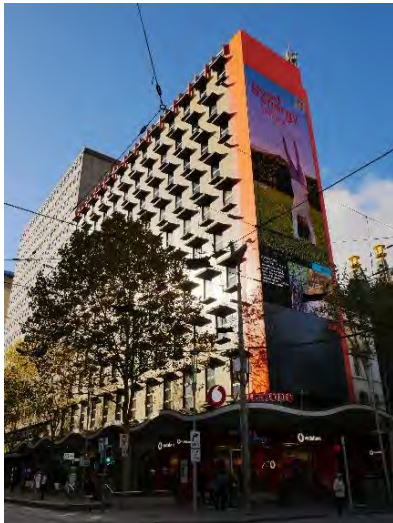
Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kollé & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



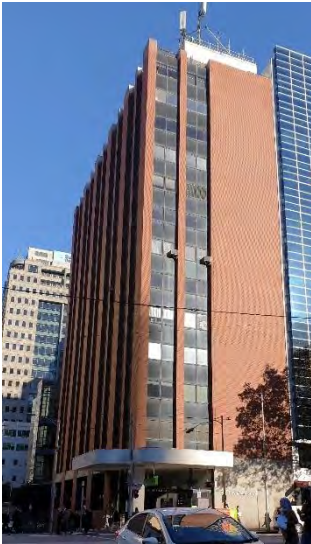
Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building, 359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)

Analysis

As a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building, the office building at 589-603 Bourke Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey commercial buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne. Similar to a number of 1960s to mid-1970s buildings listed above, the subject building clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Context History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*

Building Application Index (BAI), City of Melbourne.

Building Application Plans (BAP), City of Melbourne.

City of Melbourne Maps (CoMMaps), Site Details.

Encyclopedia of Australia Science, 'Gerard de Preu and Partners (1980 – 2006)', <www.eoas.info/biogs/A001073b.htm#pub-resources>, accessed 10 December 2019.

Sands & McDougall Directories (S&Mc).

State Library of Victoria (SLV), picture collection, images and photographers as cited.

Sun [Sydney, NSW].

The Age.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

**Review of Heritage
Overlay Listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

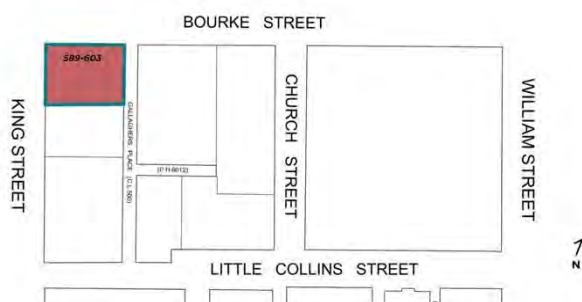
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Office Building



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The office building at 589-603 Bourke Street, a multi-storey commercial building constructed from 1973-75.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made to the street level facades are not significant.

How it is significant?

The office building at 589-603 Bourke Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed from 1973-75 to a design by Peddle Thorp de Preu, the office building at 589-603 Bourke Street has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and the prestige afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

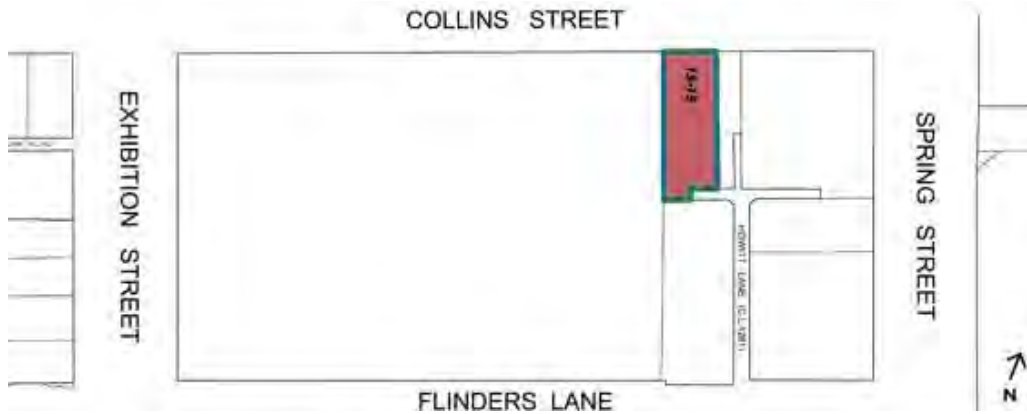
The office building at 589-603 Bourke Street is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building. The building strongly reflects the architectural style popular from the

1960s to the mid-1970s, particularly in central Melbourne, and clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a later postwar structure including three grid-like facades of complex three-dimensional wall panels that combine to create a strong horizontal emphasis. The use of materials such as precast concrete and aluminium window frames, as well as the incorporation of sunhoods to shade windows, demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style (Criterion D).

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Apartment Building
STREET ADDRESS	13-15 Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	102059



SURVEY DATE:	November 2017	SURVEY BY:	Context
HERITAGE INVENTORY	N/A	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER CATEGORY	Significant
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Kurt Popper	BUILDER:	Not known
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1970

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall 1.11 Overseas influences
5 Living in the city centre	5.1 Housing and lodging

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Medical / residential
1920s	Medical / residential
1960s	Carpark/ residential

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

Designed by émigré architect Kurt Popper, this modern residential apartment is an example of a building type that emerged in Melbourne in the late 1960s/early 1970s. It is distinctly modernist in form and aesthetic, with a curtain walled façade that features a rhythmic arrangement of brown brick spandrels and masonry balconies.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Overseas influences

America was the strongest overseas influence on the post-World War II architecture of Australian capitals. Australian architects often studied in American universities or visited the USA on study tours. American advances in the manufacturing of steel and concrete were also adopted in Australia. While steel was the main material in North American skyscrapers, concrete was used more often in Australia, and often combined with high-strength steel (Marsden 2000:70-72).

Another influence on architectural design was émigré architects who arrived in Melbourne before and after World War II. The impact of postwar immigration on Australian cities can be described in three ways: the enlivening of city centres by the arrival of European and Asian immigrants into mainly Australian-born communities; the rapid increase in the size of capital cities; and the roles played by particular immigrant groups, especially in the fields of architecture, economics, politics and cultural activities (Marsden 2000:95-99). Architect Kurt Popper, who arrived in Melbourne from Vienna in 1940, developers Bruno and Rino Grollo (sons of an Italian immigrant), and Viennese immigrant Ted Lustig and his Israeli son-in-law Max Moar, have had a significant impact on Melbourne's city landscape through architecture and property development.

Émigré architects were often educated in progressive institutions where modernism was more advanced than in Australia. Their expertise and modernist designs gained recognition and were translated into the local context. Many were also involved with teaching at architectural schools and influenced the next generation of architects (Lozanovska & McKnight 2015:352-353). Examples in the city centre include the apartment buildings, Park Tower, 199-207 Spring Street (1969) and 13-15 Collins Street (1970), both designed by Kurt Popper.

Housing and lodging

The provision of accommodation has always been a major function of Australian city centres, and has included the establishment of hotels, hostels, boarding houses and serviced apartments, as well as terraces, flats and medium-density housing. Since the 1950s, the market sought by inner-city developers has moved to an almost exclusively middle- to higher-income group. New forms of accommodation from the 1950s replaced older buildings with high-cost, high-rise buildings for a restricted range of users (Marsden 2000:53).

The postwar era saw the introduction of apartments and flats in the well-established inner suburbs of South Yarra and St Kilda, spreading to Caulfield, Malvern, Camberwell, Hawthorn and Prahran. Victoria's first block of 'own-your-own' or 'OYO' flats were built in Hawthorn in 1949 and the subsequent introduction of strata title legislation by architect and Lord Mayor Bernard Evans led to the proliferation of this housing type from the early 1950s (Heritage Alliance 2008:23).

The apartment boom reached the inner city in the late 1960s, facilitated by the *Conveyancing (Strata Titles) Act* of 1961. An Australian innovation, the legislation allowed each lot or apartment to have its own title deed (Stent 2018). Many émigré architects, who were experienced in higher density living in Europe, specialised in apartment design. Viennese-born architect Kurt Popper, for example, built two blocks of residential flats in central Melbourne – Park Tower, 199-207 Spring Street (1969) and 13-15 Collins Street (1970) (Heritage Alliance 2008:21).

Although marketed as a glamorous and convenient lifestyle, high-rise city apartment living was not popularly embraced. Exhibition Towers, an 11-storey residential building located at the north-west corner of Exhibition Street and Little Lonsdale Street, was designed and built as a residential and

commercial building. Constructed in 1968-69 to a design by Kenneth McDonald & Associates, the building was an endeavour to provide 'OYO' flats in the city centre. 'High prices, high bills and Melbourne's conservative living style' contributed to difficulties in finding buyers for the units and the building was converted to the Courtesy Inn Motel in 1971 (*Age* 17 February 1971:3). It was also reported in 1971 that Park Tower was using its tenants' car spaces as a public car park and the flats were being let on short-term leases. Similarly, the two-month-old 13-15 Collins Street apartments contemplated filling its lower four floors with shops, offices and medical practices (*Age* 17 February 1971:3, Figure 8).

In 1974, the MCC introduced a policy to encourage residents back to the city through the construction of a variety of residential typologies. However, because development was market driven, it was predominantly offices and retail spaces that were constructed in the city centre (Marsden 2000:54, 112).

SITE HISTORY

13-15 Collins Street forms part of Crown Allotment 12, Section 8, originally purchased by Godfrey Howett (CoMMaps). Until 1945, the land was occupied for more than 70 years by the family of Dr Walter Gray. Dr Gray's house with doctors' rooms was one of Melbourne's oldest residential houses at that time (*Argus* 28 September 1945:6). By 1955, the land had been cleared by the then proprietor, the trustees of the Returned Servicemen's League, and used as a car park (*Argus* 18 January 1955:15).

In 1968, plans for a new \$2.25 million apartment building, '13-15 Collins Street', were drawn up by a group of Melbourne business people who had formed a company called No 13-15 Collins Street Pty Ltd (*Age* 17 November 1972:3). The managing agents of the project were Jones, Lang & Wootton (*Age* 15 May 1968:40). By May 1968 the excavations for the foundations of the building were completed, and tenders were invited around the same time (*Age* 15 May 1968:40).

Architects Roy Grounds & Co Pty Ltd were initially appointed to design the building, the first modern apartment tower on Collins Street. The firm, however, did not complete the project. The building was constructed to an amended design by émigré architect Kurt Popper who had completed two of the first modern residential buildings in Melbourne by that time, Crossley House at 47 Little Bourke Street and Park Tower at 201 Spring Street. Although the façade of 13-15 Collins Street was largely redesigned by Popper, the finished building showed some degree of continuity with Grounds' design, including the use of masonry and render, and the dynamic arrangement of asymmetric massing across the height of the façade (Figure 2, Figure 1) (*Age* 19 June 1970:45).

One of the main differences between the designs of the two architects was the provision of the ground-level plaza. In Popper's design, the first two storeys were on the street line while the upper-storey tower was set back from the street line, whereas, in Grounds' design, the whole tower was set at the street line. The height of the building was also reduced from 24 to 22 storeys (*Age* 19 June 1970:45).



Figure 1. Roy Grounds' design for 13-15 Collins. (Source: *Age* 15 May 1968:40)



Figure 2. Kurt Popper's amended design for 13-15 Collins. (Source: *Age* 15 May 1968:40)

Completed in late 1970, 13-15 Collins Street was one of Melbourne's most luxurious blocks of strata title ('own-your-own') residential apartments. The proposed selling prices for each of the 48 flats varied from around \$35,000 for a single-bedroom apartment to \$185,000 for the 3700-square-foot penthouse on the twenty-second floor (*Age* 19 June 1970:45).

Even the single bedroom apartments were planned as 'luxury' residences featuring two bathrooms, dressing and powder rooms, a large kitchen, and balconies with views over the 'Paris end' of the city (*Age* 19 June 1970:45; 2 June 1971:11). Underground car parking and resident caretakers were also included (*Age* 19 June 1970:45).

At their completion, the apartments at 13-15 Collins Street were advertised as attractive 'city residences' offering 'a new exciting concept in modern living' (*Age* 23 September 1970:5). Contrary to initial expectations, however, the units sold slowly, with apartments in the building from the third floor up remaining empty for almost two years between 1970 and 1972 (*Age* 17 November 1972:3).

Unsuccessful sales resulted in changes being made to the building and its operation. Two months after the building's opening, the management of 13-15 Collins Street lodged an application to change the use of its lower-level suites from 'residential' to 'professional', in order to house medical practices (*Age* 19 June 1970:45).

In July 1971, the directors of 13-15 Collins Street sought Melbourne City council's permission to change the use of floors eight to 23 to commercial. The request was refused by the Building and Town Planning Committee because 13-15 Collins Street was built under an arrangement of a 'plot ratio bonus', which allowed eight-foot ceiling heights for residential buildings, instead of the nine-foot minimum requirements for office buildings. Based on this regulation, council advised that management needed to purchase land of 2000 square feet for use as a public park in order for commercial zoning to be approved (*Age* 17 November 1972:3).

In 1972, Hanover Holdings Pty Ltd acquired 13-15 Collins Street and commercial zoning was extended to all of the residential flats in the building (Age 8 August 1973:19). The total cost for the adaptation of residential suites for the accommodation of consulting rooms was about \$410,000, including the payment of a \$300,000 fee to council. Consequently, the market value of the building increased to around \$3 million in mid-1973 (Age 8 August 1973:19).

As a result of the rezoning, the units and penthouse at 13-15 Collins Street were granted two strata titles: residential and professional, which allowed conversion from a residence to an office (Age 9 May 1891:19; 19 August 1978:18). By 1974, businesses and doctors' practices were established in the premises (Age 25 September 1974:8).

Today, 13-15 Collins Street continues to house retail spaces in the lower levels and apartment/office units above the plaza. Today, the building comprises 17 residential properties, 27 businesses, three shops and two food and drink outlets (CoMMaps).

Kurt Popper, architect

Kurt Popper (1910-2008) was born in 1910 in Vienna, where his father was a successful joinery factory owner. With a keen interest in theatre and stage design, Popper studied at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, an art and craft school established in 1867 (Edquist:9). Popper was also a visiting student at the Academy of Fine Arts, where he attended the classes of Clemens Holzmeister, one of Vienna's leading architects (Edquist:11).

In March 1938, Popper was forced to leave Austria due to the political crisis in Europe. He first joined his friends in Paris. As soon as he could afford a ticket, he left for England, before travelling to Adelaide in April 1939, guaranteed by the Adelaide Jewish Community (Edquist:11).

In Adelaide, Popper briefly worked for Evans, Bruer & Hall, and completed a few commissions, one of which was featured in *Australian Home Beautiful*. While the war-time building restrictions were in action, he worked as an engineer (Edquist:11-12).

Popper held a position at the Housing Commission of Victoria in the office of Frank Heath in 1945-46. During this time, Popper's first independent commission in Melbourne, the Sherman house (1946) in East Malvern, was featured on the cover of *Australian Home Beautiful*. Following the success of the Sherman house, Popper established his own practice in Jolimont (Edquist:12).

During the 1950s and 1960s, Popper worked for many Jewish clients in St Kilda, Caulfield, Toorak and South Yarra. By the 1960s, he was recognised as one of the most prolific residential architects (Edquist:12).

While his practice ranged from large single-storey houses to own-your-own flats, one of his early achievements was high-rise city apartment blocks. Popper designed three early apartment blocks in Melbourne, including the first postwar era apartment in Crossly Lane. In recognition of his expertise, Popper was invited by the School of Architecture at the University of Melbourne to lecture on the design, construction and viability of high-rise apartments (Edquist:19).

Popper retired in 1975, at the age of 65, after over 35 years in practice (Age 18 June 2014).

SITE DESCRIPTION

This multistorey residential building has a two-storey base/podium built to the street boundary with a twenty-storey tower set back from the street. The building is distinctively modern in its form and aesthetic and is a representative example of a new building type - the modern residential tower building that proliferated in Melbourne from the late 1960s.

The building is constructed with a concrete structural frame and a curtain wall facing Collins Street. The front façade is divided into a grid pattern determined by the intersection of vertical and horizontal bays, all clad in brown brick. Masonry balconies project forward on each floor at each edge of the building. At regular intervals, the balconies extend over two bays, creating a rhythmic pattern up the façade. The arrangement varies slightly at the top two levels (which are likely to correspond with penthouse apartments) where the masonry balcony spans the entire frontage.

The podium level is divided into two wings with a centrally positioned wide entry way to the apartment tower. Retail spaces are located on the ground level with commercial spaces on the first floor. While the form of the podium is intact, the finishes to the façade have been altered, including the removal of the original tiles. A curved canopy over the tower entry doors is the only remaining feature.

The side walls of the building are clad in brown brick, with the marking of the concrete floor plates evident. The side façade presents as a solid, monumental element of the building, in contrast to the more open and dynamic front façade.

INTEGRITY

The tower section retains a high level of integrity. The form of the lower level podium remains but alterations have occurred to the finishes, including removal of the original tiles to the façade.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

There are no residential towers from the postwar period in central Melbourne on the Heritage Overlay for the City of Melbourne. A group of four residential towers is included in this study. All are relatively intact examples of a new building type that emerged in the late postwar period (late 1960s – early 1970s).

Other Post-War Modernist residential buildings in the Hoddle Grid

There are a small number of buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the apartment building at 13-15 Collins Street. These are detailed below.



Park Tower, 199-207 Spring Street (Kurt Popper, 1969) (Interim HO1263)



Exhibition Towers, 287-293 Exhibition Street (Kenneth McDonald & Associates, 1969-71)



Treasury Gate, 93-101 Spring Street (Moore & Hammond, 1971) (Interim HO1262)

Analysis

Both 199-207 Spring Street (1969) and 13-15 Collins Street (1970) were designed by émigré architect Kurt Popper, who was known for his apartment building designs.

Like the apartment building at 13-15 Collins Street, all three buildings are of modernist design, with structural concrete frames supporting curtain walls of repetitive glazed elements and masonry spandrels. In each case, primary aesthetic interest is derived from the expression of structure and materials (brick, concrete, glass) and the arrangement of structural elements (windows, balconies). There is a consistency to the arrangement of levels between all four buildings with retail/commercial spaces provided at podium level and multiple floors of apartments in a tower arrangement. Both 93-101 Spring Street and 199-207 Spring Street have a common space for apartment residents located at a mid-level.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

- | | |
|---|--|
| ✓ | <p>CRITERION A
Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p> |
| | <p>CRITERION B
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| | <p>CRITERION C
Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p> |
| ✓ | <p>CRITERION D
Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p> |
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Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p> |
| ✓ | <p>CRITERION H
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RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

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TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Study Review 1993** C

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Apartment Building

PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The apartment building at 13-15 Collins Street, Melbourne, built in 1970, and designed by émigré architect Kurt Popper.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing; and
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations are not significant.

How it is significant?

The apartment building at 13-15 Collins Street, Melbourne is of local historic, representative, aesthetic and associative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The apartment building at 13-15 Collins Street, constructed in 1970, is historically significant as one of the first wave of high-rise residential apartments constructed in the Melbourne CBD from the late 1960s, and before the introduction of a Victorian government policy in 1971 that directed where growth in Melbourne's housing supply could take place. The deliberate promotion of 13-15 Collins Street as a venue for a glamorous modern lifestyle contributes to an understanding of Melbourne as a modern city in the postwar period. (Criterion A)

The apartment building at 13-15 Collins Street demonstrates a new building typology that emerged in the CBD in the late 1960s and early 1970s – the modern high-rise residential apartment building. The apartment building at 13-15 Collins Street demonstrates key characteristics of its type. It was

constructed over a podium at the lower level accommodating retail and commercial spaces, with luxury residential apartments located in a recessed tower section. Residential accommodation included modern technologies such as individually controlled heating, cooling systems and security systems, access to communal recreation facilities located at the base of the apartments, basement car parking, and concierge/caretaker services. (Criterion D)

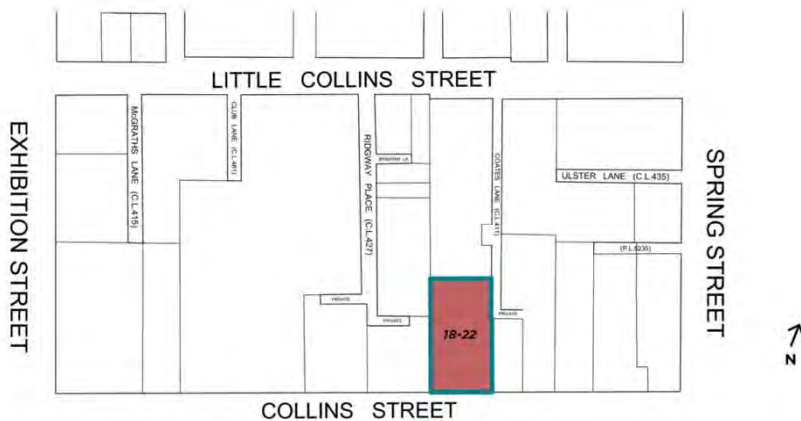
The apartment building at 13-15 Collins Street is of aesthetic significance for its distinctly modernist character expressed in its structure, facade articulation and skilful composition of form and materials. This is achieved by the combination of an expressed concrete grid structural frame, brick cladding and large areas of glazing. The façade is further enlivened by projecting masonry balconies that create a rhythmic pattern by regularly extending over two bays. The top levels of penthouse apartments are distinguished by larger balconies that unify the façade. (Criterion E)

The apartment building at 13-15 Collins Street is significant for its association with émigré architect Kurt Popper who brought European ideas about living in the city to the Melbourne CBD. Popper designed a number of residential apartment buildings in Melbourne including the six-storey 'Crossley House' (1967), which is known as the first modern residential block in Melbourne. (Criterion H)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Coates Building
STREET ADDRESS	18-22 Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	102164



SURVEY DATE: October 2019		SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage	
HERITAGE INVENTORY	No	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	HO504
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER CATEGORY	Significant
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	John A La Gerche	BUILDER:	G A Winwood Pty Ltd
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1958-1959

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Buiness and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Medical
1920s	Medical
1960s	Retail, Office

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The Coates Building is a curtain wall structure designed by architect John A La Gerche, and built in 1958-59 by builders G A Winwood Pty Ltd. It was constructed for owners Coates Building Pty Ltd, a 'type of co-operative ownership company' which was formed to develop the property. John A La Gerche was one of the directors of Coates Building Pty Ltd.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The Coates Building is a curtain wall structure designed by architect John A La Gerche, and built in 1958-59 by builders G A Winwood Pty Ltd (Goad et al. 1993; BAP; *Cross-Section*, Oct 1959:2; BAP). It was constructed for owners Coates Building Pty Ltd, a 'type of co-operative ownership company' which was formed to develop the property. John A La Gerche was appointed as one of the directors of Coates Building Pty Ltd in August 1956 (*Age*, 30 Jul 1958:7; 5 Sep 1958:5).

The building was named after Walter Coates (father of A M Coates, a Director of Coates Building Ltd) who purchased the property at the first land sales held in Melbourne in 1840 (Goad et al. 1993). The Coates family retained ownership of the property until the 1950s when it was transferred to Coates Building Pty Ltd (*Argus*, 31 Aug 1956:3). The site was formerly occupied by three bluestone and brick houses which were demolished in May 1956 to facilitate the new development (Goad et al. 1993).

The permit application for the new building – designed to accord with the 40m (132 foot) height limit in place at the time – was received by the City of Melbourne in November 1957 (with an estimated total

cost of £500,000) (BAI). Construction of the building commenced in February 1958 and was completed in 17 months, nearly two months ahead of schedule (Goad et al. 1993).

The Coates Building was developed on a co-operative basis rather than being commissioned. La Gerche had first implemented this method of finance with his earlier development of Gilbert Court at 100-104 Collins Street (1954-55) (Goad et al. 1993; *Cross-Section*, Oct 1959:2; Logan 2012:393). However, contemporary newspapers reported that the Coates Building development was:

...the first time this method of financing had been used in Australia, the architect and a shareholder (Mr J. A. La Gerche) said yesterday. The company had pioneered the system (Age, 5 Sep 1958:5).

An article in July 1958 stated that:

...(the) Coates Building Ltd will make an issue of £450,000 9 per cent registered first-mortgage debentures to the public to help finance a £750,000 "glass house" being built at the top end of Collins Street.

It continued that the:

...total cost of £750,000 will be met partly by the debenture issue and the remainder by £300,000 ordinary share capital. Tenants of the building will hold shares in the company. The debenture issue is unusual in that the public will hold debentures secured by a mortgage over the completed building. The £100 debentures have a 9 per cent interest rate and will run for 21 years, maturing in December 1979 (Age 25 Jul 1958:6).

Shareholders had the right to occupy a certain amount of floor space according to the number of shares they held. If shareholders didn't want to occupy the building, they could lease the space (*Age*, 5 Sep 1958:5). By July 1959, the entire space within the building had been acquired on a shareholding basis (*Age*, 11 Aug 1959:6).

In 1956, La Gerche visited the United States to study the latest trends in multi-storey office construction before the plans were completed (*Argus*, 25 Aug 1956:17; *Cross-Section*, Oct 1956:3). The visit is said to have resulted in his choice of stainless steel to the interior and exterior, which was believed at the time to be the first occasion of its use in Australia (Goad et al. 1993).

The Coates Building was designed as a steel frame building with precast floor units and a sheer glass and aluminum curtain wall to Collins Street (Goad et al. 1993). Architectural drawings dated August 1957 (Figure 1 & Figure 2) indicate that the Collins Street (south) elevation of the building was designed with rigidised stainless steel down the sides of the building, an aluminium cornice above the shopfronts and at the top of the building, and a wrought iron balustrade to the rooftop (BAP).

To the interior, the main entrance lobby was clad in stove enameled rigid stainless steel and a luminous ceiling immediately inside the entrance was made of contoured stainless steel and plexiglass (removed by 1993). Terrazzo flooring was laid inside and outside the building. As many occupants were expected to be members of the medical profession, a mechanical ventilation system was installed to enable full height partitions to be erected. The building comprised central heating via thermostatically controlled electric cables in the floor, windows that could be opened, and seven shops to the ground floor (Goad et al. 1993). In June 1959, newspaper articles advertised for tenants for the Coates Building as it was 'rapidly nearing completion'. These advertisements listed its features

as including sound-proof acoustic ceilings, heat absorbing, anti-glare windows and high-speed elevators as well as noting that an American system of radiant heating was to be used throughout the building (*Age*, 16 Jun 1959:6; 24 Oct 1961:5).

The 'glass box' project was discussed widely in contemporary newspapers and architectural publications, noting that it was 'the second building in Melbourne to have fully glazed and transparent multi-storey commercial curtain wall façade', following La Gerche's earlier design of Gilbert Court at 100-104 Collins Street (1954-55) (Goad et al. 1993). The Coates Building and Gilbert Court were two of the earliest 'glass box' buildings in Australia (Logan 2012:393).

The University of Melbourne publication *Cross-Section* (Oct 1959:2) commented upon the building's completion in 1959, stating that the:

Coates Building is a younger brother, in several senses, to Gilbert Court, Melbourne's first office building to earn the popular title as Glass House. Both earned the title in a technical sense as well as a popular one, by being remarkable for the absence of the traditionally expected upstanding fire-retarding spandrel between floors. In addition, both were promoted rather than commissioned, both are the only intrusions of this sort of architecture, this end of Collins Street.

La Gerche's two Collins Street buildings suggested a:

striking new direction for architectural expression in the central city and demonstrated characteristic cultural affinities with the United States in the same period (Logan 2012:393).

The Coates Building and Gilbert Court 'epitomised the sought-after total transparency and minimalism of the period where the cladding almost disappeared exposing the unadorned structural frame and the building occupants to honest scrutiny. No other multi-storey offices achieved this in the brief period before air-conditioning forced a modest spandrel to hide the false ceiling and facades began a practical path to less transparency, particularly to the sun's heat' (Goad et al. 1993, cites the National Trust). Both buildings were the only architecture of this type at the east end of Collins Street until 1960 (Goad et al. 1993).

The completed building was occupied by various tenants including medical professionals, architect J A La Gerche, the Australian Geographic Society, magazines, advertising agents, showrooms and a salon (Goad et al. 1993). Air conditioning systems began to be installed in parts of the building from 1968. The ground floor foyer was first refurbished in 1987 (BAI).

John Alfred La Gerche, architect

John Alfred La Gerche is best known for designing two of the earliest 'glass box' buildings in Australia – Gilbert Court (1954-5) and the Coates Building (1958-9), both located on Collins Street in Melbourne's city centre.

La Gerche undertook architectural training at the Melbourne Technical College, followed by the Melbourne University Architectural Atelier. He subsequently took up a position as draftsman with architects, Walter and Richard Butler, followed by five years as Chief Draftsman in the office of Frederick Morsby.

After serving in the Royal Australian Air Force and then the Royal Australian Navy during WWII, La Gerche took up the position of Chief Architect for Ansett Transport Industries. He designed several hotels in this role, including at Hayman Island, Queensland, which was heralded as Australia's first luxury international tourist resort.

In 1951, La Gerche established his own practice, where he focused on hotel remodelling as well as other commercial and industrial work. It was during this time that he designed Gilbert Court and the Coates Building, some of the first 'true curtain-walled office buildings in the city' (Reeves, Dictionary of Unsung Architects).

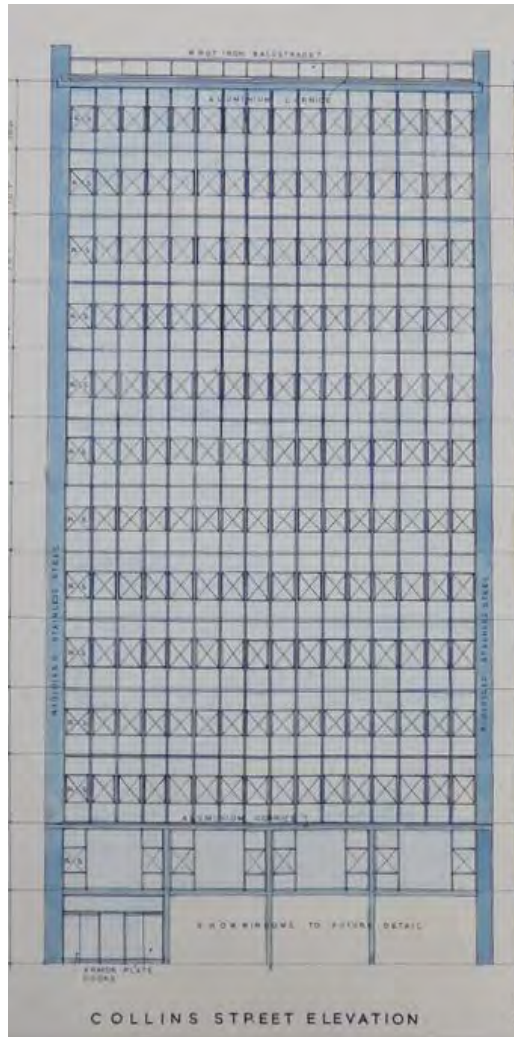


Figure 1. South elevation to Collins Street. Drawing by J A La Gerche, dated August 1957 (BAP).

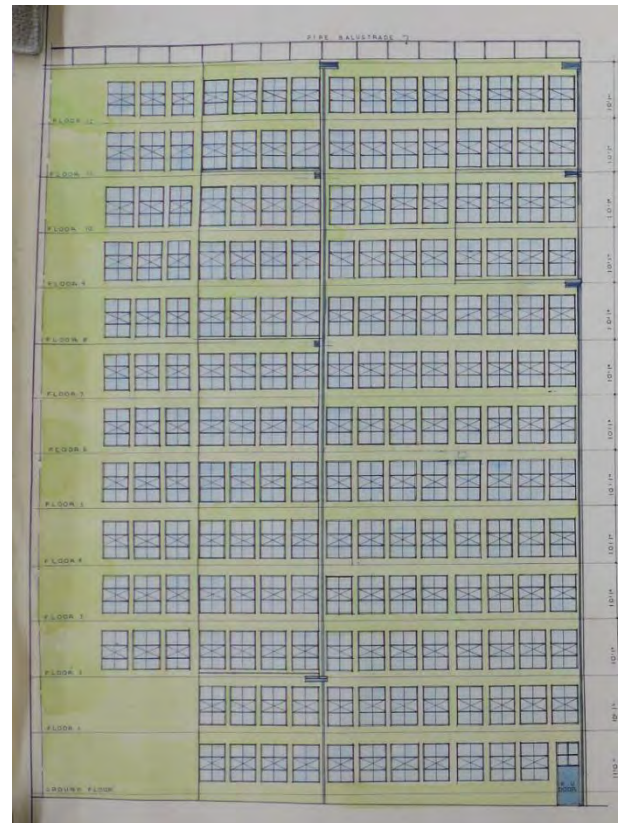


Figure 2. East elevation. Drawing by J A La Gerche, dated August 1957 (BAP).

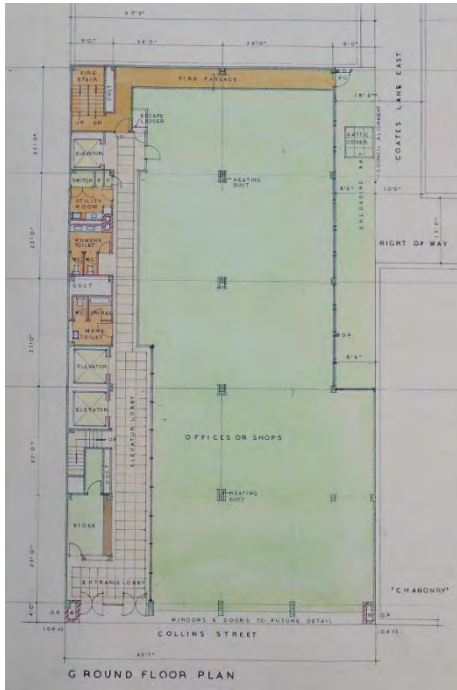


Figure 3. Ground floor plan. Drawing by J A La Gerche, dated June 1957 (BAP).

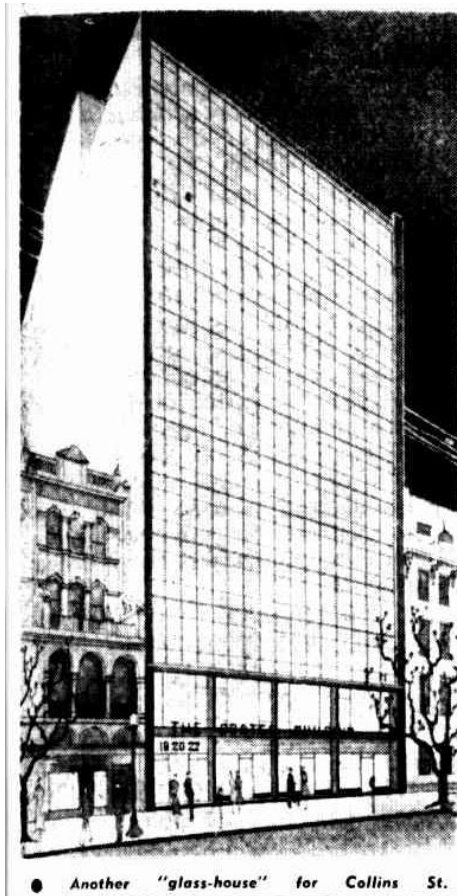


Figure 4. Illustration of the proposed design published in August 1956 (*Argus*, 31 Aug 1956:3).



Figure 5. An illustration of the proposed design, published in July 1958 while the building was under construction (*Age*, 30 Jul 1958:7).



Figure 6. Coates Building in 1960 (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H99.50/111).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Coates Building at 18-22 Collins Street is a 12-storey commercial building located on the north side of Collins Street near the corner of Spring Street. Constructed in 1959 to a design by John A La Gerche, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

Built to the then prevailing height-limit of 40m (132 foot), the Coates Building is rectangular in plan with a narrow frontage to Collins Street and recessed upper bays along the east façade which are visible above the roof of the adjoining building. The adjoining building to the east is of similar height to the Coates Building while a tall building with a frontage to Little Collins Street has been constructed at the rear. Coates Lane East provides access to the east side of the rear of the building from Little Collins Street.

The building is of concrete encased steel column and beam construction with the visible façade to Collins Street presenting as a large transparent curtain wall of light aluminium frame and glass. The façade is entirely glazed, unlike typical curtain walls of the period which incorporated opaque spandrels that obscured the view of the interior of the building and provided a horizontal emphasis to the exterior. Continuous vertical mullions from the street canopy to the parapet above, slender horizontal elements at each internal floor level and light aluminium window transoms inbetween, result in a grid-like pattern across the whole façade. The central row of window sashes were openable (and may remain openable) however a number of air-conditioning units have been inserted in various openings across the façade.

The service core is located at the west side of the building. This facade is obscured by a later adjacent building. The upper levels of the east and rear facades are visible and contain rows of individual metal-framed windows which are set into solid walls. This conservative detailing contrasts with the fully glazed front façade of the building.

A thin projecting aluminium element divides the street level façade from the building above. At ground level in Collins Street, the general form of the shopfronts and west side entrance to the office tower appears to remain. Some re-cladding of the façade has occurred at street level.

INTEGRITY

The Coates Building, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building, remains highly intact to its original construction in 1959.

Overall, the building retains a very high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone minor alterations (eg re-clad entrance at street level and the insertion of air conditioning units into the principal facade), these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey commercial building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Coates Building at 18-22 Collins Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of a 1950s multi-storey office building design. The building's curtain wall façade, with rows of metal-framed glazing and vertical mullions which divide the entire facade into a grid-like pattern, can be clearly observed from Collins Street. Unlike the more common curtain wall of the 1950s, which alternated opaque spandrels with rows of glazing, the entire front façade of the Coates Building is glazed and transparent. Despite the redesign of the façade at street level, the upper facades of the Coates Building remain highly intact to their original design.

There are a number of buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the Coates Building. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A comparative example in the City of Melbourne which is located immediately adjacent to the Hoddle Grid is ICI House, 1-4 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1958). This place is included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H0786).

Locally-significant places

Precinct Heritage Overlay

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from the early postwar period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme. Those from the 1950s that are included in the Heritage Overlay are currently included as part of Heritage Precincts, but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places. These places are:



Former Gilbert Court, 100-104 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1954-55) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Hosie's Hotel, 1-5 Elizabeth Street & 288-290 Flinders Street (Mussen McKay & Potter, 1954-55), included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Allans Building, 276-278 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, 1956-57) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Bank of Adelaide Building, 265-269 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, 1959-60) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Contributory place.

Other Examples

Despite the demolition of many 1950s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the initial period of curtain wall construction in Melbourne and demonstrate similar characteristics to the subject building. The following examples are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places as part of the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review:



Lauren's House, 414-416 Lonsdale Street (Harold Bloom, 1956) (Interim HO1254).



Former Atlas Assurance Building, 404-406 Collins Street (H Garnet Alsop & Partners, 1958-61) (Interim HO1008).



Former London Assurance House, 468-470 Bourke Street (B Evans & Partners, 1960) (Interim HO1006).



Former AMP Building, 402-408 Lonsdale Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1956-59).



Former Ajax House, 103-105 Queen Street (HD Berry, 1956).



HC Sleigh Building, 166-172 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1953-55).



Coles & Garrard Building, 376-378 Bourke Street (Meldrum & Noad, 1957).



Canton Insurance Building, 43-51 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1957).



Former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange, 376 Flinders Lane (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1957).

Analysis

As a fine and highly representative example of its type, the Coates Building at 18-22 Collins Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey office buildings in the City of Melbourne. Similar to the small number of 1950s buildings presently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme – and a small number of other examples identified throughout the Hoddle Grid and listed above – the Coates Building clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*

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The Age.

The Argus.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** C

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** A

**Review of Heritage
Overlay Listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

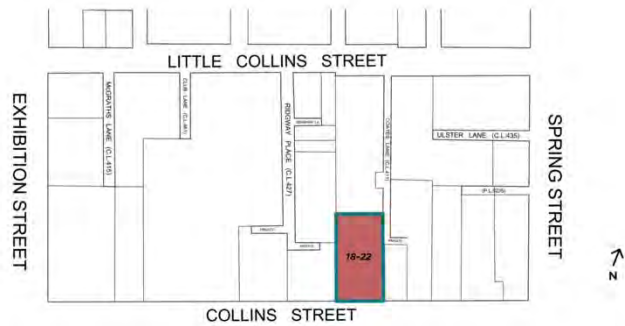
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Coates Building



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Coates Building, 18-22 Collins Street, a multi-storey office building constructed in 1958-59.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's very high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made to the street level facade are not significant. Airconditioning units are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Coates Building at 18-22 Collins Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed in 1958-59, to a design by John A La Gerche, the Coates Building has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and the prestige afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

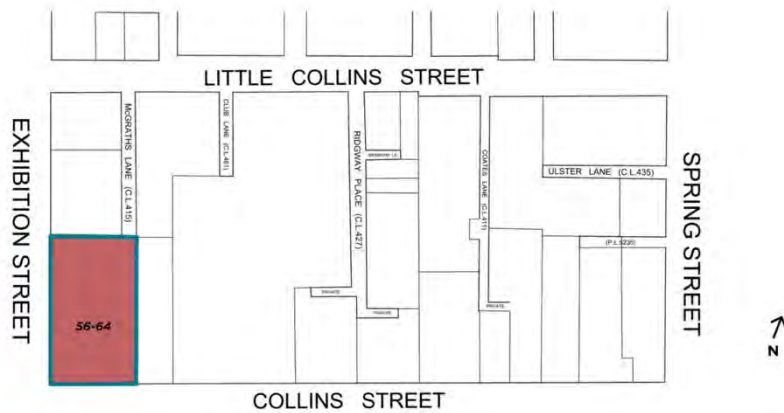
The Coates Building is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building. The building strongly reflects the style which was popular in the 1950s, particularly in central Melbourne. Constructed to the prevailing 40m (132 foot) height limit of the time, the Coates Building clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a 1950s structure with a curtain wall street

façade. The front façade of horizontal rows of framed glazing and vertical mullions which divide the facade into a grid-like pattern, and the use of materials such as aluminium window frames, demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style. The fully glazed and transparent front façade is both unusual and distinctive in the Melbourne context (Criterion D).

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former Reserve Bank of Australia
STREET ADDRESS	56-64 Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	102164



SURVEY DATE:	October 2019	SURVEY BY:	GJM Heritage
HERITAGE INVENTORY	No	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	HO504
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER CATEGORY	Contributory
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Prof. Brian Lewis, C. McGrouther, C. D. Osborne, R. M. Ure, and F. C. Crocker	BUILDER:	Watts Constructions & Civil and Civic
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1964-1966

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
2 Governing, administering and policing the city	2.1 Commonwealth government
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Medical
1920s	Medical/Hotel
1960s	Retail/Service, Medical, Café/Restaurant, Car Park, Office

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The multi-storey tower on the north-east corner of Collins and Exhibition streets was constructed in 1964-1966 to serve as the Melbourne branch of the Reserve Bank of Australia. The building was designed by a planning panel that comprised Professor Brian B Lewis (Dean of the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Melbourne, appointed as the consulting architect), C McGrouther (Superintendent Premises Section, Establishment Department of the Reserve Bank), C D Osborne (Director of Architecture of the Department of Works), R M Ure (Chief Designing Architect of the Department of Works, Melbourne), and F C Crocker (Architect in Charge, Bank and Special Projects Section of the Department of Works, Sydney).

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Governing, administering and policing the city

Public administration related to the government provision of services to Australian cities and states has always been based in capital cities. Government departments increased steadily from the late nineteenth century and continued to be of major importance after World War II (Marsden 2000:82).

Architect Miles Lewis argues that public works buildings before 1945 comprised 'restrained and sober metropolitan architecture', whereas after the war, government institutions sought to construct buildings that embodied images of modernity and progress. E F Borrie's 1954 plan for Melbourne, for example, proposed a new layout of major public buildings around Parliament House (Lewis et al 1993:221).

In the postwar period, the number of government offices increased dramatically in city centres due to two phenomena: an expansion in Commonwealth revenue and powers, and the extension of state government responsibilities to include welfare, housing, education, culture, and public transport services (Marsden 2000:83).

In 1948, the Commonwealth Government compulsorily acquired land on either side of Little Lonsdale Street, between Spring and Exhibition streets. The Commonwealth Centre (now demolished) was subsequently constructed on this block of land (with a street address of 11-39 La Trobe Street) over the period 1958 to the early 1960s. Its construction transformed 'the image of the Federal government in central Melbourne into that of a modern corporation' (Lewis et al 1993:223-24, 255).

As Commonwealth powers increased after World War II, Commonwealth buildings in city centres rose in number. Of particular influence was the transfer in 1942 of income tax revenue from the states to the Commonwealth and the resultant construction of buildings for the Taxation Office, including a building in Bourke Street, which opened in 1958. Marsden writes that the Commonwealth government presence, including the establishment after the war of the new Department of Housing and Construction, reinforced Melbourne's continuing pre-eminence as Australia's financial centre, at least until the 1960s.

A telephone exchange and postal hall building was constructed by the Commonwealth government at 114-120 Russell Street in the period 1948-54. In 1956 the building served as a relay station for the broadcasting of newly arrived television. In 1959, the Commonwealth Arbitration Courts opened at 450 Little Bourke Street, and in 1965 the Reserve Bank of Australia opened at 56-64 Collins Street. A telephone exchange was also constructed by the Commonwealth Department of Works at 376-382 Flinders Lane and opened in 1957.

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in

Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The multi-storey tower on the north-east corner of Collins and Exhibition streets was constructed in 1964-1966 to serve as the Melbourne branch of the Reserve Bank of Australia (PCA, 1989:3-4; RAIA). Prior to this date, the site was occupied by a hotel and three-storey residential buildings fronting Collins Street, dating to the Victorian period.

The Melbourne Reserve Bank of Australia building was designed by a planning panel that comprised: Professor Brian B Lewis, Dean of the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Melbourne, who was appointed as the consulting architect; C McGrouther, Superintendent Premises Section, Establishment Department of the Reserve Bank; C D Osborne, Director of Architecture of the Department of Works; R M Ure, Chief Designing Architect of the Department of Works, Melbourne; and F C Crocker, Architect in Charge, Bank and Special Projects Section of the Department of Works, Sydney (SLV, Lewis Papers).

The Department of Works compiled a set of preliminary exploratory designs (Figures 1-4) that were designed for the site within the restricted statutory building height of 132 feet (40m), however during the design process this restriction was replaced by regulations that enabled an increased building height at the site. At the first meeting of the planning panel in February 1960, it was agreed that a fifth design – a 17-storey tower block (plus five basement levels) – was to be further developed (following approval by the Bank) for consideration of the panel (Figures 5-6). The panel agreed that ‘in considering the alternatives, the aesthetic advantages of greater height for the tower block are considered important’, noting that the ‘prestige value of the Reserve Bank will compete with adjacent high rise construction at the Consolidated Zinc Building in Collins Street and future high rise structures in the immediate vicinity’ (SLV, Lewis Papers).

An illustration of the proposed Melbourne branch of the Reserve Bank of Australia was published in the *Canberra Times* in February 1964 (7 Feb 1964:22) (Figure 7). The article reported that the new building project for Collins Street was to cost £2,829,750, ‘contain 20 storeys, 17 of them above ground, and will be 242 ft. high’. The article noted that the building was ‘designed and planned by the Commonwealth Department of Works together with Professor B. B. Lewis ... of Melbourne University and representatives of the bank’. It noted that the ground floor was to comprise a covered arcade and entrances off each main street, a ‘shooting gallery for the training of bank officers’, a staff cafeteria,

auditorium and amenities. The building was to be constructed of structural steel encased in concrete, aluminium framed windows with small decorative aluminium panel above each window (*Canberra Times*, 7 Feb 1964:22). A vertical emphasis would be created with white marble clad columns to the exterior, and spandrels of black granite (PCA 1989:3)

Planning panel meeting minutes confirm that the ground floor was designed as the public entrance lobby with the first and second floors designed to accommodate the banking chamber and bonds and stocks chamber (SLV, Lewis Papers), which were reflected on the exterior by increased floor heights. Models of the design are shown at Figures 8-10. These models omit the rooftop apartment. The three basement levels were constructed by 1964 by Watts Constructions and the tower was completed in 1966 by Civil and Civic (Figures 11-12) (PCA, 1989:3).

In 1965, eminent Australian artist Sir Sydney Nolan, in collaboration with two technical artists Robin Banks and Patrick Furse, completed the mural entitled *Eureka Stockade* to be installed within the foyer of the Reserve Bank, Melbourne (Figure 13). The mural was commissioned by Dr H C Coombs, Governor of the Reserve Bank, who suggested that Nolan consider a theme related to an Australian legend (VHD, Nolan Eureka Mural). In accepting the commission, Nolan replied to Dr Coombs that he hoped he could do 'something worthy of... the spirit you bring to all these projects' (Nolan, RBAM). The mural depicts the Eureka Stockade, the uprising of goldminers against the colonial authorities. It measured 20 metres in length and 3.6 metres in height, comprising 66 panels executed in jewellery enamel on heavy gauge copper. In 2018 the mural was removed from the site and relocated to the Australian National University in Canberra.

A 1989 Commonwealth Government report indicates that works were undertaken that comprised refurbishment of the above ground interiors, upgrades for compliance with current building standards and enlargement and remodelling of the ground floor foyer to create a 'modern appearance', particularly to appeal to prospective private tenants (PCA 1989:1, 4). City of Melbourne records indicate that the works were carried out in 1993 (CoMMaps). As part of the works, the perimeter walls of the foyer were realigned to the street boundaries and the ground level facades to Exhibition and Collins streets reconstructed in dark grey granite panelling (PCA 1989:7).



Figure 1. Preliminary exploratory design 'A' (Preliminary design 'A'; SLV, Lewis Papers).



Figure 2. Preliminary exploratory design 'D' (Preliminary design 'D'; SLV, Lewis Papers).

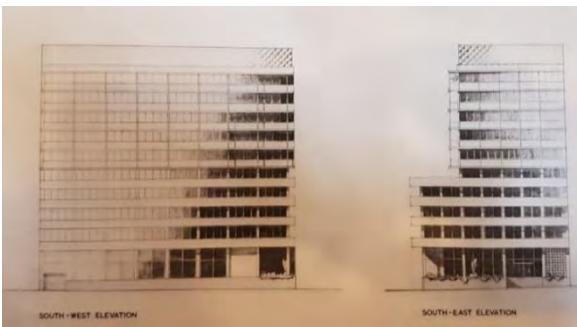


Figure 3. Preliminary exploratory design 'B' (Preliminary design 'B'; SLV, Lewis Papers).

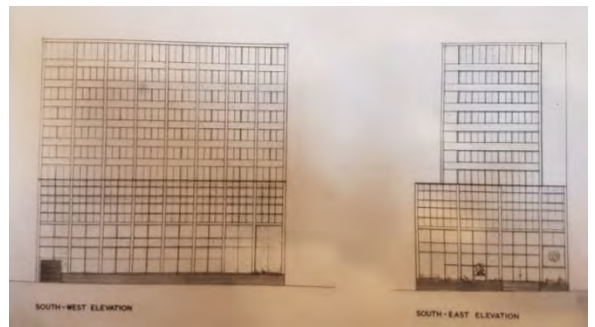


Figure 4. Preliminary exploratory design 'C' (Preliminary design 'C'; SLV, Lewis Papers).



Figure 5. Preliminary study of design 5 (or design 'E') – the first design iteration of a multi-storey tower for the Reserve Bank at the subject site (SLV, Lewis Papers).



Figure 6. A preliminary render of the ground floor as viewed from Collins Street (Preliminary Study 5A; SLV, Lewis Papers).

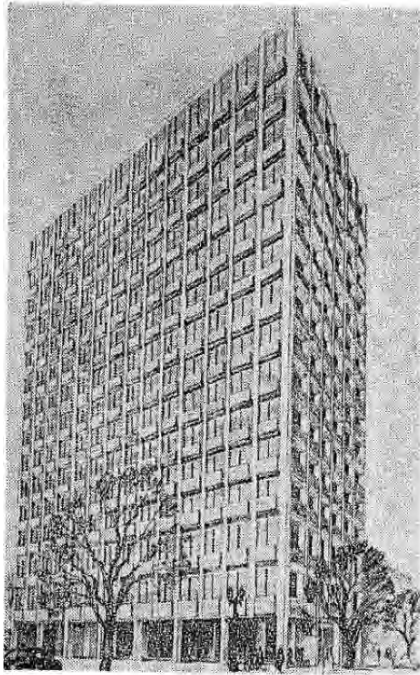


Figure 7. An illustration of the proposed 'new Reserve Bank of Australia building', published in the *Canberra Times* in February 1964.



Figure 8. Model of the south and west elevations. Image dated 1957-1984; probably dates to c1964 (NAA, item B6295, 579/31).



Figure 9. Model of the north and west elevations. Image dated 1957-1984; probably dates to c1964 (NAA, item B6295, 579/32).



Figure 10. Model of the south and west elevations from ground level. Image dated 1957-1984; probably dates to c1964 (NAA, item B6295, 579/33).



Figure 11. The newly completed building in 1966, showing the rooftop butterfly-roof apartment (NAA, item A1200, L57100).



Figure 12. Photo of the subject site dating to 1969 (NAA, item A1200_L79699).

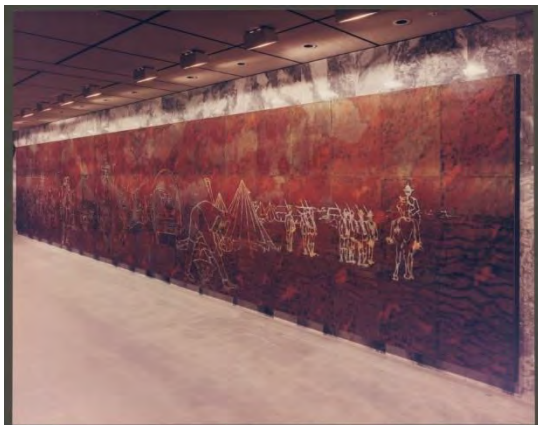


Figure 13. The Sydney Nolan mural in the foyer of the Reserve Bank in 1962 (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H2000.195/45).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former Reserve Bank of Australia building at 56-64 Collins Street is a 16-storey commercial building, with three-level basement and roof top caretaker's flat, located at the north-east corner of Collins and Exhibition streets. Constructed in 1964-66 to a design by the Commonwealth Department of Works and a Panel of expert architects, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

The building is of concrete encased steel column and beam construction, with alternating horizontal strips of paired aluminium framed windows and black granite spandrel panels, set between white marble-clad columns. These materials form a highly regular geometric grid across the main facades of the building. The extended upper level of the tower contains plant and building services and is externally clad by louvres set between the columns.

At roof level the caretaker's flat is set back from the edge of the main form of the building and has a distinctive butterfly roof which is clearly visible from the north in Exhibition Street. The tower occupies the western part of the site with vehicle access to the basement car parking and bullion vaults accessed to the east off Collins Street.

The ground floor foyer of the Reserve Bank was redesigned in the 1990s with the perimeter walls brought into alignment with the walls above. Remaining internal columns indicate the original wall placement. At this time the new external ground level facades were constructed in dark grey granite panelling and the internal foyer walls and floors were finished in panels of marble and granite. The foyer contains an open café at the south-west corner, an arched entrance with revolving door at the Collins Street entrance, an arched entrance from Exhibition Street with adjacent concierge desk and lift lobby at the north end.

INTEGRITY

The Former Reserve Bank of Australia building, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building above street level, remains highly intact from its original construction in 1964-66. The original design at street level provided both space and shelter for pedestrian traffic by setting walls back from the building line behind rows of columns. Works in the 1990s has altered this original design.

Overall, the Former Reserve Bank of Australia building retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone alterations at street level, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey office building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Former Reserve Bank of Australia Building at 56-64 Collins Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of 1960s multi-storey commercial building design. Situated on the corner of Collins and Exhibition streets, the building's grid-like curtain wall of horizontal aluminium framed glazing and black granite spandrels and vertical white marble-clad columns can be clearly observed from a number of viewpoints. Despite the redesign of street-level facades, the upper facades of the building remain highly intact to their original design.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the Reserve Bank of Australia building. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1974) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



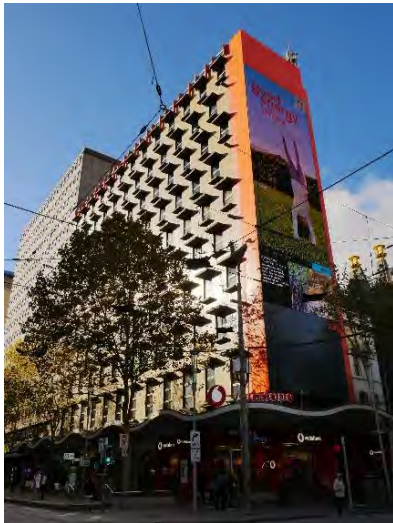
Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street
(Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street
(Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street
(B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street
(Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street
(unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street
(Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kollé, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building, 359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)

Analysis

As a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist office building, the Former Reserve Bank of Australia building at 56-64 Collins Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey commercial buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne. Similar to the small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings presently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme – and a number of other examples identified above – the Former Reserve Bank of Australia building clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

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- Heritage Victoria citation for 'Melville House, 52-54 Collins Street, Melbourne'.
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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985**

D

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993**

C

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002**

Ungraded

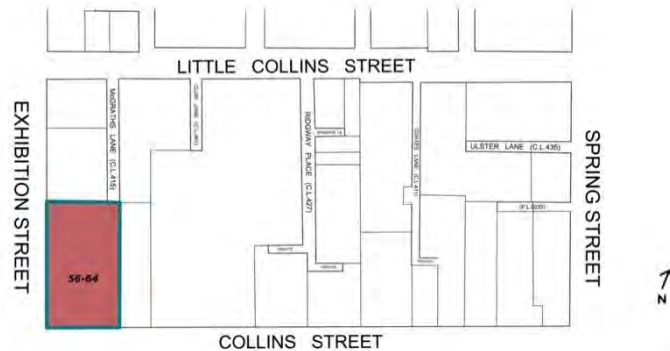
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011**

Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Reserve
Bank of Australia

PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street, a multi-storey office building constructed in 1964-66.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made to the street level facades are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former Reserve Bank of Australia at 56-64 Collins Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

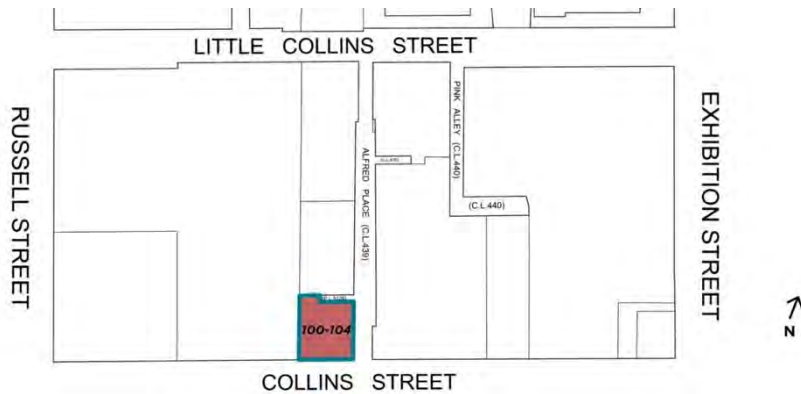
Constructed in 1964-66 to a design with input from Prof. Brian Lewis, C. McGrouther, C. D. Osborne, R. M. Ure, and F. C. Crocker, the Former Reserve Bank of Australia has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and the prestige afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

The Former Reserve Bank of Australia is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist office building. The building strongly reflects the style which was popular in the postwar period, particularly in central Melbourne. Constructed as a dominant 16-storey building on a corner site, the Former Reserve Bank of Australia building clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a postwar curtain-wall structure. The cuboid form, with facades displaying a regular grid composed of horizontal bands of glazing with dark spandrels and contrasting vertical columns, as well as the variety of materials, including granite and marble cladding and aluminium window frames, demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style (Criterion D).

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former Gilbert Court
STREET ADDRESS	100-104 Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	102156



SURVEY DATE: October 2019		SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage	
HERITAGE INVENTORY	No	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	HO504
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	John A La Gerche	FORMER CATEGORY	Significant
		BUILDER:	E A Watts Pty Ltd
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1954-1955

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here

POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Medical
1920s	Merchant, Medical, Retail, Studio
1960s	Medical, Café/Restaurant, Retail, Hairdresser, Workshop, Office, Studio, Club

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

Gilbert Court is a curtain wall structure designed by architect John A La Gerche and built in 1954-55 by builders E A Watts Pty Ltd. It was developed by Gilbert Court Pty Ltd and owned on a co-operative share basis by tenants. It was noted as Melbourne's first office building to earn the popular title as 'Glass House'.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

Gilbert Court is a curtain wall structure designed by architect John A La Gerche, and built in 1954-55 by builders E A Watts Pty Ltd. It was developed by Gilbert Court Pty Ltd and owned on a co-operative share basis by tenants (Logan 2012:393; *Argus*, 11 Mar 1954:1; *Age*, 27 May 1955:19).

Gilbert Court was one of the first speculative office buildings constructed in the post-World War II period. Rather than wait for commissions, La Gerche assessed the increasing demand for office space in Melbourne's central business district and took on the role of developer for Gilbert Court (Logan 2012:393; *Cross-Section*, Oct 1959:2). In 1953, *The Herald* stated that the development was 'the first co-operative office enterprise launched in Melbourne,' and that this method of financing new office buildings was popular in the United States (*Herald*, 18 Sep 1953:10). La Gerche later used this finance method on his development of the Coates Building at 18-22 Collins Street (1958-59). The company, Gilbert Court Pty Ltd, was registered in October 1953, before purchasing 100 Collins Street (*Age*, 17 Oct 1953:6).

The building was named in honour of Gilbert Walsh, who had purchased the property in 1950 with the intention of building a 12-storey building. However, Walsh died in December 1951 and his wife subsequently sold the land with the condition that the building would be named after her husband. Mrs Peggy Walsh was appointed chairman of the directors for Gilbert Court Pty Ltd and owned the ground floor shops, one of which she occupied for her millinery business (*Argus*, 21 Jul 1955:11).

The City of Melbourne received a building permit application for the new building in March 1954 (estimated total cost of £212,400) (BAI) and work commenced on the project the same month (*Argus*, 11 Mar 1954:1). The development attracted much attention and was reported on widely in contemporary newspapers and architectural journals. Gilbert Court was to be 'Melbourne's most ultra and up-to-date building' (*Age*, 27 Oct 1953:11) and 'the first in Australia to have a full glass construction on both frontages' (*Age*, 20 Feb 1954:3). In September 1953, *The Herald* (18 Sep 1953:10) reported that the 'limit-height blue glass and aluminium building', also described as a 'glass block,' was to occupy 'one of the most commanding and exclusive sites in any Australian capital.' The University of Melbourne's publication *Cross-Section* noted in April 1954 that Gilbert Court 'indicates heavily the New York influence: a box of glass here doing its best to ignore the regulation set-backs which once were affected as a "sky-scraper" silhouette'. Newspapers suggested that the design of the 'Glass House' was influenced by the United Nations Headquarters in New York (*Argus*, 11 Mar 1954:1; 21 Jul 1955:11). A few years after completion in May 1958, *Cross-Section* reported that Gilbert Court had 'firmly attached to its reputation the title "Melb's first glass box"' (*Cross-Section*, May 1958:2).

Gilbert Court was designed with thirteen floors, a reinforced concrete frame, full transparent curtain walls to the streets and sheer walls on the other elevations, with the service core backing on one of these (Taylor & Stewart 2001:31). Taylor & Stewart state that, like the Coates Building, Gilbert Court was 'distinguished by the absence of the traditional upstanding fire-retarding spandrels between floors' that were no longer required under the fire codes due to advances in alternative systems (Taylor & Stewart 2001:31, 36).

The site lent itself to the design, receiving natural light on three sides, with no light courts needed. A 1953 article reported that the building was to be constructed of reinforced concrete and faced with pale blue wired glass from pavement to roof on both the Collins Street and Alfred Place facades. There was to be a vitreous-enamel-covered pier on the corner and a blank wall on the west side. The glass walls were to comprise more than 1,000 windows set in anodised aluminium frames without any visible columns or masonry, giving the effect of an enormous glass screen. The concrete floor slabs were to be cantilevered three feet beyond the structural frame (*Herald*, 18 Sep 1953:10). Partial air-conditioning was installed, but hopper windows were also used to ensure adequate ventilation (Taylor & Stewart 2001:31).

The Equitable Probate and General Life Insurance Co. occupied the building in 1957, erecting a large sign on the rooftop (Figures 5 and 6).

Four years after completion of Gilbert Court, *Cross-Section* (Oct 1959:2) stated that Gilbert Court was 'Melbourne's first office building to earn the popular title as Glass House', and that the second was La Gerche's Coates Building built in 1958-59:

Both earned the title in a technical sense as well as a popular one, by being remarkable for the absence of the traditionally expected upstanding fire-retarding spandrel between floors. In addition, both were promoted rather than

commissioned, both are the only intrusions of this sort of architecture, this end of Collins Street (Cross-Section, Oct 1959:2).

Architectural historian Miles Lewis states that Gilbert Court was the first generally recognised postwar example of a city curtain wall (as it was finished before the Alliance Assurance Co building at 408-410 Collins Street, which was completed in 1957). Lewis notes that Gilbert Court's curtain wall 'is a facade wall, but it covers the entire facade rather than being framed or limited in the manner of Leonard House [44-6 Elizabeth Street; 1923-24] and the Barnett Building [164 Bourke Street; 1937-8]. It is clad in aluminium with heat-resisting glass, which in technical terms was not especially novel even for Victoria, but it suggests the aesthetic of the United Nations Building' (Lewis 2015:8.10.11).

Taylor (2001:31) claims that Gilbert Court was the first multi-storeyed building to embody the principles of Modernism. Both buildings were the only architecture of this type at the east end of Collins Street until 1960 (Goad et al. 1993).

Recent commentary on Gilbert Court states:

The building predated Bates Smart & McCutcheon's ICI House, and like ICI House, it eschewed traditional architectural language, employing the glass curtain wall that had become synonymous with the corporate skyscraper in the United States in the post-war decades. La Gerche's Collins Street buildings [Gilbert Court and Coates Building] suggested a striking new direction for architectural expression in the central city and demonstrated characteristic cultural affinities with the United States in the same period (Logan 2012:393).

La Gerche's Coates Building and Gilbert Court

... epitomised the sought-after total transparency and minimalism of the period where the cladding almost disappeared exposing the unadorned structural frame and the building occupants to honest scrutiny. No other multi-storey offices achieved this in the brief period before air-conditioning forced a modest spandrel to hide the false ceiling and facades began a practical path to less transparency, particularly to the sun's heat (Goad et al. 1993, cites the National Trust).

Alterations and renovations to Gilbert Court in the 1980s included the removal of air conditioning units to the windows within the curtain walls on the south and east elevations, and replacement with glazing (BAP).

John Alfred La Gerche (1907-c1972), architect

John Alfred La Gerche is best known for designing two of the earliest 'glass box' buildings in Australia – Gilbert Court (1954-55) and the Coates Building (1958-59), both located on Collins Street in Melbourne's city centre.

La Gerche undertook architectural training at the Melbourne Technical College, followed by the Melbourne University Architectural Atelier. He subsequently took up a position as draftsman with architects, Walter and Richard Butler, followed by five years as Chief Draftsman in the office of Frederick Morsby.

After serving in the Royal Australian Air Force and then the Royal Australian Navy during WWII, La Gerche took up the position of Chief Architect for Ansett Transport Industries. He designed several

hotels in this role, including at Hayman Island, Queensland, which was heralded as Australia's first luxury international tourist resort.

In 1951, La Gerche established his own practice, where he focused on hotel remodelling as well as other commercial and industrial work. It was during this time that he designed Gilbert Court and the Coates Building, some of the first 'true curtain-walled office buildings in the city' (Reeves, Dictionary of Unsung Architects).

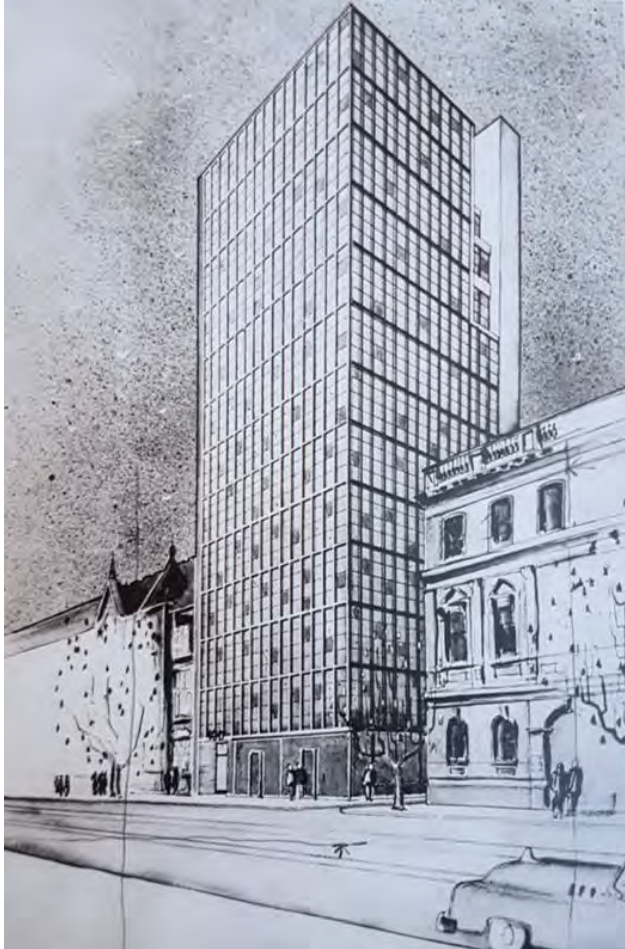


Figure 1. Drawing of the Gilbert Court project by J A La Gerche. No date (Logan 2012:394). Part of this drawing was published in *Cross-Section* in April 1954.



Figure 2. Construction of Gilbert Court, photo dated 28 February 1955 (SLV, Lyle Fowler, photographer, Image H92.20/5270).

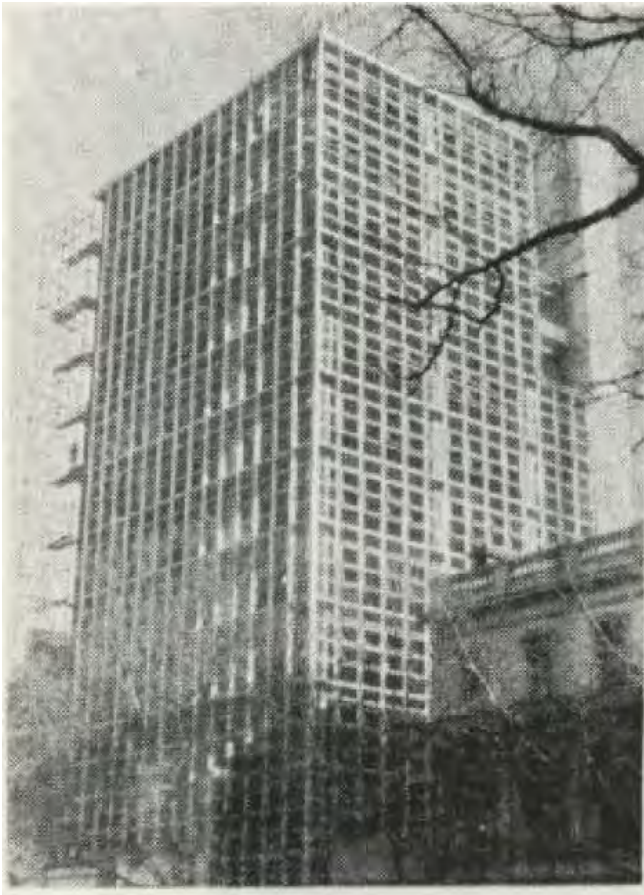


Figure 3. Photo of the building nearing completion, published in *Cross-Section* in July 1955.



Figure 4. Gilbert Court in 1955 (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H88.40/950).



Figure 5. Gilbert Court, the premises of The Equitable Probate and General Life Insurance Co., in April 1957 (SLV, Lyle Fowler, photographer, Image H92.20/6016).



Figure 6. Gilbert Court, the premises of The Equitable Probate and General Life Insurance Co., in April 1957 (SLV, Lyle Fowler, photographer, Image H92.20/6017).



Figure 7. Entrance to Gilbert Court c1985 (Butler via Flickr).



Figure 8. The building in 1984 (City of Melbourne Libraries online Heritage Collection, Reference no. Butler13462).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former Gilbert Court at 100-104 Collins Street is a 12-storey commercial building located on the north-west corner of Collins Street and Alfred Place. Constructed in 1954-55 to a design by John A La Gerche, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

Built to the then prevailing height limit of 40m (132 feet), Gilbert Court is square in plan with main frontages to Collins Street and Alfred Place. The building has a small footprint, occupying approximately one quarter of the block between Collins and Little Collins Streets. The building appears as a large transparent box with the two visible street facades presenting as entire walls of light aluminium frame and glass which wrap around the south-east corner. The service core occupies the west side of the building and presents to the exterior as a sheer wall.

The building is of reinforced concrete column and slab construction with the two adjacent curtain walls formed from aluminium framed windows and spandrels of blue obscure, but not opaque, glass. These curtain walls run continuously from the front corner of the west façade, around to a sheer wall at the rear of the east façade, which encompasses a secondary stair block. At this junction, the east facade steps back over the top floors, to accentuate the glass prism appearance of the building when viewed from Collins Street. The use of an entirely glazed façade was highly innovative at the time of

construction when the typical curtain wall incorporated opaque spandrels that obscured the view of the building's interior and provided a horizontal accent to the façade.

A slim projecting element delineates the upper façade from the street level shopfronts. The simplicity and transparency of the façade is continued at street level, with aluminium framed butt-jointed shopfronts and fully glazed doors and the absence of a verandah awning.

INTEGRITY

Gilbert Court, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building, remains highly intact to its original construction in 1954-55.

Overall, the building retains a very high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone minor alterations, particularly at street level, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey commercial building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Gilbert Court at 100-104 Collins Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of the emerging multi-storey commercial building design of the mid-1950s. The building's two grid-like curtain wall façades, with rows of aluminium-framed glazing and blue obscure glass spandrels and vertical mullions, can be clearly observed from Collins Street and Alfred Place. The use of two adjacent and entirely glazed transparent façades on a corner site was highly innovative at the time of construction. Despite the redesign of the façade at street level, the upper facades of Gilbert Court remain highly intact to their original design.

There are a number of buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to Gilbert Court. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A comparative example in the City of Melbourne which is located immediately adjacent to the Hoddle Grid is ICI House, 1-4 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1958). This place is included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H0786).

Locally-significant places

Precinct Heritage Overlay

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from the early postwar period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme. Those from the 1950s that are included in the Heritage Overlay are currently included as part of Heritage Precincts, but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places. These places are:



Former Bank of Adelaide Building, 265-269 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, 1959-60) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Hosie's Hotel, 1-5 Elizabeth Street & 288-290 Flinders Street (Mussen McKay & Potter, 1954-55), included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct as a Significant place.



Coates Building, 18-22 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1958-59) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Allans Building, 276-278 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, 1956-57) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Significant place.

Other Examples

Despite the demolition of many 1950s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the initial period of curtain wall construction in Melbourne and demonstrate similar characteristics to the subject building. The following examples are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places as part of the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review:



Lauren's House, 414-416 Lonsdale Street (Harold Bloom, 1956) (Interim HO1254).



Former Atlas Assurance Building, 404-406 Collins Street (H Garnet Alsop & Partners, 1958-61) (Interim HO1008).



Former London Assurance House, 468-470 Bourke Street (B Evans & Partners, 1960) (Interim HO1006).



Former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange, 376 Flinders Lane (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1957).



Former Ajax House, 103-105 Queen Street (HD Berry, 1956).



HC Sleigh Building, 166-172 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1953-55).



Coles & Garrard Building, 376-378 Bourke Street (Meldrum & Noad, 1957).



Canton Insurance Building, 43-51 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1957).



Former AMP Building, 402-408 Lonsdale Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1956-58).

Analysis

As a fine and highly intact representative example of its type, Gilbert Court at 101-104 Collins Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne. Similar to the small number of 1950s buildings presently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme – and a small number of other examples identified throughout the Hoddle Grid and listed above – Gilbert Court clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*

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The Age.

The Argus.

The Herald.

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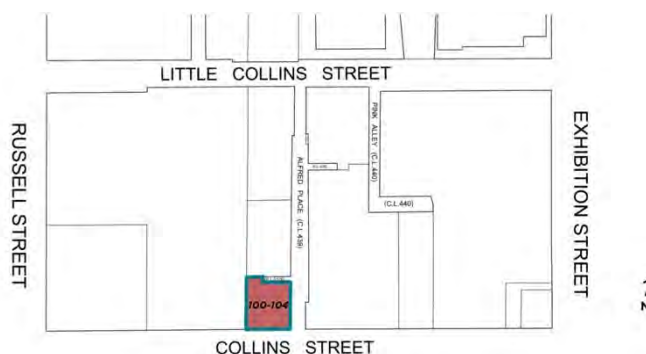
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011**

Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Gilbert Court

PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

Former Gilbert Court at 100-104 Collins Street, a multi-storey office building constructed in 1954-55.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's very high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made to the street level facade are not significant.

How it is significant?

Former Gilbert Court at 100-104 Collins Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed in 1954-55, to a design by John A La Gerche, Former Gilbert Court has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and the prestige afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

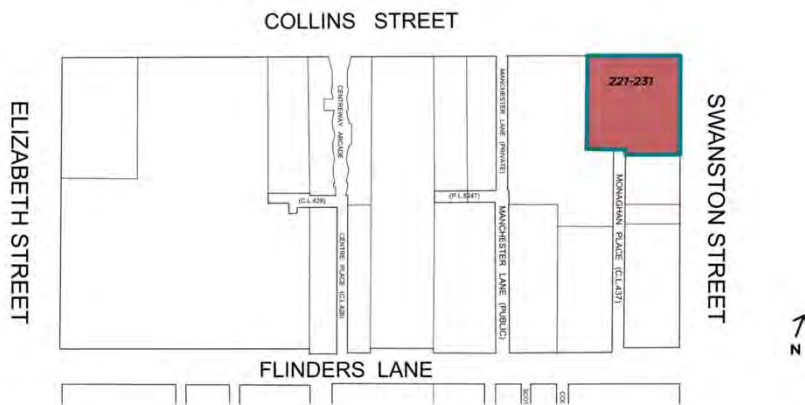
Former Gilbert Court is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building. The building strongly reflects the style which was emerging in the mid-1950s and was popular in the late 1950s, particularly in central Melbourne. Constructed to the prevailing 40m (132 foot) height limit of the time, Former Gilbert Court clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a 1950s structure with two adjacent, fully glazed curtain wall façades. The transparent façades of alternating

rows of glazing and obscure glass spandrels, and vertical mullions which divide the facade into a grid-like pattern, and the use of materials such as blue obscure glass and aluminium window frames, demonstrate important aspects of the Modernist style. On completion it earned the title of Melbourne's first 'Glass Box' (Criterion D).

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Wales Corner
STREET ADDRESS	221-231 Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	102079



SURVEY DATE: October 2019		SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage	
HERITAGE INVENTORY	No	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	HO502
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER CATEGORY	Contributory
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Stephenson & Turner	BUILDER:	Lewis Construction Co.
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1964-1966

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES Lot 1 LP97149	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Buiness and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Retail/Workshop, Medical, Café/Restaurant, Office, Merchant, Studio, Trade, Workshop, Caretaker
1920s	Retail, Library, Retail/Workshop, Medical, Hairdresser, Education, Office, Studio, Merchant, Registry Office, Caretaker
1960s	Retail, Storage, Hairdresser, Medical, Workshop, Office, Studio, Café/Restaurant, Bank, Education, Caretaker

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The multi-storey building at the corner of Collins and Swanston streets, known as Wales Corner, was designed by architects Stephenson & Turner and constructed in 1964-66 for the Bank of New South Wales.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The multi-storey building known as Wales Corner was designed by architects Stephenson & Turner and constructed in 1964-66 for owners the Bank of New South Wales (BAP; Butler 1985: Building ID Form; *Age*, 18 Jul 1962:5). The builders were the Lewis Construction Co. (*Age*, 25 May 1965:23).

An article published in July 1962 featuring the proposed building, to be called 'Wales Corner', reported that construction of the corner building was to commence early in 1963. The building was to incorporate an arcade from Swanston to Collins Street that would accommodate seven shops, a shop for Damman's tobacconists who had occupied the corner site for more than 90 years, and a banking chamber. The upper floors were for business and professional suites, showrooms and office spaces (Figure 1 shows the earlier proposed design) (*Age*, 18 Jul 1962:5).

City of Melbourne received a building permit application for the new building in December 1964 (estimated to cost £1,128,000) (BAI). Architectural drawings by Stephenson & Turner dated 1962 and 1964 show a modified version of the earlier design (Figure 2 - Figure 5), comprising a corner tower and low-scale section to the south, fronting Swanston Street. This low-scale section comprised the arcade providing access to retail shops at ground level, and a rooftop garden to the first floor. The banking chambers and bank offices were to occupy the ground and first floors of the tower. The building was designed with reconstructed stone panels and fixed glazing and reversible sash windows to the exterior (BAP).

The building was completed in 1966 and the Bank of New South Wales branch had opened by September 1966 (*Age*, 5 Sep 1966:2). The Bank of New South Wales continued to occupy the building into the 1980s (Butler 1985: Building ID Form). In 2019, the banking chambers are occupied by Westpac Bank.

Stephenson & Turner, architects

Stephenson & Turner was formed in 1921 as Stephenson & Meldrum by A G Stephenson and Percy Meldrum, who had met at London's Architectural Association. In 1925, the firm employed Keith Turner, who was well known for his design skills and headed up the newly-established Sydney office from 1934.

Stephenson & Meldrum specialised in hospital design. During the 1930s alone, the practice gained 20 major hospital commissions. In Melbourne, this included: Mercy Hospital, East Melbourne (1934), Freemasons' Hospital, East Melbourne (1935-36) and the Royal Melbourne Hospital (1938-39).

Meldrum split from the practice in 1937, having become uncomfortable with the firm's heightened focus on hospital work. It continued as Stephenson & Turner from this time, and from the 1940s onwards witnessed an extensive period of expansion. Offices were established in Newcastle, NSW (1947) and Adelaide, SA (1955), and internationally in Singapore (1949) and Wellington (1956). Offices in Auckland, Dunedin, Canberra and Hong Kong soon followed.

Though Turner retired from the practice in 1956, the firm continued to be known as Stephenson & Turner. Beyond their hospital work, the firm also designed industrial complexes, commercial office buildings, banks, town plans (including Shepparton in 1946) and the Australian pavilions at the Paris Exposition (1937) and the New York World's Fair (1939-40). Office buildings designed by Stephenson & Turner in Melbourne in the postwar period included 390 Lonsdale Street (1959); the Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Building at 308-334 Collins Street (1963); Wales Corner at 221-231 Collins Street (1964-66) and Embank House at 325 Collins Street (1965).



Figure 1. An earlier proposed design, published in July 1962 (*Age*, 18 Jul 1962:5).

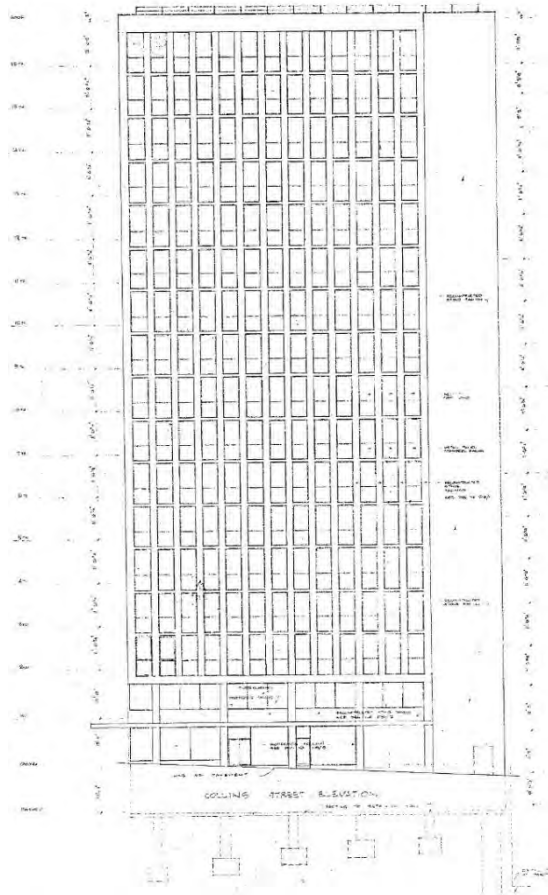


Figure 2. Northern elevation to Collins Street. Drawings by Stephenson & Turner, dated August 1964 (BAP).

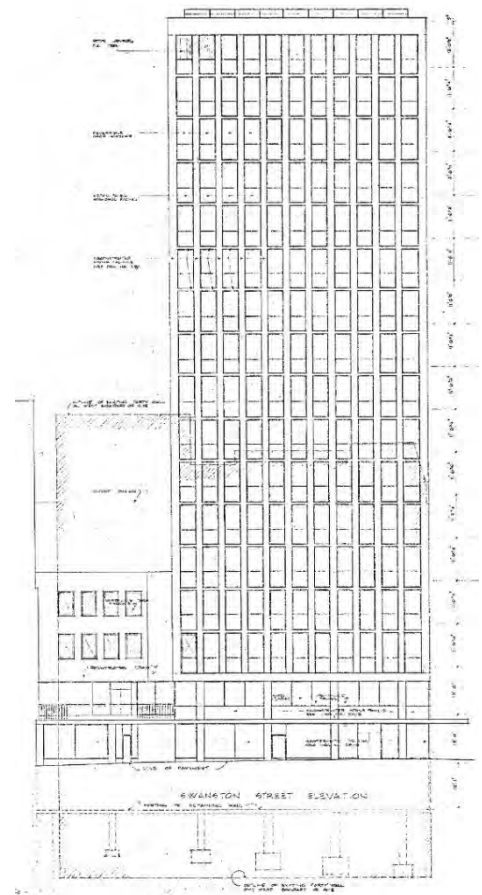


Figure 3. Eastern elevation to Swanston Street. Drawings by Stephenson & Turner, dated August 1964 (BAP).

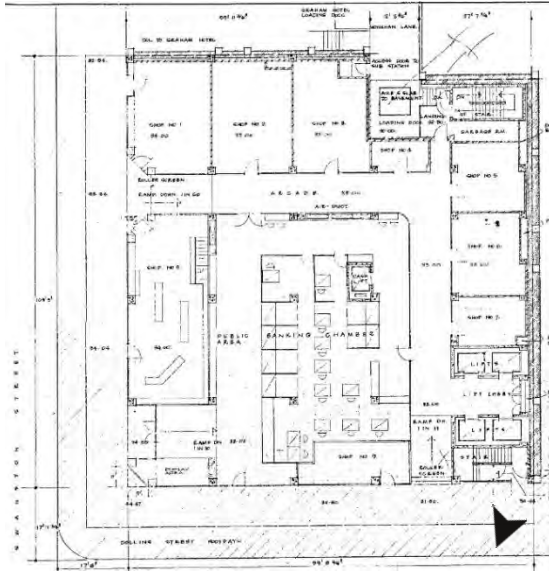


Figure 4. Ground floor plan showing the banking chambers, arcade and retail spaces. Drawings by Stephenson & Turner, dated October 1962 (BAP).

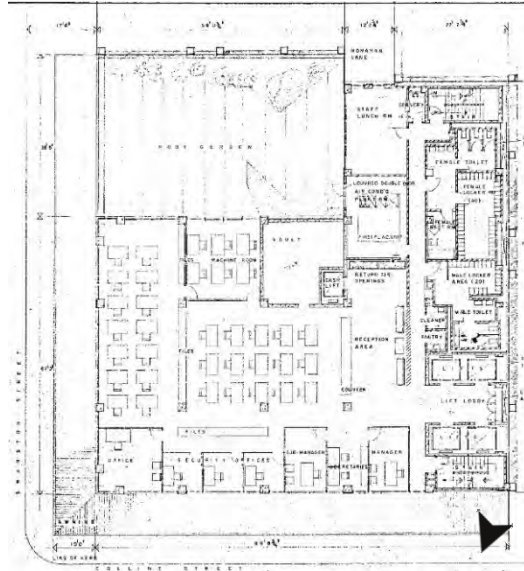


Figure 5. First floor plan showing the bank offices and rooftop garden. Drawings by Stephenson & Turner, dated August 1962 (BAP).



Figure 6. Wales Corner in 1969 (Victorian Places).



Figure 7. Wales Corner in 1984 (City of Melbourne Libraries online Heritage Collection, Reference no. Butler13511).

SITE DESCRIPTION

Wales Corner at 221-231 Collins Street is a 16-storey commercial building located at the south-west corner of Swanston and Collins streets. This is a prominent site in central Melbourne and the building has frontages to both main streets. Constructed in 1964-66 to a design by Stephenson and Turner, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

The building is rectangular in plan with a broad frontage to Collins Street. To the south of the main tower is a low-rise section of building with roof garden at first floor level, fronting Swanston Street, and a four-storey section to the rear (west). Monaghan Place provides access to the south side of the building from Flinders Lane. An arcade, accessed from Swanston Street, is located below the roof garden. Tower facades are glazed, with the exception of the solid west façade and the western portion of the north façade which are faced with reconstructed stone and enclose the service core at the western end of the building.

The building is of reinforced concrete column and slab construction with curtain wall facades to the north, east and south. Reconstructed stone-faced mullions and fine horizontal members divide the glazed facades into a regular grid-like pattern by framing rectangular bays of aluminium-framed windows and metal spandrel panels. A simple parapet and corner piers, set flush with the grid-like surface, frame the glazed facades. The reduced height first-floor level, directly above the street canopy, is treated in a contrasting manner to the façade above, with broader window sets and a reduced number of vertical mullions providing a visual base to the building.

At the ground level, a canopy with broad fascia lines both the principal facades to Collins and Swanston streets. It appears that this has replaced, or obscures, an earlier cantilevered canopy which was lighter in appearance. An additional canopy has been placed at the western end of the Collins Street façade.

INTEGRITY

Wales Corner, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building above street level, remains highly intact to its original construction in 1964-66. Works to the building at street level have altered the original design.

Overall, the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone alterations at street level, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey commercial building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Wales Corner at 221-231 Collins Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of 1960s to mid 1970s multi-storey commercial building design. Located on a prominent corner site and set on a podium base, the building's three grid-like glazed curtain wall facades of alternating rows of aluminium-framed glazing and metal spandrels, each divided by broad reconstructed stone-faced mullions and fine horizontal members, can be clearly observed from both Collins and Swanston streets. Despite the redesign of the street-level facades, the upper facades of Wales Corner remain highly intact to their original design.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to Wales Corner. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay

Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1974-73) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street
(Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street
(Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street
(Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building, 359-373 Collins Street
(Bates Smart & McCutcheon, c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street
(Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street
(Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)

Analysis

As a fine and highly representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building, Wales Corner at 221-231 Collins Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey commercial buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne. Similar to the small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings presently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme – and a number of other examples identified above – Wales Corner clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*

Building Application Index (BAI), City of Melbourne.

Building Application Plans (BAP), City of Melbourne.

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The Age.

Victorian Places, 'Wales Corner, 368 Collins Street, Melbourne, 1969', <<https://www.victorianplaces.com.au/node/64330>>, accessed October 2019.

Willis, Julie (2012), 'Stephenson & Turner' in Philip Goad & Julie Willis's (Eds.) (2012), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Port Melbourne.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985**

D

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993**

Ungraded

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002**

Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011**

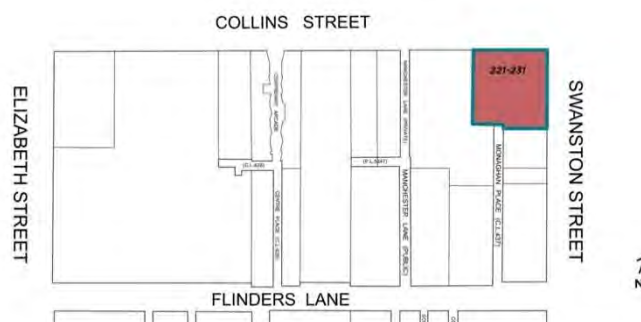
Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Wales Corner



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street, a multi-storey office building constructed in 1964-66.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made to the street level facades are not significant.

How it is significant?

Wales Corner at 221-231 Collins Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed in 1964-66 to a design by Stephenson & Turner, Wales Corner has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and the prestige afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

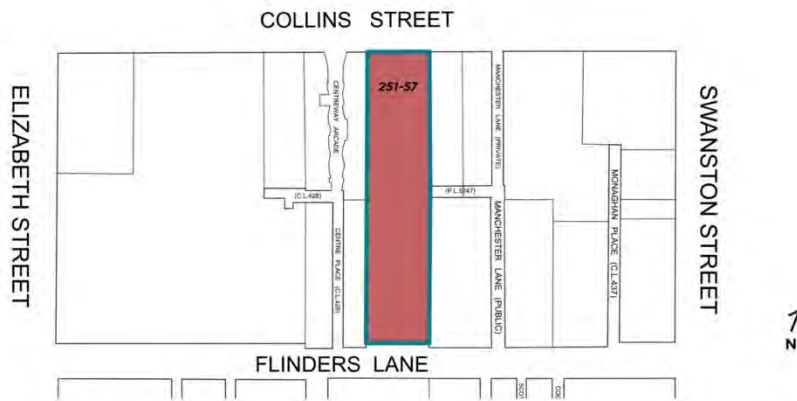
Wales Corner is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building. The building strongly reflects the style which was popular in the 1960s to the mid 1970s, particularly in central Melbourne. Constructed as a 16-storey building on a prominent corner in Collins Street, Wales Corner clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a 1960s to mid 1970s structure, including a solid exterior of three grid-like glazed curtain wall facades containing alternating rows of

glazing and solid spandrels, broad dividing mullions and fine horizontal members, a podium base and the use of materials such as metal spandrel cladding, aluminium framed windows and reconstructed stone facing. These demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style (Criterion D).

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building [also known as Emirates House (current name)]
STREET ADDRESS	251-257 Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	102083



SURVEY DATE: October 2019		SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage	
HERITAGE INVENTORY	No	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	HO502 (fronting Collins St) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane)
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER CATEGORY	Non-contributory
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Bates Smart & McCutcheon	BUILDER:	Not known
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1971-1973

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Bank
1920s	Bank
1960s	Bank, Caretaker

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The multi-storey office building, extending from Collins Street to Flinders Lane, was designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon to serve as the Melbourne offices of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Ltd. The building was constructed in 1971-1973.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The multi-storey building, extending from Collins Street to Flinders Lane, was designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon to serve as the Melbourne offices of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Ltd (CBCS).

The Bank of Victoria purchased 251 Collins Street in 1859, constructing a bank by 1862. The Bank of Victoria merged with CBCS in 1927, soon after which a new building was constructed behind the 1862 façade. This building, also designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, was demolished in 1971 for the present building (NTAV, VHD; *Cross-Section*, March 1970).

The major designer on the project was Bates Smart & McCutcheon's Robert Bruce (Goad 2004:205).¹ In March 1970, the University of Melbourne's publication *Cross-Section* reported on the intended \$10 million, 16-storey state headquarters for CBCS. The building was constructed in 1971-73 (BAP; Goad 2004:205).

The architectural drawings by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, dated 1969, show the multi-storey tower to Collins Street and the low-scale section fronting Flinders Lane (Figure 1 - Figure 3). Goad

¹ Goad appears to erroneously address the subject site as 250 Collins Street throughout the 2004 publication.

described the building's design (drawing similarities to Bates Smart & McCutcheon's design of 363-371 Collins Street) as having a 'strong horizontal emphasis that indicated graphic trabeated construction' and glazing set back deeply from the face of the building, which were 'clear expressions of structure' (Goad 2004:205). At ground level, Goad noted, the tower broke the line of the 'street wall' in favour of the current Melbourne City Council building regulations for mini-plazas. The multi-level banking chamber 'took advantage of pedestrian movement between Flinders Lane and Collins Street', essentially continuing Melbourne's network of lanes and arcades within the building itself (Goad 2004:205). The exterior was clad with 'reconstructed granite-faced precast concrete wall units' (*Architect* Jul-Aug 1973).

Photographs dating to 1973 and 1974 show the completed building (Figures 5-9). In 2019 the building is called Emirates House (ComMaps).

Bates Smart & McCutcheon, architects

Bates, Smart & McCutcheon was formed when Osborn McCutcheon joined the existing firm of Bates & Smart in 1926. Bates & Smart had itself been born out of previous iterations of a firm that could be traced back to Reed & Barnes, making it one of the oldest practices in the country (Goad 2012:72). By the 1960s the firm had become one of Australia's largest architectural firms. It exists today as Bates Smart (Goad 2012:72).

During the 1930s, Bates, Smart & McCutcheon had earned a reputation for designing Georgian-style residences, but also went on to win RVIA awards for their work on the AMP Building in Collins Street (1926-31), Buckley & Nunn Building in Bourke Street (now David Jones, 1933), and the Second Church of Christ Scientist in Camberwell (1936-37).

By the 1950s, Bates, Smart & McCutcheon had become Australia's 'expert' in high-rise office buildings design (Goad 2012:73). Much of their work at this time was large structures with glass curtain walls. In Melbourne this was exemplified by ICI House, which broke the city's existing 132-foot (40m) height limit in 1955-8 (Goad 2012:73). Other work completed by the firm in the 1950s included the first of the Sleigh Buildings at 158-172 Queen Street, Melbourne (1953-55 & 1964), Union House at 43-51 Queen Street, Melbourne (1957) and the AMP Building at 402-408 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne (1956-58).

Bates, Smart & McCutcheon continued to expand into the 1960s and 70s, with its design approach shifting from glazed curtain walls to facades of artificial stone or prefabricated concrete panels. Works in Melbourne during this period included AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, Bourke Street (1965-69) in association with US firm, Skidmore Owings and Merrill; the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61); the South British Insurance Company Ltd Building at 155-161 Queen Street (1961-62) and the Methodist Church Centre at 130-134 Little Collins Street (1966-67) with F C Armstrong.

In the 1970s the firm designed the Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street, Melbourne (c1972-75); the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73) and the double tower and plaza complex of Collins Place, Collins Street (1970-80), undertaken in collaboration with international architecture practice, I M Pei. Other notable works by the firm include the large collaborative designs of Melbourne Central with Kisho Kurokawa (1983-92) and Federation Square with Lab Architecture Studio (1997-2002) (Goad 2012:74).

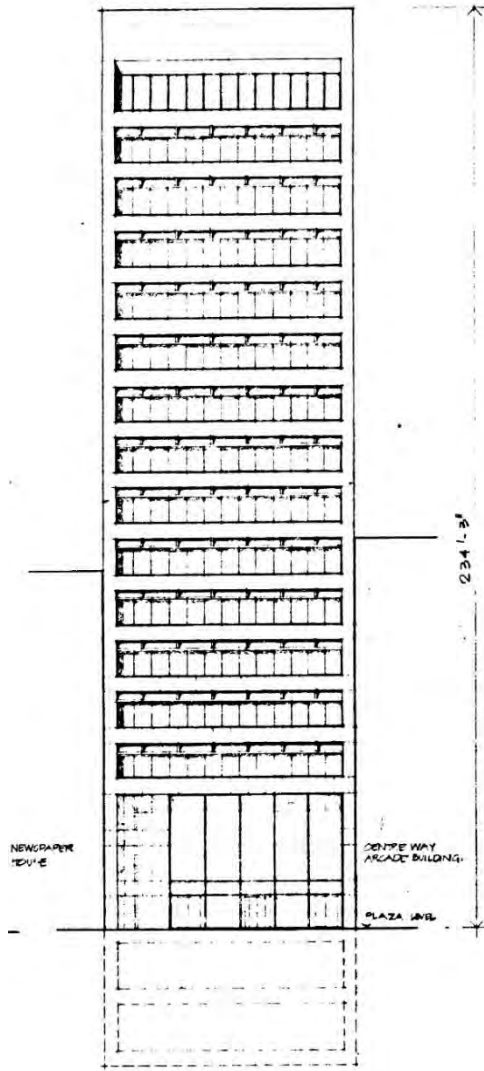


Figure 1. North elevation, fronting Collins Street. Drawings by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, dated May 1969 (BAP).

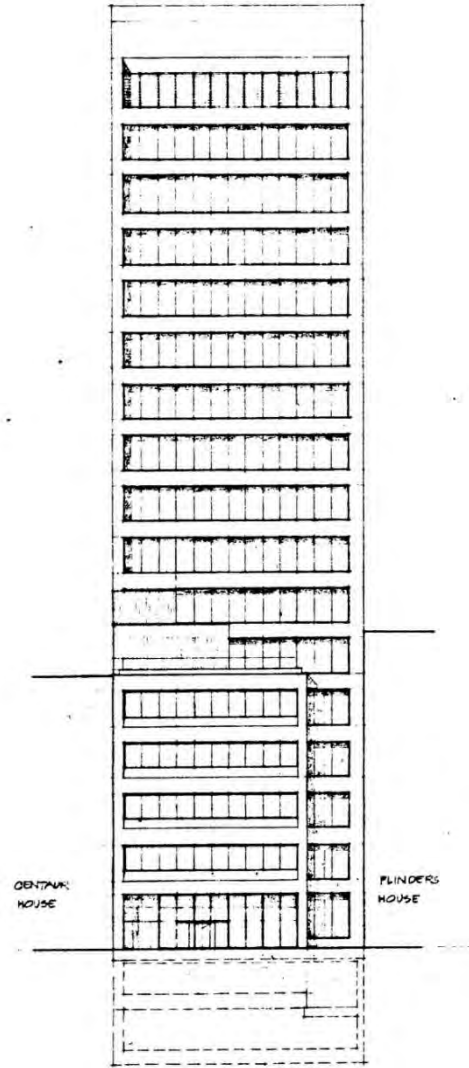


Figure 2. South elevation, fronting Flinders Lane. Drawings by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, dated May 1969 (BAP).

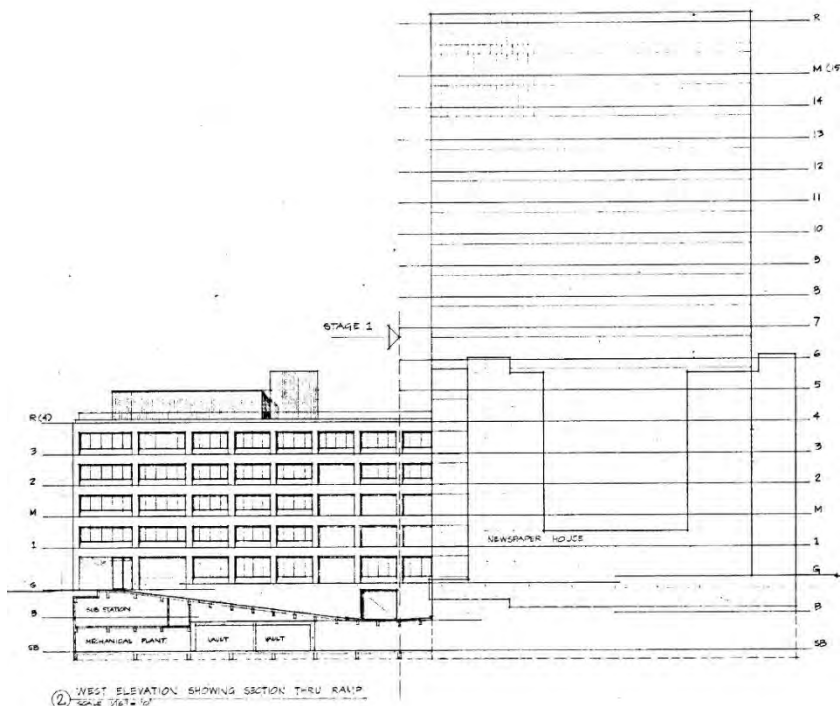


Figure 3. West elevation, showing a section through the ramp. Drawings by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, dated May 1969 (BAP).



Figure 4. Construction at the subject site, c1972 (SLV, K. J Halla, photographer, Image H36133/537).

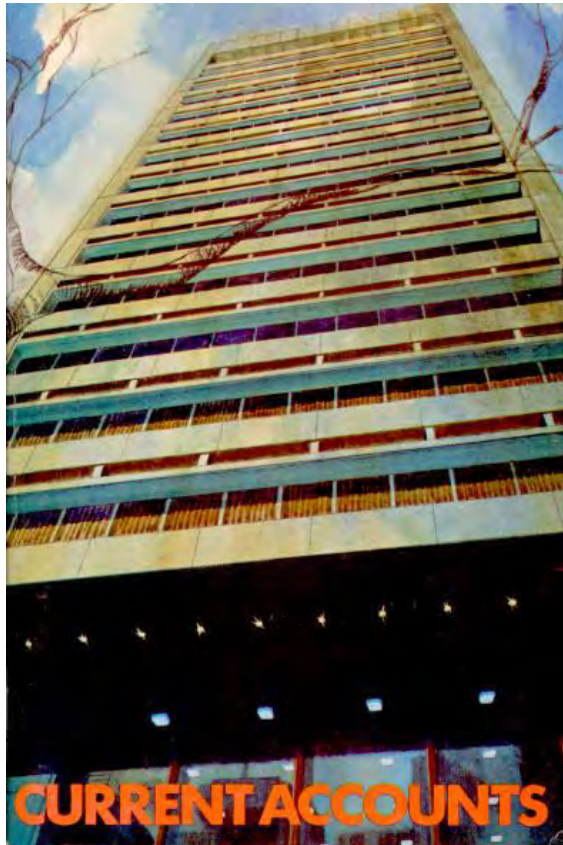


Figure 5. Illustration of the building, published in the 1973 CBC Sydney publication *Current Accounts*.



Figure 6. Image of the building published in the July-August 1973 issue of *Architect*, advertising reconstructed granite cladding by Melocco (*Architect*, Jul-Aug 1973).



Figure 7. The Collins Street elevation of the completed building; no date to photo (Goad 2004:209).



Figure 8. Collins Street entrance, photo dated 1973 (NLA, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, object 3064580).



Figure 9. Photo published in January 1974, of the Trading Bank area on the first floor (*Current Accounts*, Jan 1974).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street is a 15-storey commercial building located on the south side of Collins Street between Elizabeth and Swanston Streets. Constructed from 1971-73 to a design by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

Of rectangular plan with narrow frontages to Collins Street and Flinders Lane to the south, the building is accessible from both frontages. The building is set back from Collins Street – a feature for which additional height to the building was allowed. There are no side setbacks; however the main tower has a substantial setback from Flinders Lane, with an additional low-rise section of building fronting the latter. An access lane from Flinders Lane (Flinders Way) flanks the eastern side of this low-rise component and leads to the rear of the main tower.

The building is of concrete encased steel column and beam construction, with the structural system clearly expressed on the identically detailed north and south facades. These walls have deeply

recessed bands of windows behind rows of reconstructed granite-faced precast concrete wall units with suspended sunhoods, and a heavy crowning parapet with splayed underside. Concrete floor slabs extend beyond the line of the windows to support the precast elements, creating a structural, rather than curtain wall, façade. The strongly horizontal elements of the facades are framed by the solid vertical faces of the side walls which present unadorned facades above the adjacent buildings.

The detailing of the Flinders Street façade of the low-rise portion of building at the rear is simpler than that of the tower. Maintaining a strong horizontal emphasis, it comprises splayed-top precast concrete spandrels which alternate with rows of glazing.

A double-storey structure has recently been built across the lower Collins Street façade at ground level, utilising the original setback of the multi-storey building. This double-height addition contains two shopfronts and a central entrance to the main tower, all set below a fine projecting canopy. At the rear, a simple canopy and shopfront have been inserted below the lower splayed-top spandrel, with a recessed entrance to the building on the western side.

INTEGRITY

The Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building above street level, remains highly intact to its original construction in 1971-73. Recent additions to the Collins Street and Flinders Lane frontages of the building at street level have altered the original design at the base of the building.

Overall, the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone alterations at street level, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey commercial building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of a 1960s to mid 1970s multi-storey commercial building design. Clearly expressing the internal structure, the building has identically detailed front and rear structural facades, with horizontal bands of precast concrete wall units with integral sunhoods, deeply recessed bands of windows and heavy splayed parapet. Despite modifications to the lower Collins Street façade, the upper facades of the building remain highly intact to their original design and can be clearly observed from Collins Street.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)

- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



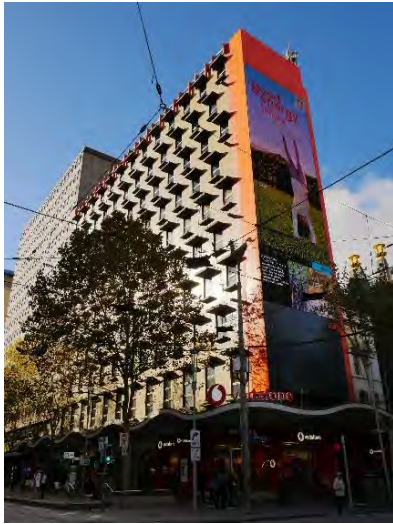
Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street
(Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street
(Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street
(Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building,
359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon,
c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan
Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen
Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)

Analysis

As a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist office building, the Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey office buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne. Similar to a number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings listed above, the subject building clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

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'Former Bank of Victoria, 251 Collins Street, MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY'

State Library of Victoria (SLV), picture collection, images and photographers as cited.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

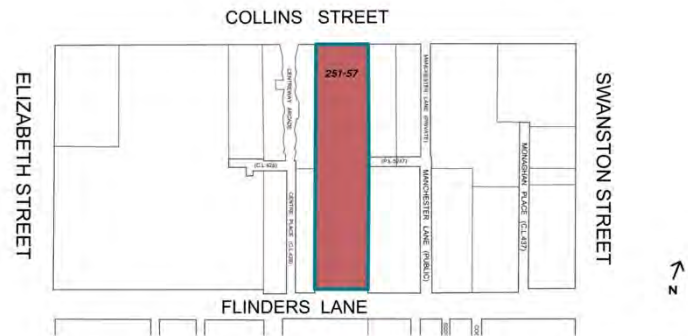
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, a multi-storey office building constructed in 1971-73.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made to the street level facades are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed in 1971-73, to a design by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, the Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and the prestige afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

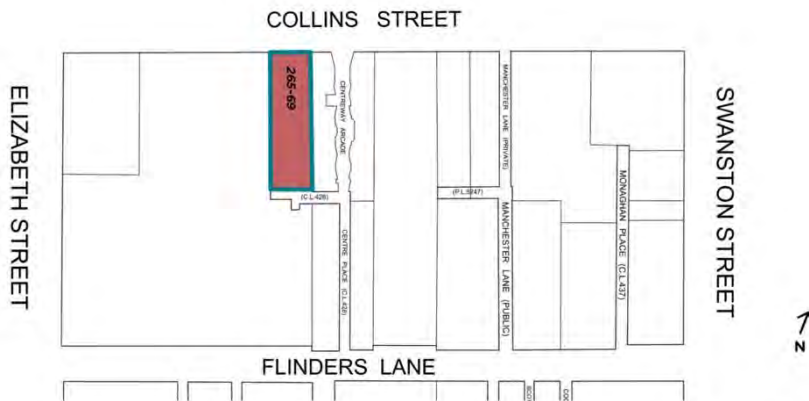
The Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building. The building strongly reflects the style which was popular in the 1960s to the mid 1970s, particularly in central Melbourne. Constructed as a 15-storey building in Collins Street, the Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a later postwar structure including identically detailed front and

rear structural facades which clearly express the structure externally, wall cladding with integral suspended sunhoods shading deeply recessed bands of continuous glazing, strong horizontal lines across the facades and the use of materials such as precast concrete panels. These details demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style (Criterion D).

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former Bank of Adelaide Building
STREET ADDRESS	265-269 Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	102085



SURVEY DATE: October 2019

SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage

HERITAGE INVENTORY	No	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	HO502
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER CATEGORY	Contributory
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Newton and Lobb	BUILDER:	E A Watts Pty Lt
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1959-1960

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Buiness and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Bank, Office, Studio, Retail, Residence
1920s	Bank, Office, Retail/Service, Studio, Caretaker
1960s	Bank

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The Former Bank of Adelaide Building was designed by architects and engineers Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb to serve as the Melbourne headquarters for the Bank of Adelaide. It was constructed in 1959-1960 by E A Watts Pty Ltd.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The Former Bank of Adelaide Building was designed by architects and engineers Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb to serve as the Melbourne headquarters for the Bank of Adelaide (BAP; *Cross-Section*, May 1959:3). It was constructed in 1959-1960 by E A Watts Pty Ltd (*Cross-Section*, May 1959:3; *Age*, 8 Apr 1959:1).

The Bank of Adelaide had occupied the site of the existing building from 1920 (S&Mc; *Age*, 8 Apr 1959:1). In August 1958 the bank announced its temporary residency at 319 Collins Street, during the demolition of the bank's old premises and construction of a new building at the site (*Age*, 16 Aug 1958:4). The earlier building was demolished in September 1958 (*Age*, 8 Apr 1959:1).

Architectural drawings dated October 1958 show the north (Collins Street) elevation and the design of the original entrance with its glazed aluminium entrance screen and granite facing surrounds.

Annotations to the drawings indicate that the north elevation was designed as an 'anodised aluminium curtain wall' with marble spandrels, stone surrounds and granite edging. The stairwell at the east side of the façade was designed with fixed glazing and marble spandrels (Figure 1). The layout placed the

banking chamber on the ground floor, bank offices on the first floor, and office spaces to let on the remaining floors (Figure 2) (BAP).

The City of Melbourne received a building permit application for the new building in January 1959 (with an estimated total cost of £570,000) (BAI). The development was subsequently discussed in contemporary newspapers and architectural publications. The *Age* reported in April 1959 that construction of the 11-storey building had commenced (Figure 3) stating,

The new building, one of the most modern occupied by a bank in Melbourne, will take advantage of the recent modifications in the building code, and will cover the maximum area permitted on a site of its size.

The article stated that, at 154 feet tall, the building was to be the first building in the central city area to exceed the old height limit of 132 feet (40m) (*Age*, 8 Apr 1959:1).

In May 1959, the University of Melbourne publication *Cross-Section* reported on the new Melbourne headquarters for the Bank of Adelaide that was under construction. It noted that the building would be Victoria's first major building using concrete with a light-weight aggregate (*Cross-Section*, May 1959:3). The new lightweight aggregate, 'Shalite', produced structural concrete to specified strength and almost half the weight. The aggregate was used on various contemporary buildings including the subject site (*Age*, 4 May 1960:9).

The groundfloor shopfront has been altered at various stages (Figure 6).

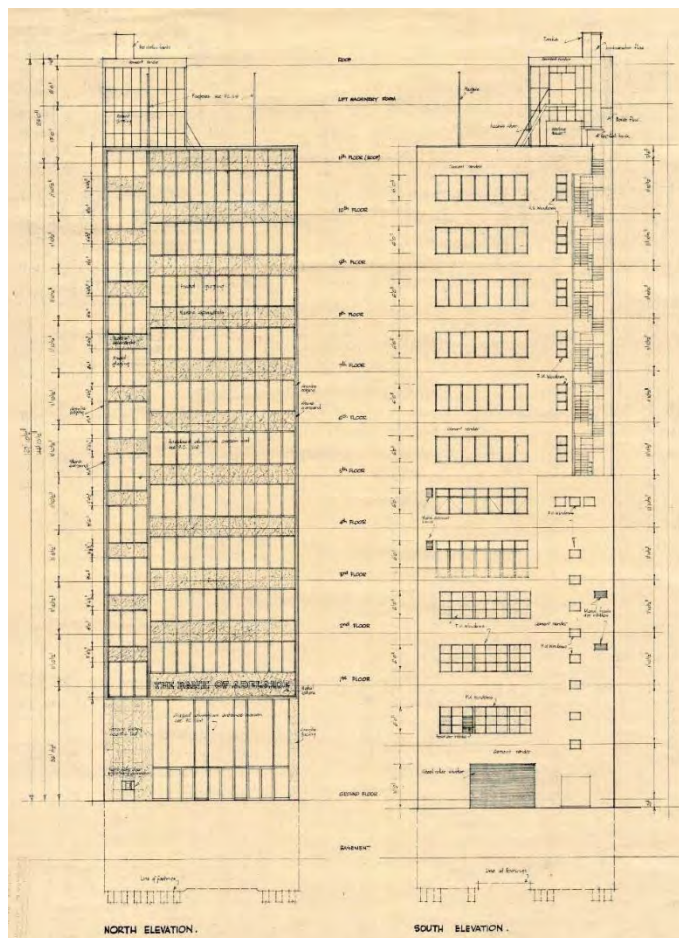


Figure 1. North (Collins Street) and south elevations. Drawings by Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, dated October 1958 (BAP).

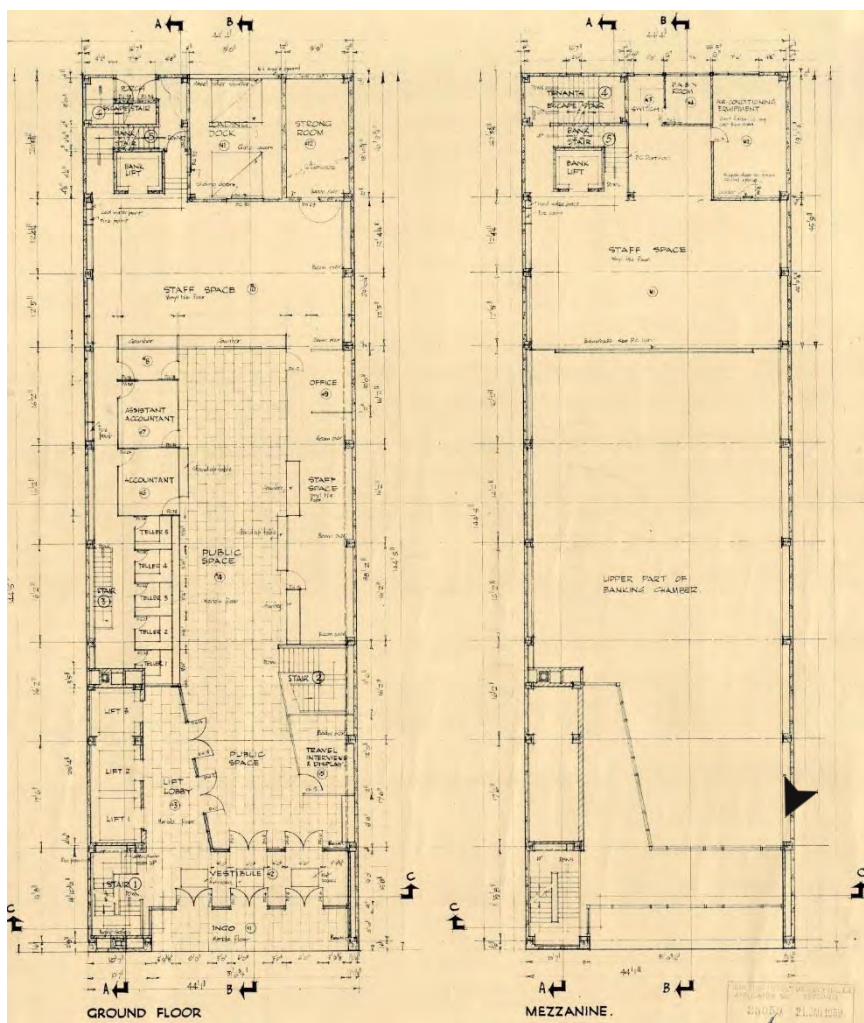


Figure 2. Ground and mezzanine floor plans, occupied by the bank. Drawings by Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, dated October 1958 (BAP).

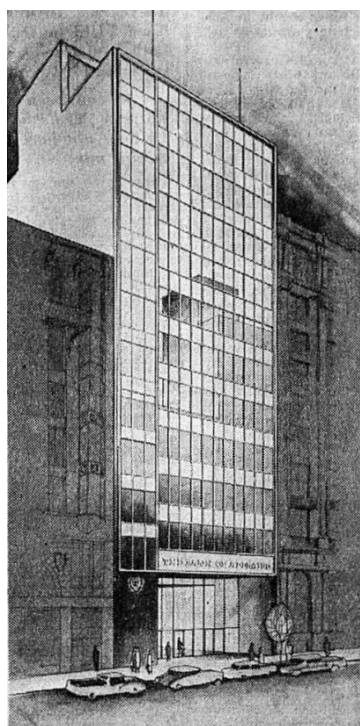


Figure 3. Illustration of the building, published in *The Age* in April 1959 (*Age*, 8 Apr 1959:1).



Figure 4. Bank of Adelaide in 1960 (SLV, Mark Strizic, photographer, Image H2011.55/1445).



Figure 5. Detail of a photo taken 1960 (SLV, Mark Strizic, photographer, Image H2011.55/1462).



Figure 6. The building in 1984 with an altered ground floor shopfront (City of Melbourne Libraries online Heritage Collection, Reference no. Butler13528).

Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, architects

Godfrey and Spowers was established in c1901 by architects, William Scott Purves Godfrey and Henry Howard Spowers. The firm designed a large number of houses, warehouses and institutional buildings and was best known for its bank building designs.

Godfrey's son, William Purves Race Godfrey, joined the practice in 1931 as a student. Spowers died the following year and Race Godfrey was made partner in c1934. The firm was suspended in 1941 as a direct result of World War II, during which time Race Godfrey worked with the RAAF as a civilian architect in Melbourne and Sydney and his father, William Godfrey, carried out commissions for air-raid shelters. Race Godfrey recommenced practice late in 1944. His father did not continue with the new firm, and retired from practice in the same year.

By the early 1950s, Race Godfrey expanded the firm to include new partners, Eric Hughes, Geoffrey Mewton and John Lobb, becoming Godfrey, Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb. The expanded firm specialised in large office and institutional buildings. Notable commissions within central Melbourne included the Allans Building at 278 Collins Street (1959), the Bank of Adelaide Building, 265-69 Collins Street (1959-60), the AMP Building, 344-50 Collins Street (1966-68) and the State Savings Bank of Victoria, 233-43 Queen Street (1967-68). The National Mutual Building, Collins Street, Melbourne (1962-5, demolished 2015) was a key work for the firm during this period.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street is an 11-storey commercial building located on the south side of Collins Street between Elizabeth Street and Swanston Street. Constructed in 1959-60 to a design by Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

Rectangular in plan, the building has a narrow frontage to Collins Street and rear access is via a laneway from Flinders Lane. The Modernist design of the Collins Street façade is emphasised by the substantial classically-inspired early twentieth century buildings which flank the building. Located on the opposite side of Collins Street is the similarly Modernist-styled Allans Building which was designed by the same architects in 1956-57.

The building is of concrete encased steel column and beam construction with the Collins Street façade presenting as a tall, narrow and transparent curtain wall of anodised aluminium framing with alternating rows of fixed glazing and solid spandrels. Stone surrounds frame the individual window and spandrel panels, forming continuous vertical and horizontal lines across the front façade.

Unlike the majority of glazed curtain wall buildings of the period, the front facade combines two curtain wall sections which vary in dimension and create an asymmetrical composition. An internal staircase to the east is distinguished from the remainder of the front facade by the use of smaller spandrels which align with the centre of the window banding of the main curtain wall, creating a subtle staggered effect. Original architectural drawings indicate that the spandrel panels were to be clad in marble. It is difficult to identify the material used in the main spandrels and it appears that the smaller spandrel panels to the east may have been re-clad.

Continuous vertical elements run from above street level to the top of the building across the entire façade, creating a grid-like pattern between slim granite-clad concrete side walls and the top parapet which frames the composition. In both sections of curtain walling, the alternating horizontal bands are

of different height, with taller window bands resulting in rectangular glazed units and spandrels of square proportion.

The rear wall of the building is of cement rendered concrete and contains a number of fixed window units.

Modifications have been made to the front façade below the first-floor strip of glazing. This includes removal of the original glazed entrance screen, granite facing and first floor spandrel. Recent framing has been inserted into this façade at street level.

INTEGRITY

The Former Bank of Adelaide Building, including the original form and detailing of the exterior of the building above street level, remains highly intact to its original construction of 1959-60. Works to the front of the building at street level has altered the original design of this frontage.

Overall, the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone alterations at street level, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey office building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Former Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of a 1950s multi-storey commercial building design. The building's transparent grid-like curtain wall façade, with alternating rows of aluminium-framed glazing and opaque spandrels and vertical mullions, can be clearly observed from Collins Street. The curtain wall façade is unusually divided into two unequal vertical parts – both comprising alternating rows of fixed glazing and opaque spandrels, and stone framing which forms a grid of continuous vertical and horizontal lines across the two individual sections of the front façade. Despite the redesign of the façade at street level, the upper facades of the Former Bank of Adelaide Building remain highly intact to their original design.

There are a number of buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the Former Bank of Adelaide Building. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A comparative example in the City of Melbourne which is located immediately adjacent to the Hoddle Grid is ICI House, 1-4 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1958). This place is included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H0786).

Locally-significant places

Precinct Heritage Overlay

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from the early postwar period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme. Those from the 1950s that are included in the Heritage Overlay are currently included as part of Heritage Precincts, but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places. These places are:



Former Gilbert Court, 100-104 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1954-55) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Hosie's Hotel, 1-5 Elizabeth Street & 288-290 Flinders Street (Mussen McKay & Potter, 1954-55), included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct as a Significant place.



Coates Building, 18-22 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1958-59) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Allans Building, 276-278 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, 1956-1957) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Significant place.

Other Examples

Despite the demolition of many 1950s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the initial period of curtain wall construction in Melbourne and demonstrate similar characteristics to the subject building. The following examples are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places as part of the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review:



Lauren's House, 414-416 Lonsdale Street (Harold Bloom, 1956) (Interim HO1254).



Former Atlas Assurance Building, 404-406 Collins Street (H Garnet Alsop & Partners, 1958-61) (Interim HO1008).



Former London Assurance House, 468-470 Bourke Street (B Evans & Partners, 1960) (Interim HO1006).



Former AMP Building, 402-408 Lonsdale Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1956-59).



Former Ajax House, 103-105 Queen Street (HD Berry, 1956).



HC Sleigh Building, 166-172 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1953-55).



Coles & Garrard Building, 376-378 Bourke Street (Meldrum & Noad, 1957).



Canton Insurance Building, 43-51 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1957).



Former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange, 376 Flinders Lane (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1957).

Analysis

As a fine and highly intact representative example of its type, the Former Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne. Similar to the small number of 1950s buildings presently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme – and a small number of other examples identified throughout the Hoddle Grid and listed above – the Former Bank of Adelaide Building clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*

Building Application Index (BAI), City of Melbourne.

Building Application Plans (BAP), City of Melbourne.

City of Melbourne Libraries online Heritage Collection, reference nos. as cited.

Cross-Section: No. 79, May 1959.

Goad, Phillip, Ed. (2003), *Judging Architecture*, Royal Australian Institute of Architects (Victoria).

Murphy, Guy & Bryce Raworth (2012), 'Godfrey & Spowers' in Philip Goad & Julie Willis's (Eds.) (2012), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Port Melbourne.

National Trust of Australia, Victoria (NTAV) (September 2014), *Melbourne's Marvellous Modernism, A Comparative Analysis of Post-War Modern Architecture in Melbourne's CBD 1955 -1975*.

Sands & McDougall Directories (S&Mc).

State Library of Victoria (SLV), picture collection, images and photographers as cited.

The Age.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** E

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** C

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Bank of Adelaide Building



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Former Bank of Adelaide Building, 265-269 Collins Street, a multi-storey office building constructed in 1959-60.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made to the street level facade are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former Bank of Adelaide at 265-269 Collins Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

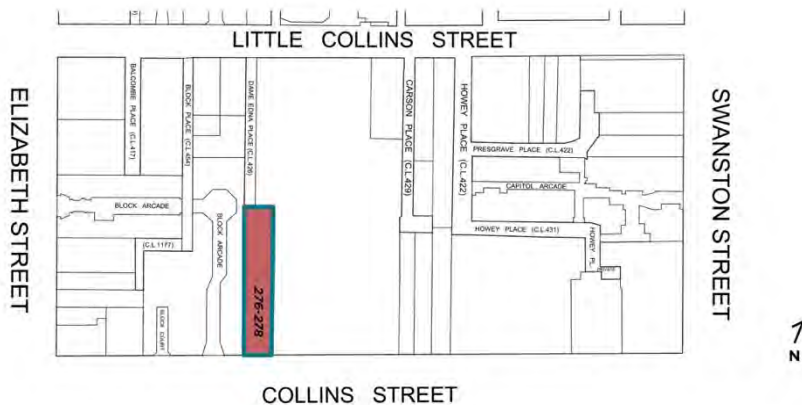
Constructed in 1959-60, to a design by Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, the Former Bank of Adelaide Building has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and prestige afforded by a dominant city presence. The Former Bank of Adelaide Building was constructed as one of the first buildings to exceed the pre-existing 40m (132 foot) height limit within the Melbourne CBD (Criterion A).

The Former Bank of Adelaide Building is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building. The building strongly reflects the style which was popular in the 1950s, particularly in central Melbourne, incorporating a curtain wall street facade. The transparent front façade of alternating rows of aluminium-framed glazing and opaque spandrels, and vertical mullions which divide the façade into a grid-like pattern, demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style. The incorporation of two contrasting grids in the front façade is unusual and distinctive (Criterion D).

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former Allans Building [also known as Mering House (current name)]
STREET ADDRESS	276-278 Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	102142



SURVEY DATE: October 2019		SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage	
HERITAGE INVENTORY	H7822-1747	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	HO502
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER CATEGORY	Significant
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb with Charles N Hollinshed	BUILDER:	Hansen & Yuncken Pty Ltd
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1956-1957

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style
3 Building a commercial city	3.3 Retail decline and revitalisation in the city centre

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Retail, Education
1920s	Retail
1960s	Retail, Merchant, Hairdresser, Office, Education, Library, Caretaker

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The Former Allans Building was designed by architects and engineers, Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, in association with architect Charles N Hollinshed, for the well-known music retailers and publishers of sheet music, Allans & Co Pty Ltd. The building was constructed in 1956-1957.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Retail decline and revitalisation in the city centre

Central Melbourne and Central Sydney accounted for approximately one third of Australian metropolitan retail sales in the 1950s. However, the 1950s saw city retailers increasingly struggle to attract consumers from the suburbs, largely due to the increase in car ownership in the postwar period. To counteract this, in 1953 Myer Ltd erected the first multi-storey carpark to be built since World War II in Lonsdale Street. Another carpark, the Grand Central Carpark, opened in Bourke Street soon afterwards (Heritage Alliance 2008:16).

Suburban development and the construction of suburban shopping complexes such as Chadstone Shopping Centre also had a major impact on Melbourne's city centre into the 1960s with traditional businesses including shops, manufacturing and professional services moving to new suburban locations (Spearritt cited in Marsden 2000:49). Several city department stores closed and were demolished or converted to other uses. The Eastern Market (located at the corner of Bourke and Exhibition streets) was demolished in 1960 to make way for the Southern Cross Hotel (Marsden 2000:49).

Some inner-city retailing persisted in this period with Allans and Co opening a new music store at 276-278 Collins Street in 1957 and Myer constructing the Department Aerial Crossover, a four-storey pedestrian bridge over Little Bourke Street designed by longtime Myer architects Tompkins, Shaw and Evans (1963) (Lewis et al 1993:264).

Alliances between government ministers, councillors and traders sought to halt the decline of retail in the Melbourne city centre. Two main strategies emerged: to expedite car access and, from the 1970s, to encourage pedestrians through, for example, the creation of car-free malls, Sunday trading, and the establishment of open-air markets (Marsden 2000:51-52).

In an effort to revive the city's waning retail economy, a trial closure of Bourke Street between Swanston and Elizabeth streets was introduced in late 1973. This followed discussions between MCC and the Retail Trader's Association. The trial resulted in protests from shop keepers and caused traffic chaos (May 2008c). The 1974 Strategy Plan pursued the concept, encouraging 'the maintenance and growth of the retail areas as the major centre for shopping for the metropolitan area' (City of Melbourne 1974:267), but it was February 1978 before the section was formally closed to through traffic. Policies within the Strategy Plan also aimed to counteract:

present economic market forces that would force entertainment and retail activities out of the CBD. The mandatory requirements for retail or entertainment floor space will ensure that the variety provided by shops, restaurants or cinemas is maintained (Interplan for CoM 1974:267).

SITE HISTORY

The Former Allans Building was designed by architects and engineers, Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, in association with architect Charles N Hollinshed, for owners Allan & Co Pty Ltd, music retailers and publishers of sheet music (BAP; *Argus*, 5 May 1956:3). The builders were Hansen & Yuncken Pty Ltd (AIA, Dec 1959:135).

George Leavis Allan (1826-1897) was a singing teacher and musical pioneer in Melbourne. He was born in London but the lure of gold led him to Melbourne in 1852. After a short stint in the goldfields, Allan returned to Melbourne in 1853 to capitalise on his musical expertise, establishing himself as a

well-respected singing teacher. In 1863 Allan joined the musical warehouse of Wilkie & Webster (est. 1850), forming Wilkie, Webster & Allan, and in 1875 he became the sole proprietor of the business. By 1877 it was the largest musical warehouse in the southern hemisphere. His son George became partner in 1881 when the name of the company was formally changed to Allan & Co. The business remained in the Allan family for many generations (Hince 1969; *Argus*, 25 Jun 1932:6). In 1976 the company was taken over by Brash Holdings, however the instrument sales department emerged from the liquidation of Brash's as a separate company in 1998 (May, 2008). Allan's merged with Billy Hyde music in 2010.

In June 1956, the City of Melbourne received a building permit application for the building at 276-278 Collins Street, with an estimated total cost of £341,000 (BAI). The building was constructed in 1956-1957 (Goad et al. 1993: 25).

Allan & Co Pty Ltd had occupied the site from at least the 1870s, with an earlier building constructed in 1876 (*Illustrated Australian News*, 27 Dec 1876:204; S&Mc). This earlier building was destroyed by fire and in May 1955 it was subsequently reported that Allan's intended to build a new 10-storey 'Music House' on the same site (*Cross-Section*, May 1955:3, Jun 1956:2; *Argus* 11 May 1955:1).

The present building is a glass curtain walled office and retail building, which was built to the 40m (132 foot) height limit in place at the time (NTAV 2014:17). The architectural drawings dated April 1956 indicate that the façade was designed with 'terracotta facing' to the vertical strips extending up the sides of the façade and metal-framed windows (Figure 1 - Figure 3).

In May 1956, *The Argus* reported that the new building was to comprise 11 floors and a basement. The lower floors were to be occupied by the music store, with the upper floors to be let. The article reported that the 'front of the building will be faced with aluminium panels between aluminium windows. The ground and first floor were to have a 'full glass front', and include acoustically treated ceilings, heating, a giant piano showroom and television display centre (*Argus*, 5 May 1956:3). The completed building is at Figure 4 to Figure 7.

Allans occupied the building until at least c1982 (S&Mc). In 2019 the building is called Mering House (ComMaps).

Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, architects

Godfrey and Spowers was established in c1901 by architects, William Scott Purves Godfrey and Henry Howard Spowers. The firm designed a large number of houses, warehouses and institutional buildings and was best known for its bank building designs.

Godfrey's son, William Purves Race Godfrey, joined the practice in 1931 as a student. Spowers died the following year and Race Godfrey was made partner in c1934. The firm was suspended in 1941 as a direct result of World War II, during which time Race Godfrey worked with the RAAF as a civilian architect in Melbourne and Sydney and his father, William Godfrey, carried out commissions for air-raid shelters. Race Godfrey recommenced practice late in 1944. His father did not continue with the new firm, and retired from practice in the same year.

By the early 1950s, Race Godfrey expanded the firm to include new partners, Eric Hughes, Geoffrey Mewton and John Lobb, becoming Godfrey, Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb. The expanded firm specialised in large office and institutional buildings. Notable commissions within central Melbourne included the Allans Building at 278 Collins Street (1959), the Bank of Adelaide Building, 265-69 Collins Street (1959-60), the AMP Building, 344-50 Collins Street (1966-68) and the State Savings

Bank of Victoria, 233-43 Queen Street (1967-68). The National Mutual Building, Collins Street, Melbourne (1962-5, demolished 2015) was a key work for the firm during this period.

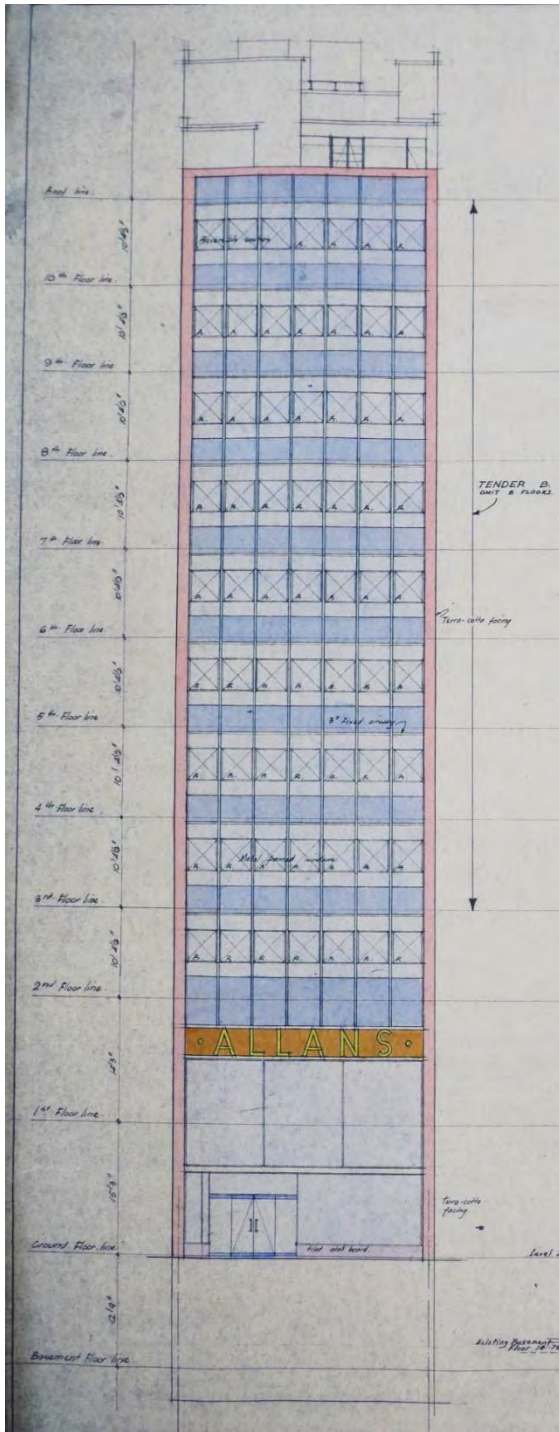


Figure 1. South elevation to Collins Street. Drawing by Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, in association with Charles N Hollinshed, dated April 1956 (BAP).

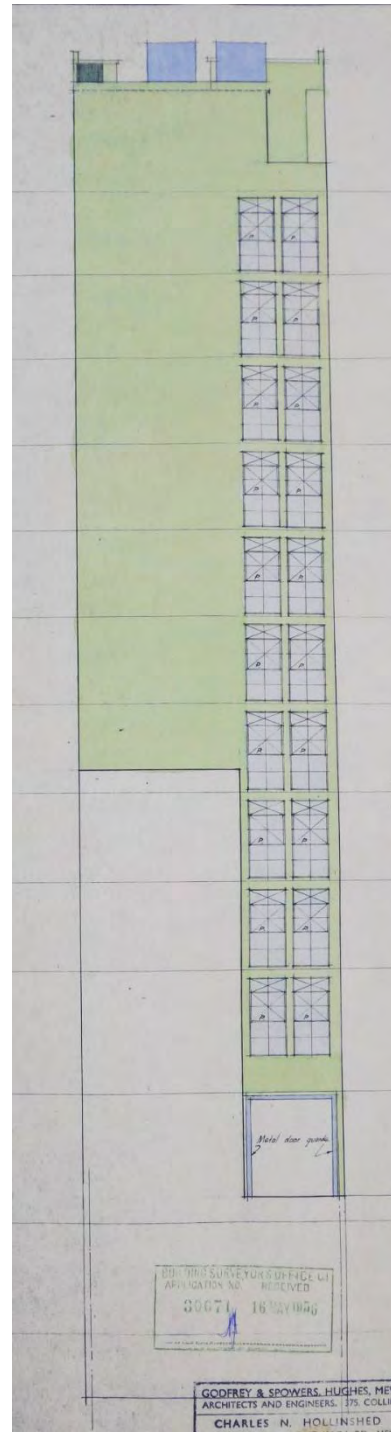


Figure 2. North elevation. Drawing by Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, in association with Charles N Hollinshed, dated April 1956 (BAP).

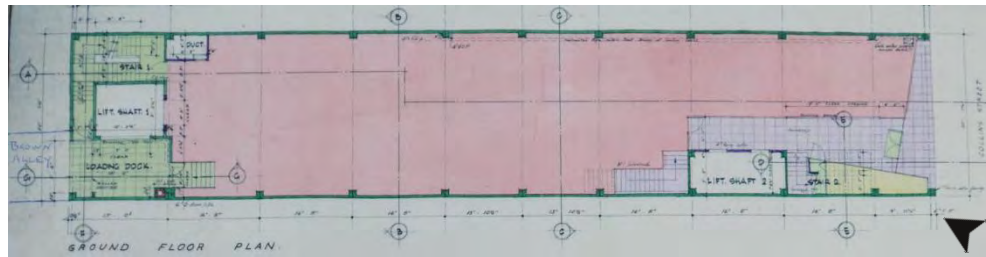


Figure 3. Ground floor plan, Collins Street at right. Drawing by Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, in association with Charles N Hollinshed, dated April 1956 (BAP).

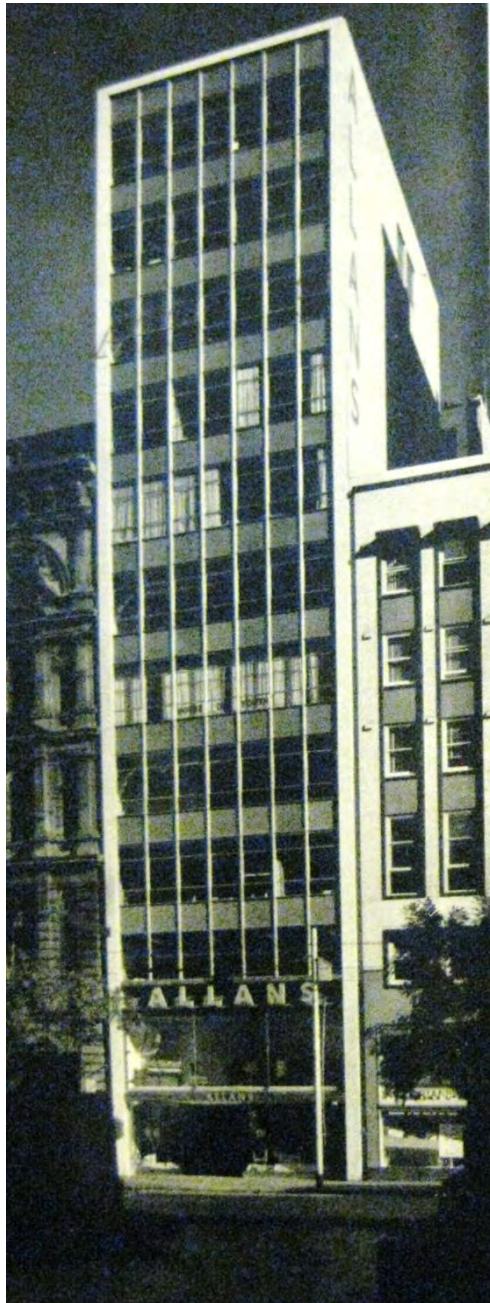


Figure 4. Allans Building, photo published in 1959 (Saunders, 1959:90).

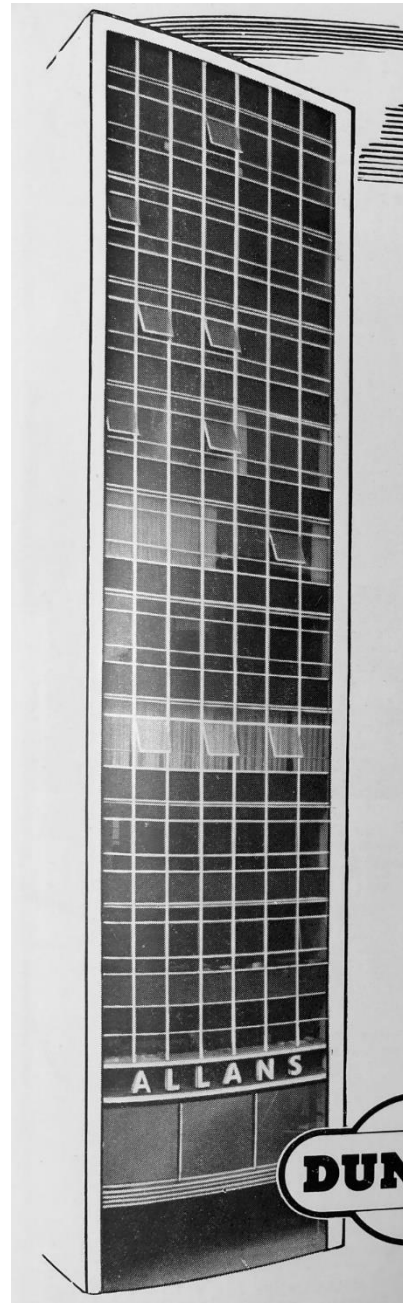


Figure 5. Illustration of the newly completed building published in *Architecture in Australia* in March 1960, advertising Dunlop Rubber Flooring, used throughout the building (AIA, Mar 1960:9).



Figure 6. Photo of the completed building published in *Architecture in Australia* in December 1959.



Figure 7. Allans Music store in in 1982 (City of Melbourne Libraries online Heritage Collection, Graeme Butler, photographer, Reference no. Butler16369).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former Allans Building at 276-278 Collins Street is an 11-storey commercial building located on the north side of Collins Street between Elizabeth Street and Swanston Street. Constructed in 1956-57 to a design by Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, in association with Charles N Hollinshed Associates, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

Constructed on a long, narrow site, the Former Allans Building has a minimal frontage of 30 feet (9 metres) to Collins Street. Dame Edna Place provides access to the rear of the building from Little Collins Street. The adjacent building to the east partially wraps around the rear of the building and to the west is the low-rise Block Arcade building, dating from the 1890s. Located on the opposite side of Collins Street is the similarly styled Former Bank of Adelaide which was designed by the same architects as the Former Allans Building in the late 1950s.

The building is of concrete encased steel column and beam construction with the Collins Street façade presenting as a tall, narrow and transparent curtain wall of metal framing with alternating rows of glazing and opaque red spandrels (possibly glass with applied finish). The rows of glazing contain a central row (openable, reversible sashes indicated on the original drawings) which are the same height as the spandrel panels. Rows of half-sized windows above and below result in dominant bands of glazing across the façade. Together with continuous mullions which run from above street level to the top of the building, these horizontal bands form a grid-like pattern across the whole façade. Concrete side walls and crowning parapet frame the façade.

Side walls of the Former Allans Building are concrete and a large portion of the west façade is visible above the adjacent Block Arcade building. A vertical 'Allans' sign is painted on this wall, above the adjacent façade. A light court, situated on the east side of the building, provides light to the building above the second floor, while the north (rear) façade has been obscured by later building.

At street level, a double-height portion of the front façade was originally recessed behind the line of the building. This area has been extensively modified with the insertion of a glazed shopfront with fine cantilevered awning set between the original side walls.

INTEGRITY

The Former Allans Building, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building, remains highly intact from its original construction in 1956-57.

Overall, the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone alterations at street level, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey commercial building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Former Allans Building at 276-278 Collins Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of 1950s multi-storey commercial building design. The building's transparent grid-like curtain wall façade, with alternating rows of metal-framed glazing and opaque glass spandrels and vertical mullions, can be clearly observed from Collins Street. Despite the redesign of the façade at street level, the upper facades of the Former Allans Building remain highly intact to their original design.

There are a number of buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the Former Allans Building. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A comparative example in the City of Melbourne which is located immediately adjacent to the Hoddle Grid is ICI House, 1-4 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1958). This place is included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H0786).

Locally-significant places

Precinct Heritage Overlay

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from the early postwar period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme. Those from the 1950s that are included in the Heritage Overlay are currently included as part of Heritage Precincts, but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places. These places are:



Former Gilbert Court, 100-104 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1954-55) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Hosie's Hotel, 1-5 Elizabeth Street & 288-290 Flinders Street (Mussen McKay & Potter, 1954-55), included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct as a Significant place.



Coates Building, 18-22 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1958-59) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Bank of Adelaide Building, 265-269 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, 1959-60) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Contributory place.

Other Examples

Despite the demolition of many 1950s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the initial period of curtain wall construction in Melbourne and demonstrate similar characteristics to the subject building. The following examples are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places as part of the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review:



Lauren's House, 414-416 Lonsdale Street (Harold Bloom, 1956) (Interim HO1254).



Former Atlas Assurance Building, 404-406 Collins Street (H Garnet Alsop & Partners, 1958-61) (Interim HO1008).



Former London Assurance House, 468-470 Bourke Street (B Evans & Partners, 1960) (Interim HO1006).



Former AMP Building, 402-408 Lonsdale Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1956-59).



Former Ajax House, 103-105 Queen Street (HD Berry, 1956).



HC Sleigh Building, 166-172 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1953-55).



Coles & Garrard Building, 376-378 Bourke Street (Meldrum & Noad, 1957).



Canton Insurance Building, 43-51 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1957).



Former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange, 376 Flinders Lane (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1957).

Analysis

As a fine and highly intact representative example of its type, the Former Allans Building at 276-278 Collins Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne. Similar to the small number of 1950s buildings presently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme – and a small number of other examples identified throughout the Hoddle Grid and listed above – the Former Allans Building clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

- Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*
- Architecture in Australia* (AIA): December 1959; March 1960.
- Building Application Index (BAI), City of Melbourne.
- Building Application Plans (BAP), via Public Records Office Victoria: VPRS 11200, P7, Units 1372, 1373, 1375, 1378.
- City of Melbourne Libraries online Heritage Collection, photographers and reference nos. as cited.
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- Cross-Section*: No. 31, May 1955; No. 44, June 1956.
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- Murphy, Guy & Bryce Raworth (2012), 'Godfrey & Spowers' in Philip Goad & Julie Willis's (Eds.) (2012), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Port Melbourne.
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- Saunders, David A L (1959), 'Office Blocks in Melbourne' in *Architecture in Australia*, June 1959.
- The Age*.
- The Argus*.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** C

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** C

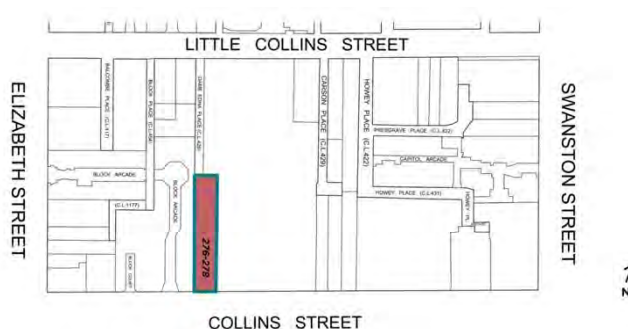
**Review of Heritage
Overlay Listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Allans Building

PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Former Allans Building, 276-278 Collins Street, a multi-storey commercial building constructed in 1956-57.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made to the street level facade are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former Allans Building at 276-278 Collins Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed in 1956-57, to a design by Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb in association with Charles N Hollinshed, the Former Allans Building has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and the prestige afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

The Former Allans Building has strong and enduring associations with the development of the music industry in Melbourne. The music dealership, which continuously occupied the site in Collins Street from at least 1876 to c1982, was noted as being the largest in the southern hemisphere by 1877 (Criterion A).

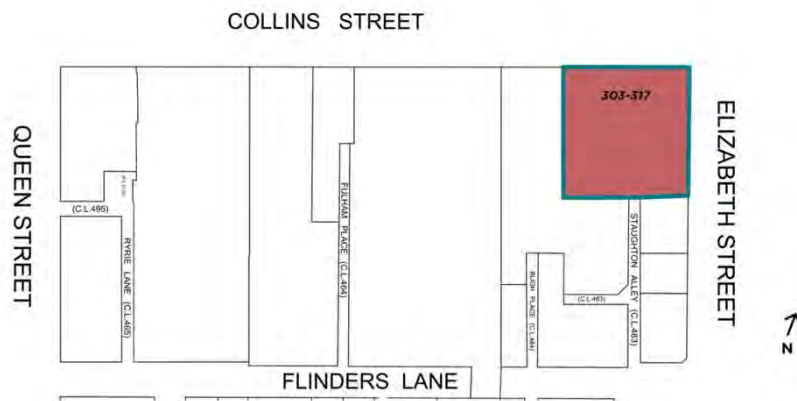
The Former Allans Building is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building. The building strongly reflects the style which was popular in the 1950s, particularly in central Melbourne. Constructed to the prevailing limit-height of 40m (132 feet) at the time, the Former Allans Building clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a 1950s structure with a curtain wall façade. The transparent front façade of alternating rows of glazing and opaque glass spandrels, along vertical mullions which divide the facade into a grid-like pattern, and the use of materials such as opaque glass and metal window frames, demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style (Criterion D).

The Former Allans Building has close associations with the Allan family, headed by George Leavis Allan who worked in the music industry in Melbourne from 1853 and established the music business, Allan & Co, with his son in 1881. The Allan family owned the music business through the latter part of the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth century. The family were significant contributors to the music industry in Melbourne for over 100 years and the family name was synonymous with this industry for a long period (Criterion H).

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former MLC Building [also known as Royal Bank Plaza and IOOF Centre (current name)]
STREET ADDRESS	303-317 Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	110762



SURVEY DATE: October 2019		SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage	
HERITAGE INVENTORY	No	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER GRADE	Ungraded
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Civil and Civic Pty Ltd in association with Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton	BUILDER:	Civil and Civic Pty Ltd
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	c1970 - 1973

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Retail, Workshop, Office, Café/Restaurant, Studio, Medical, Education, Caretaker, Carrier
1920s	Workshop, Office, Retail, Hairdresser, Café/Restaurant, Storage, Studio, Carrier, Retail, Caretaker, Trade
1960s	Café/Restaurant, Office, Retail, Studio, Medical, Hairdresser, Merchant, Carrier, Retail/Workshop, Caretaker

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The building at 303-317 Collins Street, on the south-west corner of Collins and Elizabeth streets, was completed in 1973 as the Melbourne headquarters of the Mutual Life and Citizens Assurance Company Pty Ltd (MLC). Design co-ordination, construction and mechanical and electrical engineering of the building was carried out by Civil and Civic Pty Ltd (the design and construction subsidiary of Lend Lease Corporation Ltd) with architects in association being R. S. Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The MLC Building, on the south-west corner of Collins and Elizabeth streets, was completed in 1973 for the Mutual Life and Citizens Assurance Company Pty Ltd (MLC) who redeveloped their site, replacing the earlier Melbourne headquarters for the company on the site (*Age*, 13 Aug 1973:17; *Telegraph*, 30 Mar 1937:8; *Construction*, 29 Mar 1939:6; BAF).

MLC acquired the corner property in 1936, occupying an earlier building on the site from 1938. The company temporarily relocated to the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street in 1969 (which they had previously occupied between 1911 and 1938) during redevelopment of the subject site (*Age*, 13 Aug 1973:17, 21; S&Mc).

The insurance company MLC was established in Victoria in 1888 as The Citizens' Life Assurance Company, providing life assurance with low premiums to the working man. Previously, life assurance benefits were restricted to the wealthy in Victoria. The company grew rapidly, taking over the Mutual Life Association of Australasia in 1908 and the Australian Widow's Fund Life Assurance Society in 1910. The company became the Mutual Life and Citizens Assurance Company Pty Ltd. By the 1970s there were 19 district and sales offices throughout Victoria (*Age*, 13 Aug 1973:17). Today, MLC provides life insurance as well as investments, superannuation and financial advice to corporate, institutional and retail customers (MLC, 'About').

The City of Melbourne received a building permit application for the 30-storey office building at the site in January 1970 (BAI; BAF). Design co-ordination, construction and mechanical and electrical engineering of the building was carried out by Civil and Civic Pty Ltd (the design and construction subsidiary of Lend Lease Corporation Ltd). The architects in association were R. S. Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton (Goad 2012:199; BAP). In August 1973 *The Age* published a feature on the newly completed building, reporting that the architects in association were 'R S Demaine and Partners', the structural engineers were W J and W L Meinhardt and mechanical engineers in association were Rider Hunt and Partners (architectural plans record Norman & Addicoat as the latter, in 1969) (*Age*, 13 Aug 1973:17).

Architectural drawings dated 1969 show the north and south elevations and ground floor plan (Figure 1 - Figure 3). The designs included a plaza, basement car parking, ground floor shops, offices and a banking chamber, a first floor theatrette (in the circular section projecting into the plaza) and offices, a 13th floor executive level, 15th floor caretaker's flat, two plant/motor rooms, and the remainder as offices (BAF; BAP). MLC constructed a temporary building on the site to house the State Savings Bank (whose premises were acquired for the new build) until occupancy was available in the new building (BAF; *Age*, 13 Aug 1973:20).

The building was opened by Premier Rupert Hamer at a special function held on site in August 1973 (*Age*, 13 Aug 1973:17). The (almost 400ft/122m) high-rise building was completed at a total cost of \$12.5 million. A technique new to Australia, 'rock socketting' was used for the foundations. The building was constructed of precast concrete and clad with re-constituted granite panels (*Age*, 13 Aug 1973:17-21; AIA, May/June 1973). The design requested a facing that would 'produce a subdued but rugged brown effect', the response to which was a natural stone aggregate from Talbot, a mining town near Maryborough, and sandblasting techniques to expose the stone (as the semicircular shape of the building made polishing of panels impracticable). The overall result was a natural look, rather than a contrived or artificial appearance. Each panel was between 2½ to 4 inches (6.3-10cm) thick. A contemporary newspaper article stated that the 'precast cladding is also serving as external formwork, designed to withstand great pressures during placement. In this way the cladding became an integral part of the structure instead of being just "hung on."' Aggregates in the same Talbot quarts were used to finish off the ground floor columns and entrance, this applied finish being 'water washed with a fine spray and then cleaned with acid' (*Age*, 13 Aug 1973:17-21).

The completed building comprised two basements, ground and 29 upper floors, a spacious forecourt with a circular rotunda and fountain, and an 'unusual semi-circular shape with circular lift-tower at the rear' and sill-to-ceiling aluminum-framed windows on all elevations, and a theatrette. The high-rise building was also fitted with the fastest lifts in Melbourne at the time, servicing the upper floors (*Age*, 13 Aug 1973:17-21).

The MLC weather beacon from an earlier MLC building – reportedly a 'long feature of Melbourne life' – was relocated to the top of the new building. Operated remotely by the Weather Bureau, the beacon provided weather updates and forecasts (*Age*, 13 Aug 1973:19).

An image (appears to be a photo montage prior to completion) of the building was published in *The Age* in 1972 (31 Jul 1972:37), requesting occupants for 'The MLC Building', 'Melbourne's outstanding new office building' (Figure 5). 'The MLC Building' at 303-317 Collins Street was advertised in August 1973 as 'Melbourne's newest prestige office building' by leasing agents George G Henderson (*Age*,

13 Aug 1973:21). Photos published during this period showed the original entrance and forecourt area (Figure 4 – Figure 5).

In 2012, the building was referred to as Royal Bank Plaza (Goat 2012:199). MLC sold the property in 2017 (MLC). A low-scale addition has been constructed in front of the building, extending to the Collins and Elizabeth street boundaries (post-1984), and is occupied by Westpac in 2019. In 2019 the name of the building is the IOOF Centre (CoMMaps); the top of the weather beacon bears the name 'IOOF'.

Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, architects

Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton was established in 1957, originating from the private practice of architect Robert Snowden Demaine in 1937. Demaine acted as caretaker for a number of Melbourne practices during World War II while their directors were involved in the war effort and gained considerable experience in hospital and industrial architectural design. Demaine was instrumental in advocating for the establishment of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects (RVIA) Small Homes Service in 1947 and served as RVIA president in 1945 and RAI national president in 1952-54.

Ailsa Merle Trundle joined the firm as junior partner in 1943, forming Demaine, Russell and Trundle alongside Arthur Leslie Russell, who specialised in hospital design. Trundle, born in Murwillumbah, NSW began her architectural studies through the Bendigo School of Mines, followed by study at the Gordon Institute at Geelong and the University of Melbourne's Architectural Atelier (MUAA). One of the first women to be offered a named partnership in an Australian architectural firm, she was responsible for much of the firm's welfare work, including buildings for the Autistic Children's Association (Black Rock, Mansfield and Bayswater), and the Dalkeith Home for the Aged, Traralgon.

In 1957, the firm amalgamated with the existing firm of Armstrong and Orton to become Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton. Lloyd Orton was educated at the Melbourne Technical College and the University of Melbourne and travelled to Europe on a scholarship after WWII. On his return to Melbourne in 1951 he co-founded the firm of Armstrong & Orton with young designer, Anthony Brown Armstrong.

Notable postwar buildings in central Melbourne designed by Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton include BP House on Albert Road, Melbourne (1962-4), the Naval and Military Club, Little Collins Street, Melbourne (1967) and the MLC Building, Collins Street, Melbourne (c1970-1973) in association with Civil and Civic Pty Ltd. The firm also designed three red-brick Brutalist buildings for the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT, buildings 51, 56 and 57) in the 1970s.

The firm continues to practise as Demaine Partnership.

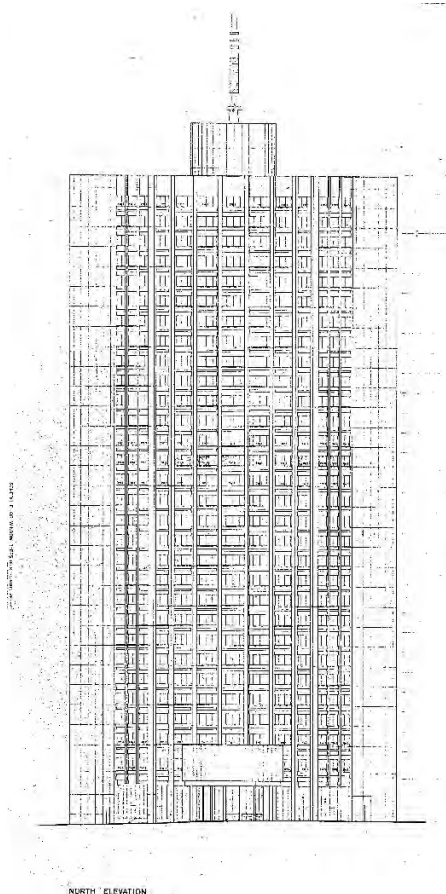


Figure 1. Architectural drawing of the north elevation, dated 1969 (BAP).

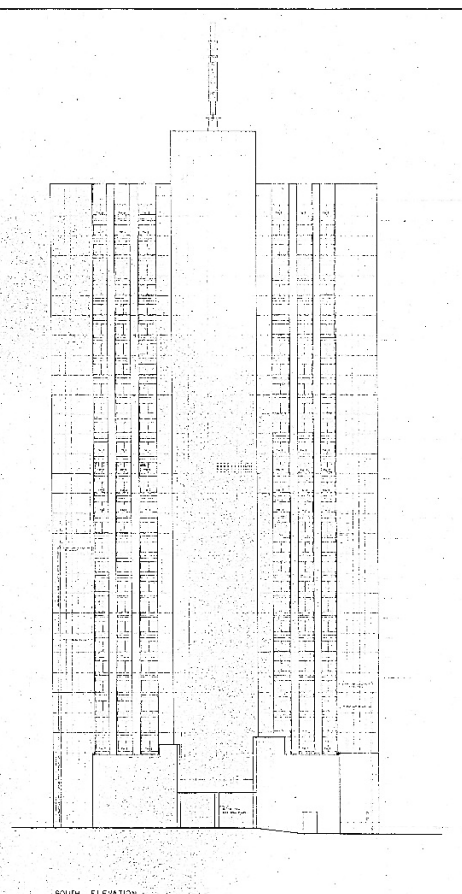


Figure 2. Architectural drawing of the south elevation, dated 1969 (BAP).

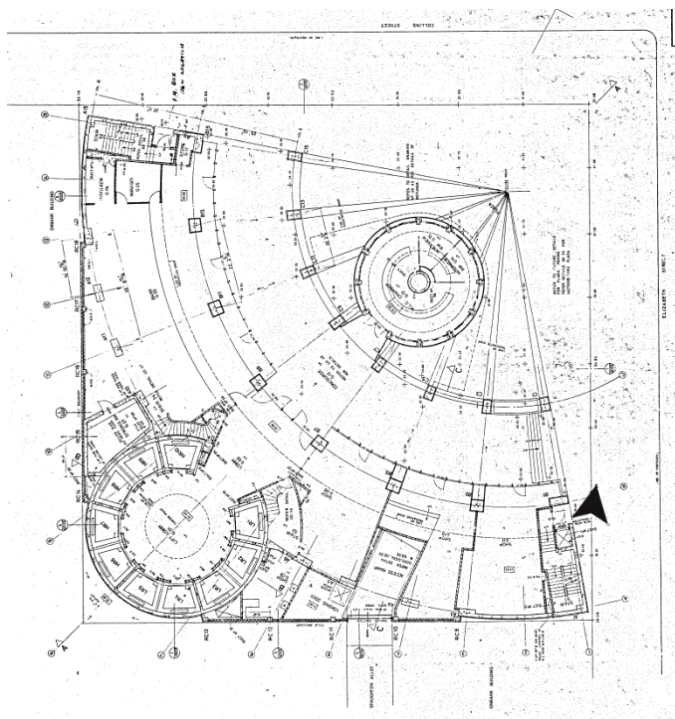


Figure 3. Ground floor plan, drawing dated 1969 (BAP).



Figure 4. Photo of the building published in the May/June edition of *Architecture in Australia* (AIA, May/Jun 1973:8).



Figure 5. An image of the newly completed building published in *The Age* in July 1972 (*Age*, 31 Jul 1972:37).

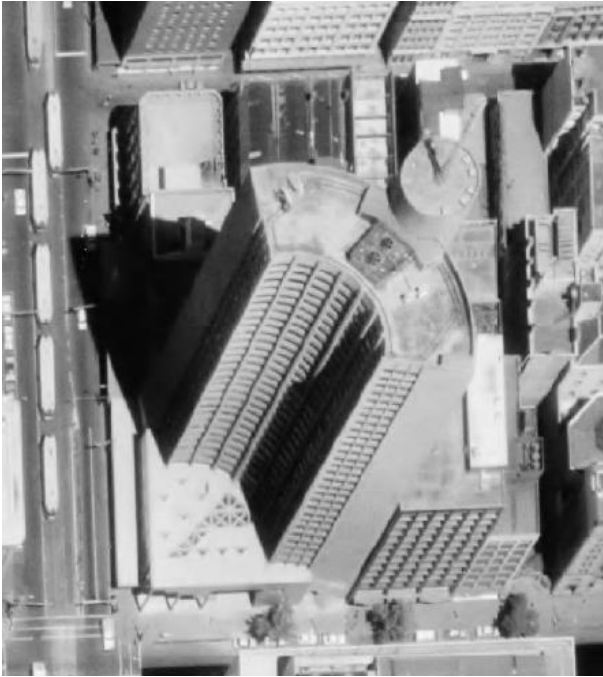


Figure 6. An oblique aerial of the building in 1987, showing the weather beacon (Landata Victoria).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former MLC Building at 303-317 Collins Street is a 30-storey commercial building located at the south-west corner of Collins and Elizabeth streets. Completed in 1973 to a design by Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

The building is of unusual quadrant form, with the focal point near the main Collins and Elizabeth street intersection. A circular lift tower is located at the rear of the building and a low-rise forecourt, extending to both street fronts, has replaced an original forecourt rotunda. Adjacent buildings in both Collins and Elizabeth streets are low-rise and therefore the subject building is visible from a number of directions. Staughton Alley provides access to the south side of the building from Flinders Lane.

The building is of reinforced concrete column and slab construction, with the structure clearly expressed on the highly visible concave front facade. External precast concrete cladding, faced with thick granite panels with sandblasted finish, is an integral part of the structure as it served as external formwork.

The concave front façade of the building is articulated with vertical stone-clad piers which rise to the apex of the building. Alternating rows of aluminium framed fixed windows and stone-clad spandrels are set behind these piers with a crowning solid band above. Alternating bands of windows and spandrels are repeated across parts of the other three facades, with the exception of solid stone-clad panels which enclose internal access stairs at the rear corners of the building and the circular lift well at the centre of the rear convex façade.

At the corner of Collins and Elizabeth streets the building has been substantially altered at ground level with the removal of the original entrance rotunda and replacement with a low-scale building which extends across the curved front façade of the multi-storey building, obscuring the lower façade. Extending to the Collins and Elizabeth street boundaries, this is a partially glazed and panelled pavilion with a combination of column and pier supports and cantilever verandah with deep fascia.

INTEGRITY

The Former MLC Building, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building above street level, remains highly intact to its original construction in c1970-73. Works to the building at the Collins and Elizabeth street corner, including demolition of the forecourt rotunda and construction of a low-scale forecourt building which extends to both street boundaries, has altered the original design at street level.

Overall, the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone alterations at street level, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey commercial building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Former MLC Building at 303-317 Collins Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of a 1960s to mid 1970s multi-storey office building design. Located on a prominent site, the building's grid-like walls of clearly expressed structure, clad with precast granite-faced concrete panels, can be clearly observed from many directions. The curved form of the building is highly unusual and distinctive. Despite demolition of the original forecourt rotunda, and construction of a low-rise forecourt which extends to both Collins and Elizabeth street frontages, the upper curved facades of the Former MLC Building remain highly intact to their original design.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the Former MLC Building. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1974-73) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



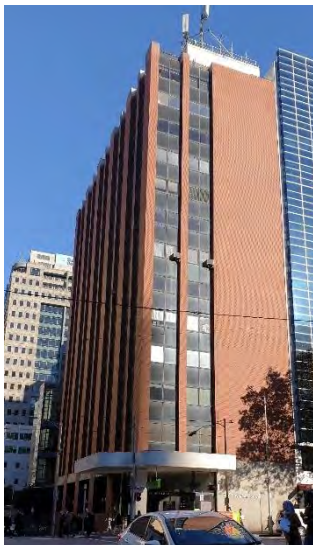
Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building, 359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

As a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building, the Former MLC Building clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey commercial buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne. Similar to a number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings listed above, the subject building clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

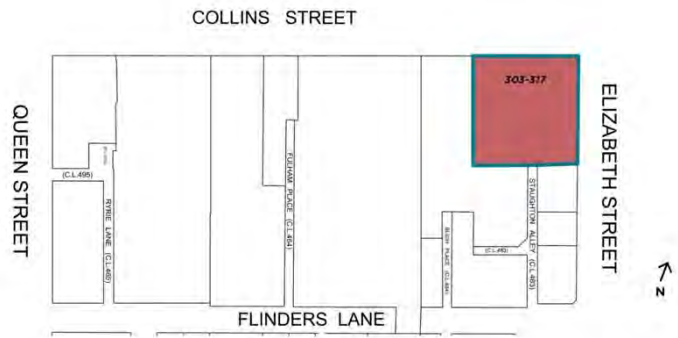
**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former MLC Building

PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street, a multi-storey office building constructed in 1970-73.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later additions made to the forecourt are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former MLC Building at 303-317 Collins Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed c1970-73 to a design by Civil and Civic Pty Ltd in association with Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, the Former MLC Building has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and the prestige afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

The Former MLC Building is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building. The building strongly reflects the style which was popular from the 1960s to the mid 1970s, particularly in central Melbourne. Constructed as a 30-storey structure, the Former MLC Building clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a later postwar commercial building including

grid-like walls of clearly expressed structure, and the use of materials such as granite-faced precast concrete panel cladding. These demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style. The adoption of a curved form to clearly display the trabeated system of construction is unusual and distinctive (Criterion D).

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME Former Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Building and plaza with 'Children's Tree' Sculpture

STREET ADDRESS 308-336 Collins Street, Melbourne

PROPERTY ID 102137



SURVEY DATE: October 2018

SURVEY BY: Context

HERITAGE INVENTORY Not provided

EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY No

PLACE TYPE Individual Heritage Place

PROPOSED CATEGORY Significant

FORMER GRADE C

DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST: Stephenson & Turner (building)
Tom Bass (sculpture)

BUILDER: Not known

DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: Postwar Period (1945-1975)

DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION: 1963

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Offices
1920s	Offices
1960s	Offices

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

The former Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Building at 308-336 Collins Street, opened in 1963. It was designed by architects Stephenson & Turner and constructed by Lewis Construction Co Pty Ltd. The building was set back to create a 'pedestrian precinct' and a commissioned sculpture by artist Tom Bass, 'Children's Tree' was installed in the forecourt of the building facing Elizabeth Street as part of the design.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17).

Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

Prior to the present building, the subject site on the key city corner of Elizabeth and Collins streets was occupied by the Equitable Building, built between 1891 and 1896 (MV 2018a) (see Figure 1). The Equitable Life Assurance Society (USA) paid £360,000 for the site in 1890, towards the end of the economic boom of the 1880s (MV 2018a). The Equitable Life Assurance Society had wanted to build 'the grandest building in the Southern Hemisphere', and commissioned the large structure to a design by American architect, Edward Raht. The building was constructed by David Mitchell (MV 2018a) and the Equitable Life Assurance Society owned the building until 1923, when it sold it to the Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society (MV 2018a).

The Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society was founded in Melbourne in 1873, and by 1874 had established offices in other Australian cities. Offices in British colonial outposts, such as New Zealand and South Africa, followed (MV 2018b). By the late 1950s, new headquarters were required by the Society. Consequently, the Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society demolished the Equitable Building at the corner of Elizabeth and Swanston streets and constructed the current office block (MV 2018b). Parts of the old Equitable Building can be found in various locations around Melbourne, with Harcourt granite blocks situated outside the Melbourne Museum, and the statuary above the portico moved to the grounds of the University of Melbourne (MV 2018a).

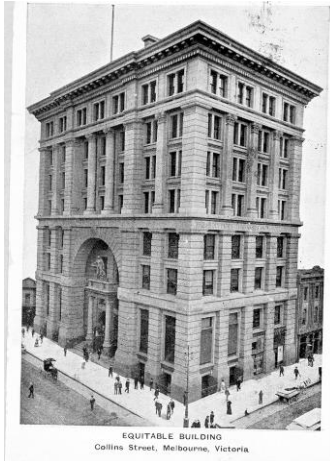


Figure 1. The Equitable Building, which stood on the subject site (Source: General sequence postcard 1906, SLV)

Construction started on the existing building on the subject site in 1959, with the Colonial Mutual Life Assurance building opening in 1963 (MBAI 33728; Sievers 1963, SLV). Gold lettering on both the Elizabeth and Collins street facades of the building promoted the company's name. Stephenson & Turner were the architects for the building, which was constructed by Lewis Construction Co Pty Ltd (*Cross-Section* 1963:np).

The *Cross-Section* architecture journal described the Colonial Mutual Life Assurance building in December 1963:

[The building] is conservatively clad, in panels of cream travertine Italian marble, grey Harcourt (Vic.) granite and black Imperial (S.A.) granite. The C.M.L. building sits back 20 ft from the Elizabeth Street frontage, providing the currently conventional street-side pedestrian precinct...The pavement space outside the C.M.L. is yet to be enlivened by a Tom Bass sculpture...On the skyline, the C.M.L. building fits into place without looking like a raw and independent intrusion...C.M.L. cost approx. £3 million. Construction: rigid steel frame. 21 floors above ground, 3 basements. Air conditioned (Cross-Section 1963:np).

The building was set back, which allowed for a 'pedestrian precinct' and the installation of a Tom Bass sculpture in the forecourt of the building facing Elizabeth Street (National Trust 2014) (see Figure 2 and Figure 3). The Bass sculpture in the forecourt, installed by 18 December 1963, is known as 'Children's Tree' and was commissioned by the Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society as part of the site design (*Canberra Times* 18 December 1963:35). Tom Bass later evaluated the work as follows.

Another really important part of my work has been children's sculpture...The next thing that came along was the Children's Tree in Melbourne. I had been asked by an insurance company to do a sculpture for a space that had been created in the forecourt of their new building, right in the heart of the city...When they first said they wanted a children's sculpture there, I thought how inappropriate it was to have something for children in such a busy, noisy place. But...the more I worked on it the more realised how important it was to create this little incident in the heart of a great bustling city that would remind people of their childhood. It would also be where children brought into the city could find

some little thing that related to them. So, again, I was really drawn into it and had a thoroughly marvellous experience doing it (Bass and Smart 2006:108-109).

The building was refurbished in 2003, and this is presumably when substantial alterations to the façade were made (CoMMaps).



Figure 2. The subject building not long after completion. (Source: Sievers 1963, SLV [copyright](#))



Figure 3. A view of the statue and building behind it. (Source: Sievers 1963, SLV [copyright](#))

Tom Bass, sculptor

Tom Bass was a prolific Australian sculptor, who completed many public and private commissions, including the 'Trial of Socrates' at Wilson Hall at the University of Melbourne and another children's sculpture 'Genii' in Queen Victoria Gardens. Bass' community-focused work is featured in many prominent Australian public spaces and institutions, including schools, universities and churches, as well as government and corporate sites. In 1974, Bass established the Tom Bass Sculpture Studio School (still in operation), where he taught until his death in 2010. He was made a Member of the Order of Australia for his contribution to public art. A retrospective of Bass' work was held at the Sydney Opera House, where it was claimed that 'no artist has done more to shape the face of public art in Australia' (Brown 2010; Design and Art Australia 2011).

Stephenson & Turner, architects

The *Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture* contains the following information about Stephenson & Turner:

At its peak, Stephenson & Turner was Australia's largest architecture firm, with offices in Melbourne, Sydney, Newcastle, New Zealand and Hong Kong. It was formed in 1921 by A. G. Stephenson and Percy Meldrum as Stephenson & Meldrum, after both had returned to Australia after WWI, having met at London's Architectural Association. The firm had relatively modest beginnings, with a range of projects and clients, including the State

Savings Bank of Victoria (Its chairman, Sir William McBeath, had encouraged Stephenson to return to Melbourne to set up a practice.) The firm's first hospital client, the Melbourne Children's Hospital in 1925, and a proposed reform to the hospital system, prompted Stephenson to imagine a new direction for his fledgling firm and he audaciously borrowed money to take an extensive overseas trip in 1926-27 to the United States and Canada to gather intelligence and experience with a view to becoming a firm specialising in hospitals...

The firm established a Sydney office in 1934 led by Donald Keith Turner, and were known in NSW from 1935 as Stephenson, Meldrum & Turner, taking on several large hospital projects including Gloucester House at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney (1936) ... Meldrum was becoming increasingly uncomfortable with Stephenson's interest in taking on more hospital work...The result was a very rapid and acrimonious split in the partnership...

Turner & Stephenson continued as Stephenson & Turner, continuing their hospital work during WWII, and afterwards promoted a number of their associates, such as Ellison Harvie, Geoffrey Moline and John D. Fisher, to partners. Beyond their hospital work, the firm also undertook key industrial complexes, commercial office buildings, banks, town plans (including Shepparton (1946) and the Australian pavilions at the Paris Exposition (1937) and the New York World's Fair (1939-40) (Willis 2012).

SITE DESCRIPTION

308-336 Collins Street, Melbourne is a 19-storey concrete and steel building built 1959-63 in the Post-War Modernist style. It exhibits key characteristics of the style, particularly the use of a steel and reinforced-concrete frame allowing for its great height at the time, distinct double height base in a contrasting material and set back shopfronts to create an undercroft. Positioned on the north-west corner of Collins Street and Elizabeth Street, the building is set back from Elizabeth Street to create a small publicly accessible plaza. The building has a narrow frontage to Elizabeth Street, but is on a deep block that extends a considerable distance along Collins Street.

Above the ground level the primary façade facing Collins Street is divided into sixteen equal vertical bays providing a regular grid of windows. Four more identical vertical bays complete the eastern elevation facing Elizabeth Street reinforcing the cubiform massing of the building. The windows are framed in natural aluminium with a central mullion. It is unclear if these are original or have been replaced, but the original pattern of two vertically proportioned sashes for each module is retained.

The building was refurbished in 2003 which included the re-cladding of the facade in an aluminium cladding system, replacing the original panels of cream travertine Italian marble and grey Harcourt granite. This has resulted in the building losing some of the original design refinement of the structural grid, especially the prominence of the projecting vertical elements. Notwithstanding this the original character of the building resulting from its cubiform massing, structural grid and regular pattern of windows remains clearly legible.

At the ground and first floor level the original form of the building remains largely unaltered.-A simple rectangular pattern etched into the granite is evident in the spandrel above the shop fronts along both Collins and Elizabeth streets, which is original. The windows at the first-floor level are natural aluminium framed and appear original. At the ground level the shop fronts were originally set back from the street to provide an undercroft as the building had no awning at street level. The shop fronts have been replaced and brought forward to be in line with the building's façade above. A continuous

awning has been added to the Collins Street façade. Along Elizabeth Street a smaller cantilevered awning has been added and provides some shelter to the plaza space.

The Tom Bass sculpture known as 'Children's Tree' was commissioned by the Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society in 1963 specifically for the plaza of the building at 308-336 Collins Street. It remains in its original setting, located close to the two pedestrian crossings at the intersection of Collins and Elizabeth streets. The bronze sculpture displays two children around a small, leafy tree: a girl holds a doll and a boy kneels to have a closer look at a lizard at the base of the tree. On top of the tree is an owl overlooking passersby.

INTEGRITY

308-336 Collins Street is generally intact with some changes visible to original or early fabric. Alterations include the recladding of the building above street level with an aluminium cladding system and the replacement of shopfronts, bringing them forward to be in line with the building above. At the ground and first floor level the original form of the building remains with its original granite cladding and what appear to be original aluminium framed windows. The plaza has been retained, although its extension into the building's undercroft has been lost. The Tom Bass sculpture 'Children's Tree' remains in its original location within the forecourt.

The building's original built form, scale, some evidence of its original materials and key stylistic details remain clearly legible.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The former Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Building and plaza is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of 1960s to mid-1970s multi-storey building design.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the Former Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Building. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently

included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1974-73 included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street
(Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street
(Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street
(Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building, 359-373 Collins Street
(Bates Smart & McCutcheon, c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street
(Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street (Yunken Freeman, 1966)

Public artworks

Within the Hoddle Grid, the following public artworks are comparable to the Tom Bass 1963 'Children's Tree' sculpture, in terms of the medium, setting or time period:

Hosie's Hotel Mural, 1-5 Elizabeth Street, 1955 (VHR H2094; HO938 – mural only)

Hosie's Hotel Mural, at the corner of Elizabeth and Flinders streets, was created in 1955. Richard Beck (1912-1985), an English and German trained graphic designer and one of the leading modernist graphic designers in Melbourne at the time, was commissioned to create a mural for the new Hosie's Hotel. The Hosie's Hotel Mural is of historic importance for its connection to the modernist movement in architecture and design in Melbourne. At this time, modernism was important as the city of Melbourne attempted to present itself to the world as a modern, contemporary city at the time of the 1956 Olympic Games. The re-building of Hosie's Hotel was an expression of a desire to provide modern hotel accommodation and the inclusion of the mural in the overall design of the building demonstrates the desire to appear modern.



Hosies Hotel Mural, built in 1955.

Former Sleigh Corner Building with 'Transformation', 158-164 Queen Street, 1964 (Recommended as individually significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review)

The former Sleigh Corner Building (now known as Elders House), at 158-164 Queen Street, is a 15-storey postwar pre-cast concrete and steel curtain wall corner commercial office building. It was constructed in 1964 to a design by Bates Smart & McCutcheon for H C Sleigh Ltd. It is a fine example of the postwar International style. It has a narrow frontage to Queen Street and deeper frontage to Bourke Street. The building retains its original plaza with sculpture 'Transformation' created by sculptor Tom Bass.



158-164 Queen Street and 'Transformation', built in 1964. (Source: Context 2019)

St James, 527-555 Bourke Street with 'Awakening', 1969

A site with two building properties. Designed in the International style by the New York company Skidmore Owings & Merrill LLP in partnership with Bates Smart & McCutcheon and built in 1969. The sculpture 'Awakening' by the internationally renowned sculptor, Clement Meadmore, partially encloses the space to the east, complementing the architecture and providing a human scale.



Tower at 535 Bourke Street and 'Awakening' by Clement Meadmore, built in 1969.

Former Shell House, 1 Spring Street, 1985-89 (VHR H2356; HO1235)

1 Spring Street, Melbourne comprises a 28-storey office tower and northern podium, main foyer with Arthur Boyd mural 'Bathers and Pulpit Rock', and external plazas including a large external plaza at the Spring Street corner containing the Charles O Perry sculpture 'Shell Mace'. The building was originally known as Shell House (VHD Place ID 197961; CoMMaps).



1 Spring Street and 'Shell Mace' by Charles O Perry, built in 1985-89.

Analysis

The former Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Building and plaza compares with the above examples of Post-War Modernist style office buildings built from the 1960s to the mid 1970s. The subject building is a generally intact example of the type, demonstrating the key characteristics such as the use of steel and reinforced concrete frame and non-loadbearing glazed façade system. Eagle House at 473 Bourke Street (VHR H1806), Reserve Bank of Australia at 60 Collins Street (Contributory in HO504 Collins East Precinct) generally compare with the subject building, sharing similar design aspects of the postwar period.

The former Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Building and plaza is an important, and increasingly rare, example within the Hoddle Grid of a postwar office site on a major corner location, where the original

configuration of the publicly accessible open plaza has been retained. Most other examples in Melbourne that retain their original plaza setting are located outside of the Hoddle Grid, such as the Victorian State Offices at 1 Macarthur Street and 1 Treasury Place (VHR H1526), which also has a forecourt plaza with the building set back from the street. The subject site is distinguished by its siting on a prestigious corner location with an intact open plaza.

The site is also notable among its contemporaries for the sculpture 'Children's Tree', created by important sculptor Tom Bass, in the plaza. As an artwork exposed to general public within the busy central Melbourne area, it is comparable to the Hosie's Hotel Mural, in that both were created during the postwar era. As a three-dimensional sculpture included in the design for an overall building scheme, St James with 'Awakening' at 527-555 Bourke Street and the former Sleigh Corner Building with 'Transformation' at 158-164 Queen Street (both recommended as individually significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review) are comparable to the subject site.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** C

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** C

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

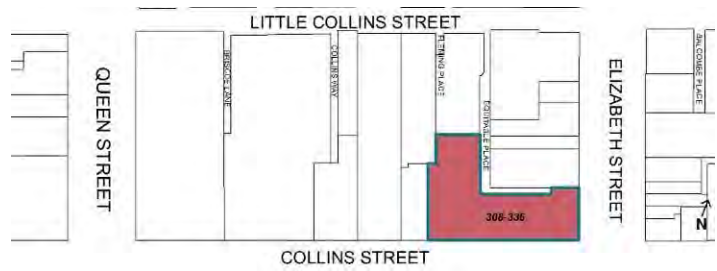
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society Building with Plaza and 'Children's Tree' sculpture



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The former Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society building, built in 1959-63 to a design by Stephenson & Turner, and publicly accessible plaza with bronze 'Children's Tree' sculpture, created in 1963 by Tom Bass at 308-336 Collins Street, Melbourne, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- Original building form and scale;
- Original publicly accessible plaza setting with bronze 'Children's Tree' sculpture, created in 1963 by Tom Bass;
- Original pattern of fenestrations; and
- Original double height building base with granite cladding and aluminium windows.

Later alterations, particularly at street level, are not significant.

How it is significant?

The former Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society Building with Plaza and 'Children's Tree' sculpture at 308-336 Collins Street is of local historic, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The former Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society building, constructed in 1959-63 to a design by Stephenson & Turner, for the Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society (founded in Melbourne in 1873), is significant as part of the post-World War Two development and the rapid growth of the corporate architecture of the 1950s-1970s. Its development reflected the expansion of large national and international companies opting for construction and naming rights of new city office buildings as a form of promotion and fund investment. The former Colonial Mutual Life Assurance building is significant historically as a reflection of the growth of insurance and assurance companies in Victoria during the 1950s-60s resulting in many company-named buildings being commissioned and constructed. (Criterion A)

The former Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society building and plaza is also historically significant as an example of a postwar office site that provided a publicly accessible plaza, demonstrating one of the key aspects of the postwar corporate buildings in Melbourne. Many postwar office towers also played a gallery role as sculpture, paintings and tapestries were installed in their foyers, meeting rooms and forecourts. The provision of the forecourt or plaza in the curtilages of building allotments created a specific urban form in the central city. The former Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society building and plaza is an important example that still retains the ground level plaza and commissioned artwork by sculptor Tom Bass, 'Children's Tree'. (Criteria A and D)

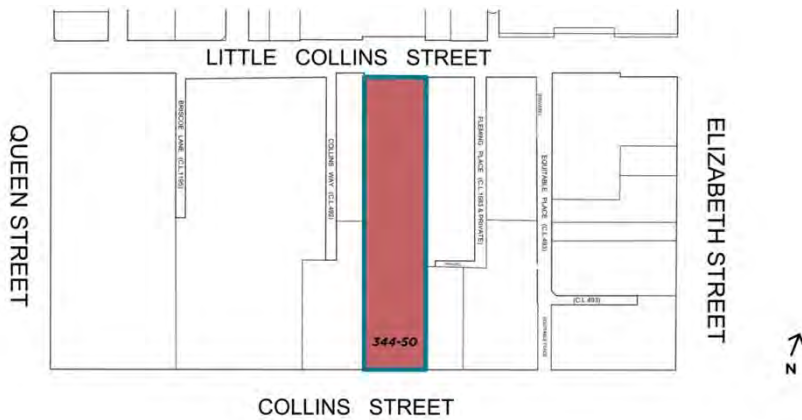
The former Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society building is a good example of post war development in central Melbourne that retains its original form, scale and characteristic stylistic details which reflect the era and original design in which it was constructed. It exhibits a design aesthetic characteristic of its type, medium/high rise commercial office buildings that combine expansive glazed panel with solid sections to achieve a distinctive expressed aesthetic. Key stylistic details include the regular grid pattern of windows above ground level and the original double height building base, clad in granite and retaining the original aluminium framed windows. It is unusual in retaining its original plaza and bronze sculpture 'Children's Tree' created in 1963 by Tom Bass specifically for this space. (Criterion D)

The bronze sculpture 'Children's Tree', created in 1963 by celebrated Australian sculptor Tom Bass, and set within its original plaza setting is aesthetically significant. The aesthetic qualities of the place are enhanced by the incorporation of an outstanding piece of publicly accessible artwork in the plaza, which was commissioned by the Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society. The sculpture and plaza were integral parts of the original design of the building at 308-336 Collins Street, by architects Stephenson & Turner. (Criterion E)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former AMP Building [also known as Citibank Centre (current name)]
STREET ADDRESS	344-350 Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	102135



SURVEY DATE: October 2019		SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage	
HERITAGE INVENTORY	No	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb	FORMER GRADE	Ungraded
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	BUILDER:	E A Watts Pty Ltd
		DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1966-1968

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Buiness and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Retail
1920s	Retail, Workshop, Caretaker
1960s	Office, Retail

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The multi-storey office building, extending from Collins Street to Little Collins Street, was designed by architects and engineers Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, as a rental investment for the owners, the AMP Society. The structural engineering consultants were Clive Steele Associates and builder was E A Watts Pty Ltd. The building was constructed in 1966-1968.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The multi-storey office building, extending from Collins Street to Little Collins Street, was designed by architects and engineers Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, as a rental investment for the owners, the AMP Society (BAP). The structural engineering consultants were Clive Steele Associates and builder was E A Watts Pty Ltd (BAP; *Cross-Section*, Apr 1970).

Architectural drawings dating to December 1965 and January 1966 show key floor plans and elevations (Figure 1 - Figure 3). The City of Melbourne received a building permit application for the building in July 1966 (with an estimated total value of \$5,117,800) (BAI) and construction was completed in 1968 (Figure 4). The Taxation Department occupied the building from March 1969 (*Age*, 28 Feb 1969:2; S&Mc).

The project was discussed in contemporary architectural publications. The September/October 1969 edition of *Architect* (Sep-Oct 1969:24) reported that the new design features on both the Collins and Little Collins street facades of the AMP Building included:

... flush glazing, concealed fixing and self-draining sub-sills. Window frames and mullions both incorporate a recessed channel for terminating internal partitions. All are in Kalcolor aluminium, by Comalco. Its main façade ... has 120 double windows recessed in pre-cast concrete surrounds. A wide transom acts as a strengthening member. Light court windows

are fully reversible for cleaning. Fabrication and design of windows and door suites was by Perry Metal Window Company.

In April 1970, *Cross-Section* discussed the completed building, noting that the Collins Street façade 'has a grid of precast concrete surrounds, a proportioned pattern more generously spaced and slimmer in mass than is usual in this kind of office building finish in Melbourne, perhaps more suited to the scale of a wide street' (*Cross-Section*, No. 209, Apr 1970:3).

In 2019 the building is called the Citibank Centre (ComMaps).

Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, architects

Godfrey and Spowers was established in c1901 by architects, William Scott Purves Godfrey and Henry Howard Spowers. The firm designed a large number of houses, warehouses and institutional buildings and was best known for its bank building designs.

Godfrey's son, William Purves Race Godfrey, joined the practice in 1931 as a student. Spowers died the following year and Race Godfrey was made partner in c1934. The firm was suspended in 1941 as a direct result of World War II, during which time Race Godfrey worked with the RAAF as a civilian architect in Melbourne and Sydney and his father, William Godfrey, carried out commissions for air-raid shelters. Race Godfrey recommenced practice late in 1944. His father did not continue with the new firm, and retired from practice in the same year.

By the early 1950s, Race Godfrey expanded the firm to include new partners, Eric Hughes, Geoffrey Mewton and John Lobb, becoming Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb. The expanded firm specialised in large office and institutional buildings. Notable commissions within central Melbourne included the Allans Building at 278 Collins Street (1959), the Bank of Adelaide Building, 265-69 Collins Street (1959-60), the AMP Building, 344-50 Collins Street (1966-68) and the State Savings Bank of Victoria, 233-43 Queen Street (1967-68). The National Mutual Building, Collins Street, Melbourne (1962-65, demolished 2015) was another key work for the firm during this period.

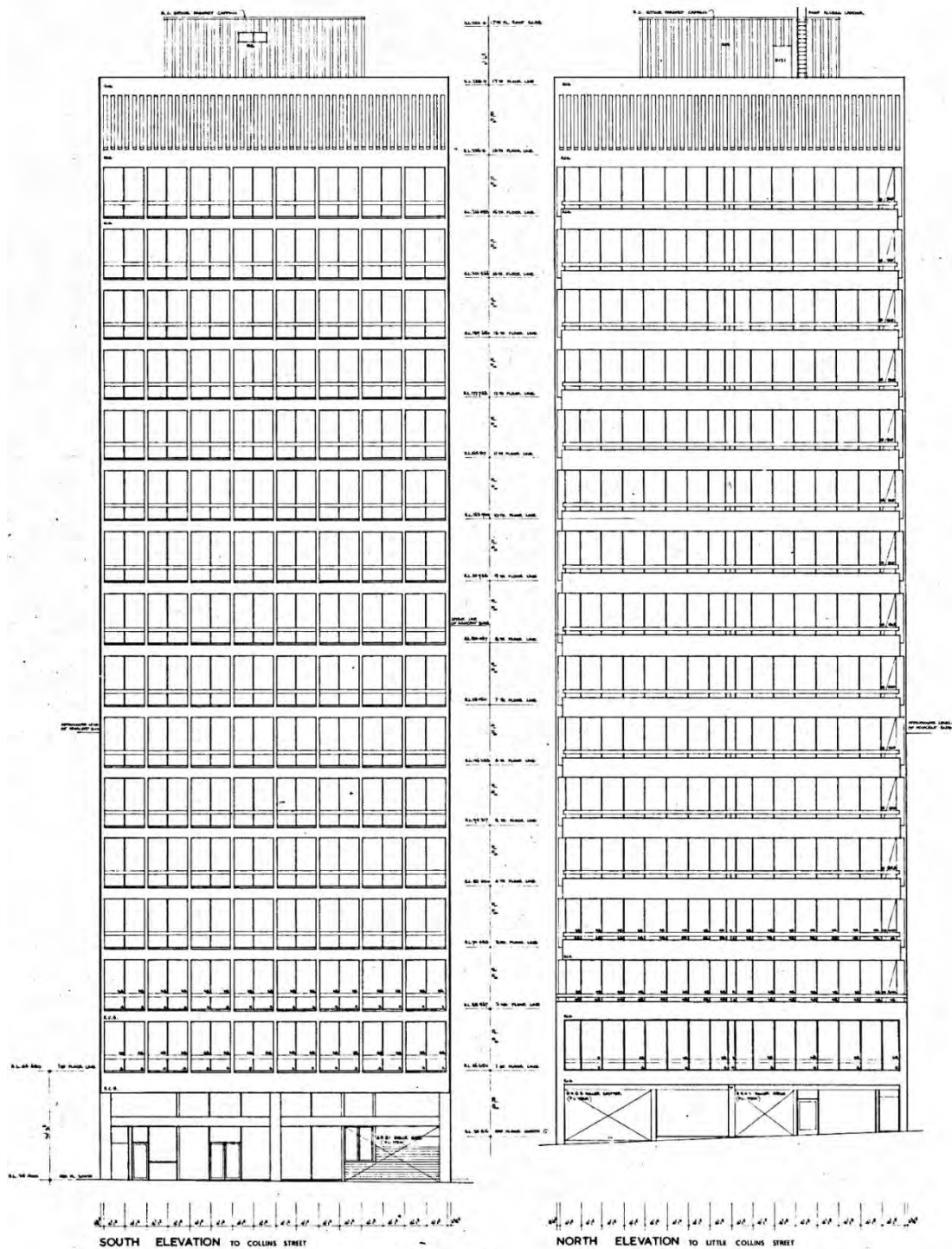


Figure 1. South (left) and north (right) elevations. Drawings by Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, dated January 1966 (BAP).

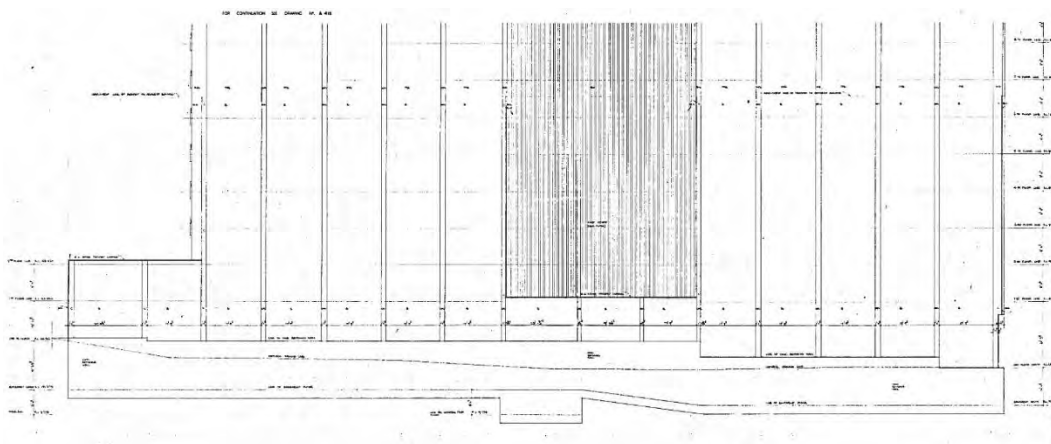


Figure 2. Lower part of the west elevation. Drawings by Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, dated January 1966 (BAP).

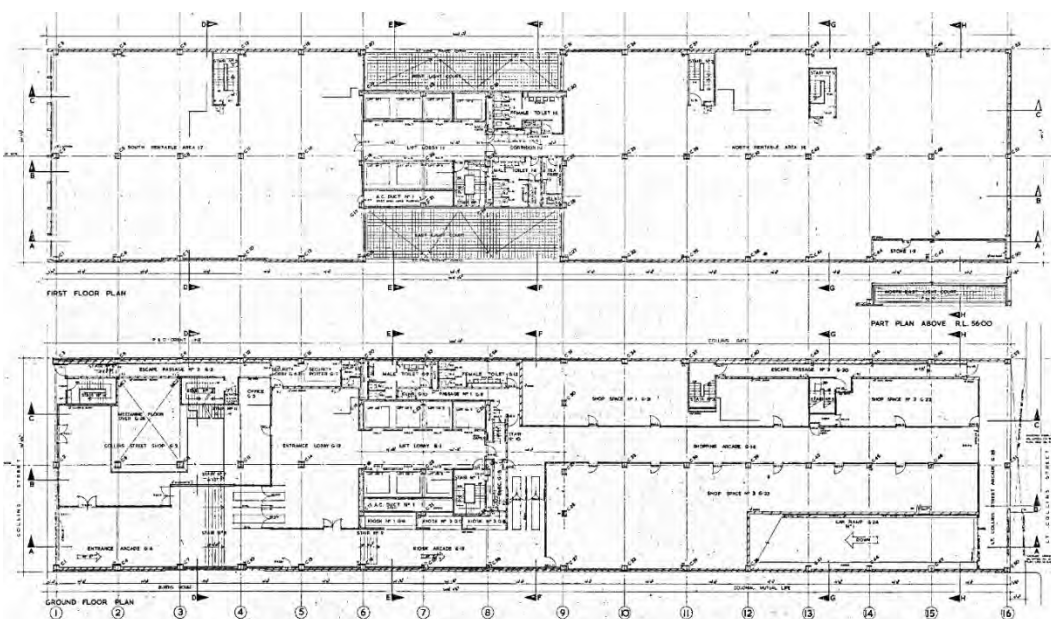


Figure 3. Ground floor plan (bottom) and first floor plan (top). Drawings by Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, dated December 1965 (BAP).



Figure 4. The newly completed building in 1968 (NLA, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, object 161643077).



Figure 5. Photo of the building published in the Sep/Oct 1969 edition of *Architect* (Sep-Oct 1969:25).



Figure 6. Photo of the Collins Street façade, published in 1970 (*Cross-Section*, No. 209, Apr 1970:3).



Figure 7. Part of the Collins Street entrance in 1975 (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H99.50/88).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former AMP Building at 344-350 Collins Street is a 16-storey commercial building located on the north side of Collins Street between Queen Street and Elizabeth Street. Constructed in 1966-68 to a design by architects Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

Rectangular in plan, the building has frontages to both Collins Street and Little Collins Street. The central core of the building, containing the lift lobby, is set back from adjoining buildings above the ground floor level, creating tall light wells to both the east and west sides of the building. A public car park in the basement is accessed from Little Collins Street, below a double-height podium which fronts the street.

The building is of concrete encased steel column and beam construction with brick side walls, and three internal rows of columns along the length of the building. The front façade is a grid-like curtain wall formed from generously spaced, slim precast concrete spandrels and mullions, which surround aluminium-framed glazing units with broad lower transom and fine central mullion. The rear façade faces north and incorporates rows of projecting precast concrete balconies with fine handrails, which provide some shade to the curtain wall of continuous glazing and creates a dominant horizontal emphasis. Facings to the precast concrete panels are of reconstructed stone and the same material is used to form a slotted service screen at the top floor of the building that sits flush with both the front and rear facades.

The lower Collins Street façade has been greatly modified and the original form and detailing is no longer identifiable. This includes both the ground level shopfronts and the first-floor set of windows.

INTEGRITY

The Former AMP Building, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building above street level, remains highly intact to its original construction in 1966-68. Works to the building at street level have altered the original design.

Overall, the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone alterations at street and first-floor level, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey commercial building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Former AMP Building at 344-350 Collins Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of 1960s to mid-1970s multi-storey commercial building design. This includes the contrasting fully glazed grid-like curtain walls of the front and rear facades and their associated detailing, including fine precast concrete spandrels and mullions to Collins Street and projecting precast concrete balconies which shade the continuous glazing of the rear façade. Despite modifications made to the lower two levels of the Collins Street façade, the upper facades of the Former AMP Building remain highly intact to their original design and can be clearly observed from Collins Street and Little Collins Street.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the Former AMP Building. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



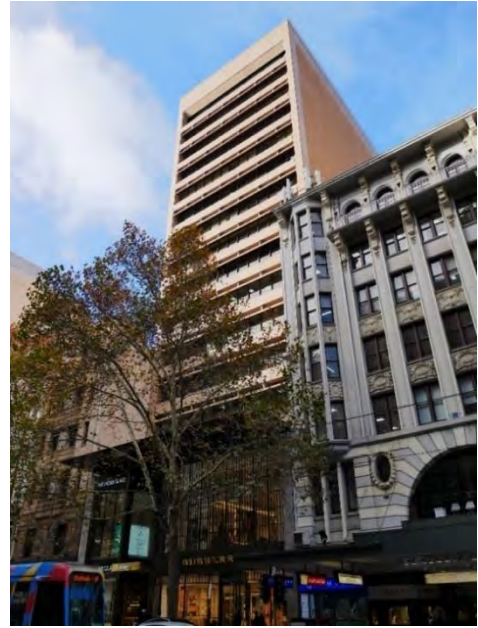
Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1974-73 included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



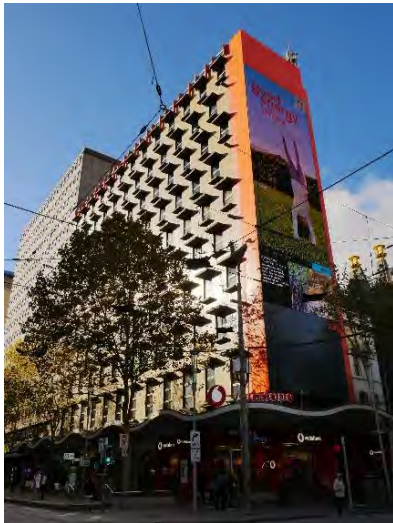
Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kollé & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kalle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building, 359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

As a fine, highly intact and highly representative example of Post-War Modernist commercial building, the Former AMP Building at 344-350 Collins Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey commercial buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne. Similar to the small number of 1960s to mid-1970s buildings presently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme – and a number of other examples identified above – the Former AMP Building clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*

Architect: September/October 1969.

Building Application Index (BAI), City of Melbourne.

Building Application Plans (BAP), City of Melbourne

City of Melbourne Maps (CoMMaps), Site Details.

Cross-Section: No. 209, April 1970.

Goad, Phillip, Ed. (2003), *Judging Architecture*, Royal Australian Institute of Architects (Victoria).

Murphy, Guy & Bryce Raworth (2012), 'Godfrey & Spowers' in Philip Goad & Julie Willis's (Eds.) (2012), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Port Melbourne.

National Library of Australia (NLA), images and photographers as cited.

Sands & McDougall Directories (S&Mc).

State Library of Victoria (SLV), picture collection, images and photographers as cited.

The Age.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage Review
1993** Ungraded

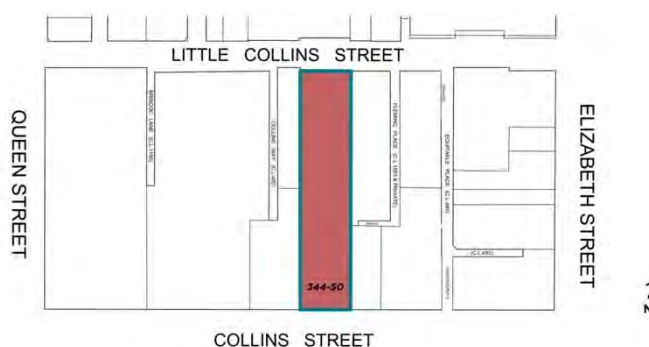
**Review of Heritage Overlay
Listings in the CBD 2002** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage Review
2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former AMP Building

PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street, a multi-storey office building constructed in 1966-68.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made to the street and first-floor level facades are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former AMP Building at 344-350 Collins Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed in 1966-68 to a design by Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, the Former AMP Building has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and the prestige afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

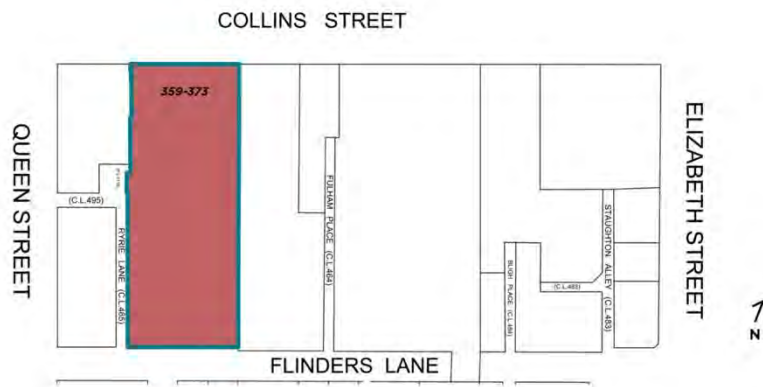
The Former AMP Building is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building. The building strongly reflects the style which was popular in the 1960s to the mid-1970s, particularly in central Melbourne. Constructed as a 16-storey building, the Former AMP Building clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a postwar structure, including two contrasting curtain walls – the front facade with fine spandrels and mullions and the rear façade with projecting balconies and

glazed wall behind – and the use of materials such as stone-faced precast concrete panels and aluminium-framed windows. These demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style (Criterion D).

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building [also known as Optus Centre (current name)]
STREET ADDRESS	359-373 Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	102092



SURVEY DATE: October 2019		SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage	
HERITAGE INVENTORY	No	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER GRADE	Ungraded
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Bates Smart & McCutcheon	BUILDER:	Not known
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	c1972-1975

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Buiness and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Office, Hotel, Studio, Caretaker, Smoking Room
1920s	Café/Restaurant, Office, Studio, Merchant, Bank
1960s	Retail, Office, Studio, Retail, Bank

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The building at 359-373 Collins Street, Melbourne was designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon for the Victorian headquarters of the Commonwealth Banking Corporation. Construction of the multi-storey tower was completed in 1975.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation building on the south side of Collins Street, between Queen and Elizabeth streets, was designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon (Figure 1). The major designer on the project was Robert Bruce (Goad 2004:205). The City of Melbourne received a building permit application in August 1971, with the total cost of the project estimated at \$17,442,000 (BAI). An article published in January 1972 reported that the 33-storey building, 'claimed as Melbourne's "largest" bank', would serve as the Victorian headquarters of the Commonwealth Banking Corporation (*Age*, 12 Jan 1972:21). Construction of the multi-storey tower was completed in 1975 and at the time of completion was the tallest building in Melbourne (NTAV 2014:53; Goad 2004:205, 208).

The Commonwealth Banking Corporation had occupied an earlier building on the site, built c1922. Following demolition of this earlier building, Bates Smart & McCutcheon also designed a temporary structure to accommodate the bank on site during the construction phase. This was completed by January 1972 (*Age*, 12 Jan 1972:21; S&Mc).

Architectural drawings by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, dated 1972, show the elevations and original form of the Collins Street entrance of the tower building (Figure 2 - Figure 4). Goad described the building's design (drawing similarities to Bates Smart & McCutcheon's design of 251-257 Collins Street), as being set back from Collins Street, with a 'strong horizontal emphasis that indicated

graphic trabeated construction' and glazing set back deeply from the face of the building, which were 'clear expressions of structure' (Goad 2004:205). At ground level, Goad noted that the tower broke the line of the 'street wall' in favour of the current Melbourne City Council building regulations for mini-plazas. The multi-level banking chamber 'took advantage of pedestrian movement between Flinders Lane and Collins Street', essentially continuing Melbourne's network of lanes and arcades within the building itself (Goad 2004:205). The building was clad with 'reconstructed granite-faced precast concrete wall units' (*Architect*, Nov/Dec 1974:8).

A recent low-scale addition has been constructed off the Collins Street façade, designed by architects Woods Bagot (Schiavello). In 2019 the building serves as the Optus Centre (CoMMaps).

Bates Smart & McCutcheon, architects

Bates, Smart & McCutcheon was formed when Osborn McCutcheon joined the existing firm of Bates & Smart in 1926. Bates & Smart had itself been born out of previous iterations of a firm that could be traced back to Reed & Barnes, making it one of the oldest practices in the country (Goad 2012:72). By the 1960s the firm had become one of Australia's largest architectural firms. It exists today as Bates Smart (Goad 2012:72).

During the 1930s, Bates, Smart & McCutcheon had earned a reputation for designing Georgian-style residences, but also went on to win RVIA awards for their work on the AMP Building in Collins Street (1926-31), Buckley & Nunn Building in Bourke Street (now David Jones, 1933), and the Second Church of Christ Scientist in Camberwell (1936-37).

By the 1950s, Bates, Smart & McCutcheon had become Australia's 'expert' in high-rise office buildings design (Goad 2012:73). Much of their work at this time was large structures with glass curtain walls. In Melbourne this was exemplified by ICI House, which broke the city's existing 132-foot (40m) height limit in 1955-8 (Goad 2012:73). Other work completed by the firm in the 1950s included the first of the Sleigh Buildings at 158-172 Queen Street, Melbourne (1953-55 & 1964), Union House at 43-51 Queen Street, Melbourne (1957) and the AMP Building at 402-408 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne (1956-58).

Bates, Smart & McCutcheon continued to expand into the 1960s and 70s, with its design approach shifting from glazed curtain walls to facades of artificial stone or prefabricated concrete panels. Works in Melbourne during this period included AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, Bourke Street (1965-69) in association with US firm, Skidmore Owings and Merrill; the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61); the South British Insurance Company Ltd Building at 155-161 Queen Street (1961-62) and the Methodist Church Centre at 130-134 Little Collins Street (1966-67) with F C Armstrong.

In the 1970s the firm designed the Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street, Melbourne (c1972-75); the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73) and the double tower and plaza complex of Collins Place, Collins Street (1970-80), undertaken in collaboration with international architecture practice, I M Pei. Other notable works by the firm include the large collaborative designs of Melbourne Central with Kisho Kurokawa (1983-92) and Federation Square with Lab Architecture Studio (1997-2002) (Goad 2012:74).



Figure 1. Illustration of the proposed multi-storey building by Bates Smart & McCutcheon (c.1970) (Goad 2004; *Architect*, Sep/Oct 1970:12).



Figure 2. North elevation to Collins Street (left) and south elevation to Flinders Lane (right). Drawings by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, dated January 1972 (BAP).

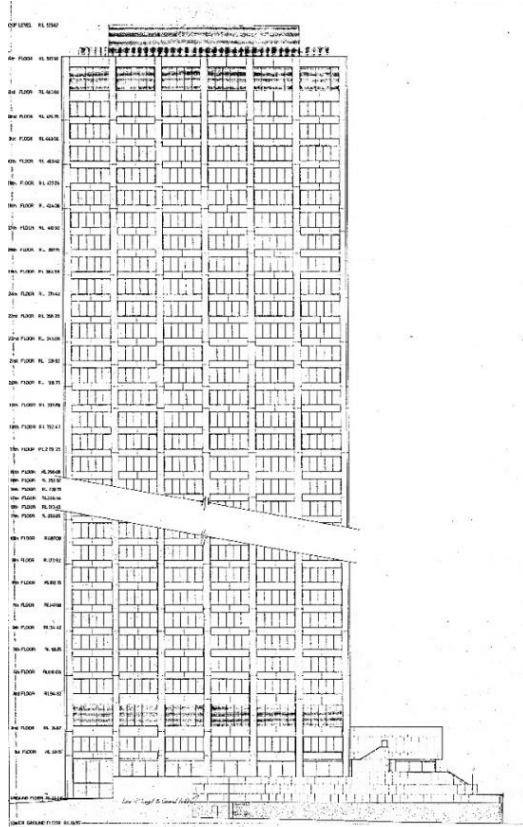


Figure 3. West elevation. Drawing by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, dated January 1972 (BAP).

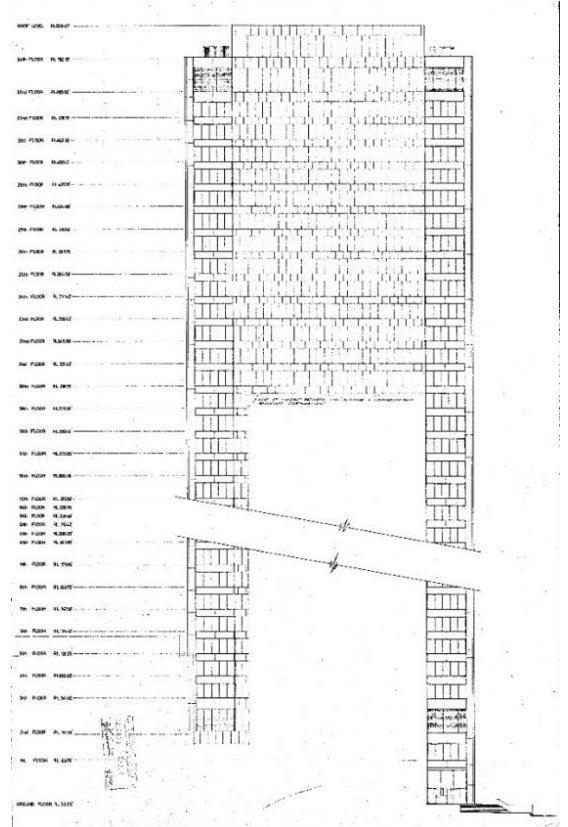


Figure 4. East elevation. Drawing by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, dated January 1972 (BAP).



Figure 5. Illustration of the building published in the Nov/Dec 1974 issue of *Architect*, advertising reconstructed granite cladding by Melocco.



Figure 6. The tower under construction; photo dated c1975 (SLV, Hans Bonney, photographer, Image H2009.50/262).



Figure 7. Interior of the completed banking chamber (Goad 2004:209).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street is a 33-storey commercial building located on the south side of Collins Street between Queen Street and Elizabeth Street. The building has frontages to both Collins Street and Flinders Lane and is accessible from both frontages. Constructed from c1972-75 to a design by Bates, Smart & McCutcheon, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

The Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building is of rectangular form with narrow façades to Collins Street and Flinders Lane. The building is set back approximately 8 metres from Collins Street – a feature for which additional height to the building was allowed. The building is also set back from the adjoining building to the west (Ryrie Lane at the rear) and partially set back from the adjoining building to the east (Fulham Place at the rear). The main tower building is set well back from Flinders Lane, with a double-level podium occupying this space. The podium comprises access stairs leading to the elevated Collins Street entry to the east and an access ramp to the basement carpark on the western boundary at Ryrie Lane.

The building is of concrete encased steel column and beam construction, with the trabeated structure clearly expressed on the north, south and west curtain wall facades. This results in a regular grid-like pattern across these facades, formed from reconstructed granite-faced precast concrete wall units. Wide spandrels, with rows of deeply recessed aluminium-framed glazing, sit flush with continuous vertical piers that rise uninterrupted from above street level. The grid-like patterning continues around the building to the corners of the east façade. Abutting an existing building on the adjoining site when the subject place was constructed, the eastern wall is primarily a plain façade.

A low-scale, double-storey structure has recently been built across the Collins Street façade at ground level, utilising the original eight-metre setback of the multi-storey building. This is a glazed structure with light framing and central projecting canopy. Alterations have also been made to the rear podium in Flinders Lane, however the general form has been retained.

INTEGRITY

The Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building above street level, remains highly intact to its original construction in c1972-75. A recent addition to the Collins Street frontage of the building at street level has altered the original design at this frontage.

Overall, the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone alterations at street level, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey commercial building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of a 1960s to mid 1970s multi-storey office building design. The building's three grid-like walls of clearly expressed structure, clad with precast granite-faced concrete panels, dominated the skyline when constructed as the tallest building in the CBD in the 1970s. Despite the redesign of the street-level facade, the dominant upper facades of the Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation building remain highly intact to their original design and can be clearly observed from Collins Street and Flinders Lane.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)

- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



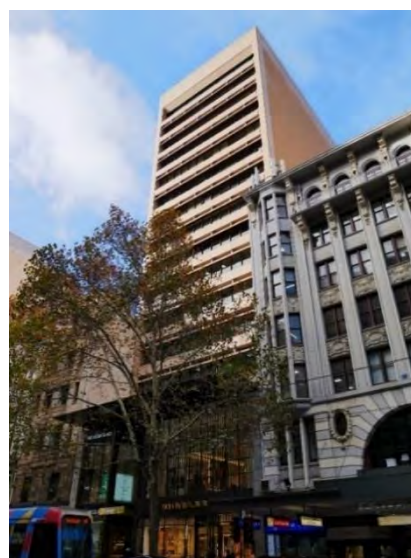
Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1974-73 included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street
(Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



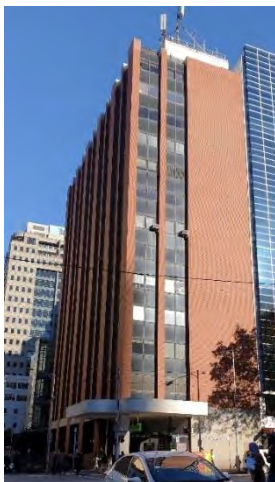
Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street
(Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (Perrot
Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre
McIntyre & Partners, c1972-73)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird &
Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen
Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

As a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building, the Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey commercial buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne. Similar to a number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings listed above, the subject building clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*

Architect: September/October 1970; November/December 1974.

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City of Melbourne Maps (CoMMaps), Site Details.

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Sands & McDougall Directories (S&Mc).

Schiavello, '367 Collins St', <<https://www.schiavello.com/construction/projects/commercial/367-collins-st>>, accessed 26 June 2019.

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The Age.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

**Review of Heritage
Overlay Listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

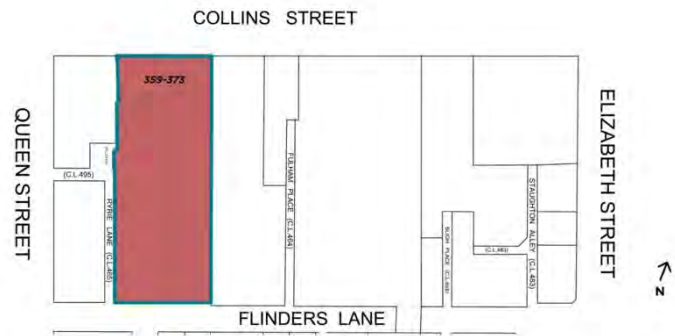
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building, 359-373 Collins Street, a multi-storey office building constructed c1972-75.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made to the lower levels are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed in c1972-75 to a design by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, the Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and the prestige afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

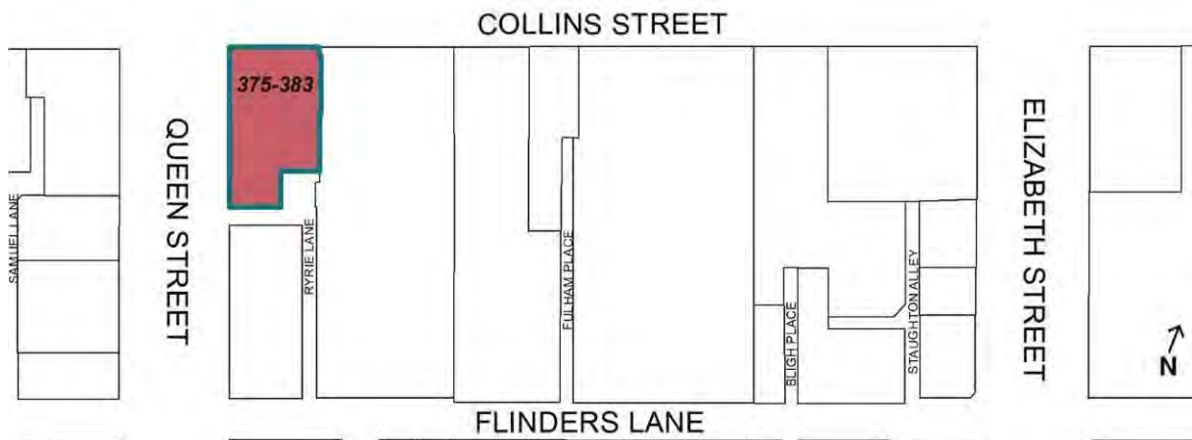
The Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building. The building strongly reflects the style which was popular in the 1960 to the mid 1970s, particularly in central Melbourne. Constructed as a 33-storey structure, the Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building clearly demonstrates typical

characteristics of a later postwar commercial building, including three grid-like walls of clearly expressed structure, and the use of materials such as granite-faced precast concrete panel cladding. These demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style (Criterion D).

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former Legal & General House
STREET ADDRESS	375-383 Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	102093



SURVEY DATE:	March 2019	SURVEY BY:	Context
HERITAGE INVENTORY	N/A	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Bernard Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking	FORMER GRADE	Ungraded
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	BUILDER:	E A Watts Pty Ltd
		DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1967

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Office
1920s	Office
1960s	Office

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

The former Legal & General House at 375-383 Collins Street, Melbourne, is a 17-storey postwar office building built in 1967 to a design by architects Bernard Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking in the Post-War Modernist style. The building opened in 1967 for Legal & General Assurance Society Limited and was occupied by that company until 1993. *It continues to be used as offices today.*

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17).

Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The subject site of 375-383 Collins Street forms part of Crown Allotment 18, Block 4, first purchased by Arthur Willis for J McIntyre for £42 in 1837 ('Plan of Melbourne' 1838; DCLS 1839). By the late nineteenth century Block 4 was developed with mostly masonry buildings of three to five storeys.

Commercial businesses, predominantly in the fields of banking and insurance, populated Block 4 and continued to make up the dominant industry in that block into the twentieth century (Mahlstedt Map no 4, 1888). In 1887 a building permit was registered for the subject site for the construction of an eight-storey building for merchant F W Prell. David Mitchell oversaw the construction of the substantial building to the design of architect Francis Maloney White (MCC registration no 3102, as cited in AAI, record no 71566; Broome et al 2016:2). The building, occupied by several commercial agencies, including North British & Mercantile Insurance, was one of three highly ornate buildings known as Prell's Buildings, all built on prominent corner sites with Queen Street frontages, constructed by Mitchell and designed by White (see Figure 1) (Broome et al 2016). At the time of their construction, Prell's Buildings were amongst Melbourne's tallest (*Bendigo Advertiser* 15 June 1888:3; Mahlstedt Map section 1 no 15, 1910). In 1929 the building on the subject site was extensively remodelled for the Australian Provincial Assurance Association (APA) (*Argus* 14 September 1929:6). As part of the remodelling, the APA erected a tower atop the building that was described, following its completion,

as a new landmark on the site of Prell's Building (see Figure 2) (*Argus* 28 June 1930:6). The building became known as the Australian Provincial Assurance (APA) Building during this time. APA occupied the ground floor of the building and leased the above ground storeys to commercial tenants, many of whom were insurance or banking organisations (S&Mc 1940).

Prior to construction of the subject building, English company Legal & General Assurance Society Limited acquired the 1887 building in 1954 to commence operations in Australia (CT:V6002 F251). In 1955, the Legal & General Assurance Society Limited and APA occupied the ground floor of the 1887 building (S&Mc 1955). The following year Legal & General Assurance established its first Australian branch at 375-383 Collins Street, which opened in 1956, and the building became known as the Legal & General Building (*Age* 6 August 1955:27; *Sydney Morning Herald* 31 December 1955:25; S&Mc 1960). Legal & General retained ownership of the subject site until 1993 (CT:V6002 F51).

Legal & General Assurance Society Limited was formed in London in 1836 as the New Law Life Assurance Society, restricted to those in the legal profession. The name was changed to Legal & General Life Assurance Society in the 1920s when policies were made available to the general public. The society expanded in the United Kingdom and acquired a number of overseas life assurance companies, and by 1956, Legal & General Assurance reputedly had the largest ordinary insurance branch business in the United Kingdom. By the 1960s, the company's assets were valued at £1 billion (Legal & General Group 2019; *Age* 4 February 1956:5).

Legal & General Assurance Society Ltd announced the establishment of its first life assurance branch in Australia, in Melbourne, in 1956 (*Age* 4 February 1956:5). The company's subsidiary, the Gresham Fire & Accident Society, had operated in Australia from 1912.

Legal & General Assurance's business invested several million pounds in Australia and grew exponentially in the late 1950s. Between 1946 and 1958, the Society's assets increased from £100 million to £400 million (*Age* 14 January 1959:6). The Society was formally admitted to the Life Offices' Assurance Society for Australasia in 1966 (*Age* 21 December 1966:11).

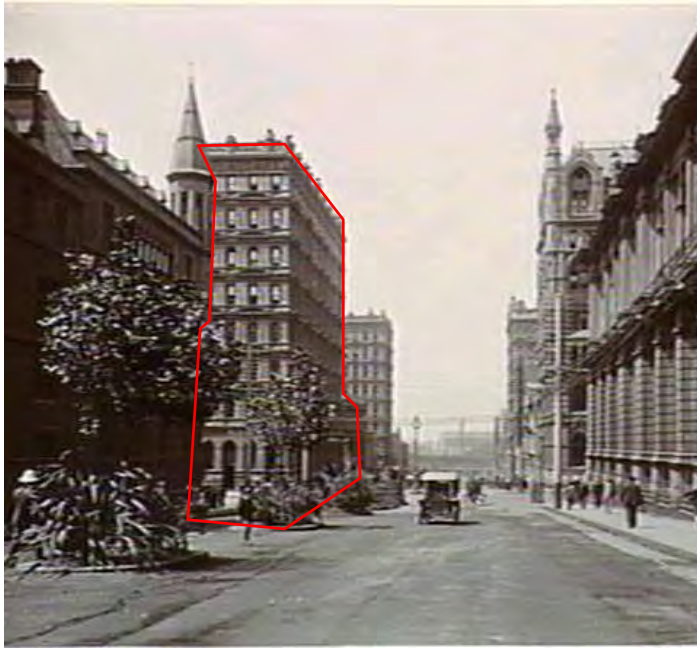


Figure 1. Queen Street looking south showing Prell's Buildings, c1913-1914. The Prell's building that was formerly located on the subject site is outlined in red. (Source: SLV)



Figure 2. Prell's Building on the subject site during remodelling in 1929. (Source: *Argus* 14 September 1929:6)

In 1965 Legal & General Assurance filed a building application for the erection of a new building valued at £1,300,000 on the subject site (MBAI). In 1966-67 E A Watts constructed the 17-storey building, named Legal & General House, to a design by architects Bernard Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hockey (see Figure 3) (CoMMaps). During its construction, an article in the *Age* described the building as contributing to Melbourne's changing skyline, because of its height and the coppery glow of its façade, designed for sun and glare protection. The building's heat-reflecting glass cladding, an innovation at the time, incorporated a transparent gold coating capable of resisting and reflecting infrared sun waves (*Age* 25 October 1966:13). The newspaper article noted that the new building would feature a paved and landscaped forecourt set 20 feet back from Collins Street, and be faced

with white mosaic tiles articulated with black mosaic tile recess



(see

Figure 4) (*Age* 25 October 1966:13).

In 1967, space in Legal & General House was advertised for lease. Each level was air-conditioned and comprised 6315 square feet of space on each floor (*Age* 28 June 1967:11). By 1970, the majority of the floors had been filled by multiple commercial enterprises, many belonging to insurance and brokering agencies. Legal & General Assurance Society Ltd occupied the ground floor and Capel Courts Securities Ltd occupied several other floors within the building in 1974 (S&Mc 1970, 1974). Internal partitions were added and removed within the building from the 1960s through to the 1980s (MBAI).

In 1984 the entrance and lobby were refurbished, and a canopy erected to cover exposed decorative beams within the courtyard (MBAI). The ground-level façade was faced with marble cladding the following year, concurrent with alterations to the ground and seventh floors (MBAI).

The Legal & General Assurance Society Ltd became a wholly owned division of the Legal & General Group in the 1970s. In 1991, the company decided to abandon the Melbourne property market and concentrate on its portfolio in Sydney, Brisbane and possibly Canberra (*Age* 23 October 1991:24). In October 1991, the Legal & General Group announced that it planned to sell Legal & General House, its last remaining Melbourne building, for between \$15 and \$20 million (*Age* 23 October 1991:24). Director of Legal & General noted that the building was offered at a 'realistic price' because it required extensive refurbishment (*Age* 23 October 1991:24). With its headquarters in London, Legal & General continues to operate today, offering investment management, lifetime mortgages, pensions, annuities, life assurance, and general insurance (Legal & General Group 2019).

The subject building was sold in 1993 to Perpetual Nominees Ltd, which subsequently carried out a series of refurbishment works to the building with the bulk of work taking place in 1998. It is likely that components of the 1998 refurbishment involved the clear green tinted glazing clad to the ground level and an open balcony with glass balustrade, metal railing (CT:6002 F251; CoMMaps).

Offices in the building continued to be occupied by the legal and financial professions through the 1990s-2000s (*Age* 15 May 1995:25; 23 December 2000:80).

The building presently houses offices occupied by 36 businesses (CoMMaps).

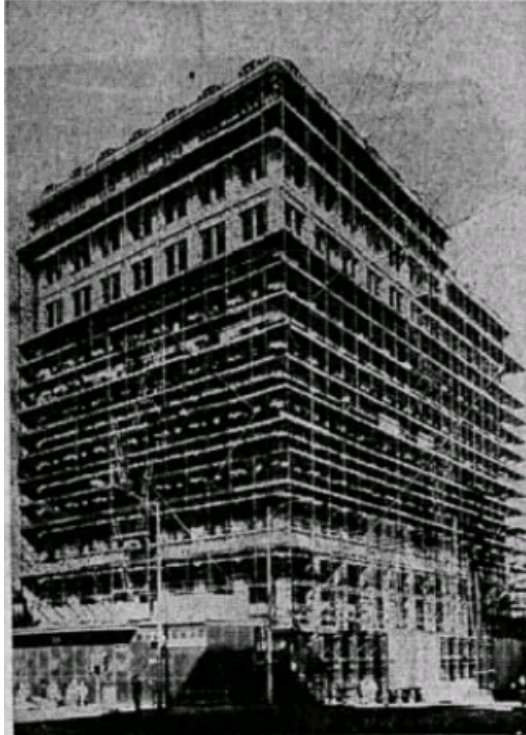


Figure 3. New Legal & General House under construction, 1966. (Source: *Age* 25 October 1966:13)



Figure 4. Photograph showing Legal & General House completed. (Source: Crothers 1967, SLV)

Bernard Evans (Bernard Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking), architect

Bernard Evans (1905-1981) was an architect, builder and civic leader. Born in Manchester, his family emigrated in 1913 and Bernard worked for his father as a designer and builder, studied at the Working Man's College (now RMIT University) and established the Premier Building Company in 1928. His expansive career spanned a period as Melbourne City Councillor (1949-73) and Lord Mayor (1959, 1960). Evans was known for his work on flats and public housing. His work in the 1950s and 60s was concerned with office buildings and the Emerald Hill Court Estate in South Melbourne. His impressive Ampol House (1958) with the spiral staircase, at the corner of Grattan Street and Elizabeth Street, was demolished in 2012 (Dunstan 2012:237-8).

Evans campaigned for the removal of the 40-metre (132-foot) height limit for buildings in the city centre. His architectural firm of Bernard Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking Pty Ltd was disbanded in 1975 following Evans' resignation in 1971. A larger than life figure, he was knighted in 1962 but faced allegations of conflict of interest with his private companies and his role as a Councillor for the City of Melbourne (Dunstan 2012:237-8).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The former Legal & General House at 375-383 Collins Street, Melbourne, is a 17-storey reinforced concrete frame commercial building, originally constructed in 1967 and refurbished at ground level in

1998. The building exhibits characteristics of the Post-War Modernist style, evident in its strong modular format reflective glass cladding. Located on a prominent corner with frontages to both Queen Street and Collins Street, the building has an 'L-shape' footprint and also has a rear frontage to Ryrie Lane.

The ground level main entry to the building is on the Queen Street frontage, enclosed by a projecting steel and glass 'loggia' that occupies the original set back space to the Queen Street boundary. At the top of the building there is a thin 'floating' roof slab supported by columns aligned with the main structural grid.

The Legal & General House was notable for being '...faced with white mosaic tiles articulated with black mosaic tile recess(es)', the glass used in its windows that featured '...transparent gold coating capable of resisting and reflecting infra-red sun waves' and other aspects of its design and planning including the '... paved and landscaped forecourt set 20 feet back from Collins Street'. The mosaic tiling and tinted glazing remain extant. Between the bottom and top levels, the façade exhibits a robust grid pattern created with three-dimensional square panels clad in white mosaic tiles, contrasted with a recessed black mosaic tiled surfaces. Each module of white mosaic-tiled square precast concrete frame surrounds a copper mosaic-tiled internal panel surrounding paired windows with gold-tinted glazing.

The overall strong modularity of the facades of the building also continued down to the ground plane as rectangular columns, so that the facade at street level was dominated by the double height colonnade (see figure 4). While still extant, the ground floor colonnade is now partially overlaid by the recent glass cladding.

In what is understood to be major components of its 1998 refurbishment, the ground level to the Queen Street and Collins Street frontages are clad in clear green tinted frameless glazing fixed to the reinforced concrete structure, and with thin horizontal aluminium spandrels. On the south-western corner is a small, open balcony with glass balustrade, metal railing and compact canopy overhead supported by two squat, rectangular concrete columns.

INTEGRITY

The former Legal & General House at 375-383 Collins Street is highly intact with few changes visible to original fabric. Above the ground and first floor levels, the building retains its original modular pattern of fenestration, original stylistic details, and with original materials to wall surfaces and glazing. The thin 'floating' roof slab supported by columns is also retained. The distinctive ground floor colonnade has been partially obscured by clear and green tinted frameless glazing with thin horizontal aluminium spandrels, reducing the visual impact of the double height colonnade, although at street level on the southern and eastern elevations the original rectangular concrete columns are extant. The original setback from Queen Street, a notable feature of the original building design, has also been partially enclosed by a projecting steel and glass 'loggia'. The building also retains its original built form and scale, configuration, and materiality. Overall the building has high integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The 1950s saw the development of the modern multi-story office building in Melbourne, often built for insurance companies or finance companies, or for professional offices. From this time through to the mid 1970s, the Post-War Modernist style enjoyed widespread popularity, particularly for high-rise

commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne. Reinforced concrete frames provided the structural systems, allowing the façade to be clad in a non-load bearing curtain wall. In early examples, curtain walls were typically fully glazed, while in later examples, precast concrete was used to achieve variety of expression and flexibility of form, led by Bates Smart McCutcheon's South British Building of 1960-62.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the Royal Insurance Group building. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)

Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)

Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)

Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)

BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 19741-73 included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street (Yuncken Freeman, 196)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street
(Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



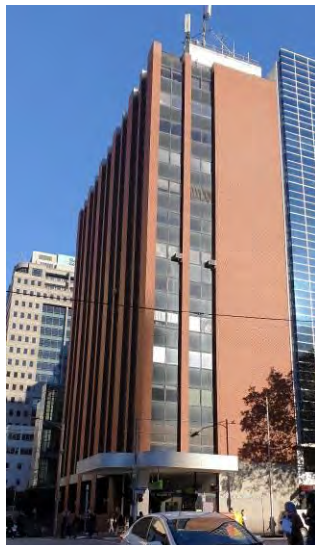
Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street
(Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street
(Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building,
359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon,
c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan
Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen
Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

In its early use of a non-loadbearing precast concrete panel façade system, the former Legal & General House at 375-383 Collins Street is comparable to a number of other buildings in central Melbourne constructed at a similar time. It is particularly comparable with the Royal Insurance Group Building at 430-442 Collins Street (interim HO1010) and the Scottish Amicable Building at 128-146 Queen Street (HO1213). It shares with these examples characteristics consistent with the Post-War Modernist style, including concrete post and slab construction, a non-loadbearing precast concrete panel façade with a repetitive modular geometry and a double or triple height street level undercroft and colonnade (altered for the subject building). The façade panels of the former Legal & General House have a more pronounced appearance than the abovementioned examples, although on close inspection reveal fine detailing in the mosaic-tiled wall surfaces.

The former Legal & General House is also comparable with other above buildings as an early example of a high-rise commercial building constructed following the abolition of the 40-metre height limit for buildings in the city centre.

The buildings above almost all share a history of construction for large insurance, assurance or banking organisations, and reflect the increased economic activity of the 1950s-70s in Melbourne that facilitated the construction of new bank buildings and the headquarters of national companies and corporations, including insurance companies. In Melbourne this activity was concentrated in the traditional centre of commerce and finance, west of Elizabeth Street in Queen and Collins streets, established from the late nineteenth century. The comparative examples including the subject building reflect this pattern of activity.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

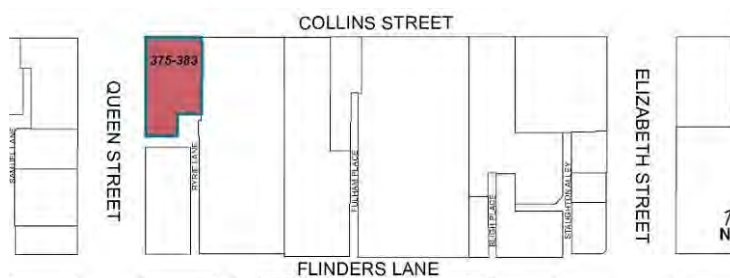
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Legal & General House



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The former Legal & General House at 375-383 Collins Street, Melbourne, built 1967, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- Original form and scale;
- Original modular composition of façades comprising precast concrete panels with inset windows;
- Original external materials including mosaic tiles, glazing, remaining fabric of the original colonnade; and,
- 'Floating' roof slab supported by columns.

Later alterations, particularly at street level, are not significant.

How it is significant?

The former Legal & General House at 375-383 Collins Street is of historic, representative, aesthetic and technical significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The former Legal & General House is historically significant for the evidence it provides of Melbourne's postwar development and rapid growth of corporate architecture. Constructed in 1967 to a design by architects Bernard Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, the building demonstrates the pattern in 1950s-70s' Melbourne of increased economic activity that facilitated the construction of new bank buildings and headquarters of national and international companies and corporations. Many of these companies were banking, insurance and assurance related. In Melbourne this activity was concentrated west of Elizabeth

Street in Queen and Collins streets from the late nineteenth century. Legal & General House is located within this precinct, occupying the site of the earlier 1887 Prell's Buildings. The Prell's Buildings were occupied by commercial agencies including North British & Mercantile Insurance, and the Australian Provincial Assurance Association and were owned by Legal & General Assurance Society from 1954. (Criterion A)

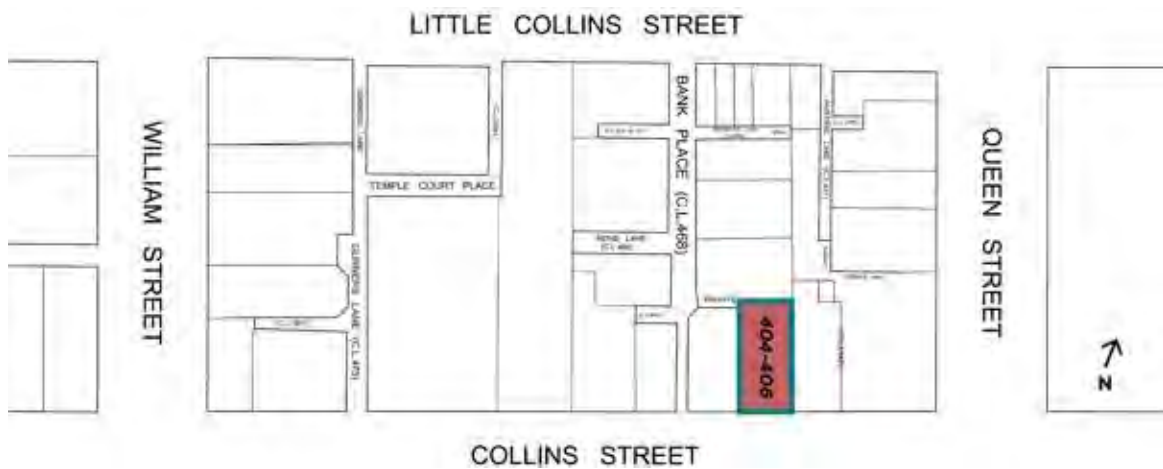
The former Legal & General House is significant as a highly intact example of a Post-War Modernist style commercial building in central Melbourne. The building exhibits key characteristics of the style, including concrete post and slab construction, a non-loadbearing precast concrete panel façade with a repetitive modular geometry, and a double height street level undercroft and colonnade. Although the undercroft and colonnade have been altered in part, and are partially obscured, original fabric remains which enables the original building form and style at ground level to be appreciated. The former Legal & General House is also representative of the early wave of high-rise commercial buildings constructed following the abolition of the 40-metre (132-foot) height limit for buildings in the city centre. (Criterion D)

The former Legal & General House is significant for the retention of fine original detailing, including original mosaic-tiled wall surfaces, and copper tinted glazing which was noted at the time of its completion as creating a coppery glow to the façade. The glazing was also noted at the time as innovative, designed for sun and glare protection. The building's height and the aesthetic effect of the glazing were key factors contributing to the building's distinctive aesthetic prominence in Melbourne's changing skyline. (Criteria E and F)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Atlas Assurance Building [also known as Praemium House]
STREET ADDRESS	404-406 Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	102129



SURVEY DATE: May 2017		SURVEY BY: Context	
HERITAGE INVENTORY	N/A	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	Yes – interim controls HO1008
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER GRADE	C
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	H Garnet Alsop & Partners	BUILDER:	E.A Watts
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1965)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1958-61

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Offices
1920s	Offices
1960s	Offices – services

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: refer to map

SUMMARY

The former Atlas Assurance Building is an 11-storey steel framed reinforced concrete office building. It is an early example of curtain wall construction. Designed by H Garnet Alsop & Partners, it was refurbished in 1993 with the facade refurbished in 2001. It features a bronze statue of Atlas at the front of the building that was associated with the Mutual Assurance Society of Victoria.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical

presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The site on which the former Atlas Assurance building is located was formerly occupied by the National Mutual Assurance Society of Victoria. The company began in 1869 in Melbourne and expanded across Australia throughout the early 1900s, amalgamating with many smaller mutual societies ('National Mutual Life Association of Australasia' 2011).

This steel-framed and reinforced concrete building was erected in 1957-8 for the Atlas Assurance Co Ltd by builders EA Watts Pty. Ltd., initially as basement, ground, mezzanine and six upper levels, to the design of architects and engineers' H Garnett Alsop & Partners. The estimated cost was £310,000. Within two years of completion, another four levels were added to take it to just over the city's building height limit of 40 metres (132 feet) (Figure 1). The same architects and builder were commissioned to complete the additional storeys.

The Atlas Company was a successful insurance company founded in 1808, with international branches that followed its establishment in Britain. 404-406 Collins Street was the company's head

office for both New Zealand and Australia. The building's construction coincided with the erection of a number of large insurance and assurance company offices nearby in what was Melbourne's financial centre.



Figure 1. 404-406 Colins Street in 1961. (Source: Fowler 1961, SLV H92.20/7132 [copyright](#))

Howard Garnet Alsop, architect

In March 1926, 17-year old Howard Garnet Alsop became an articled pupil of his architect uncle. Between 1930 and 1932, Alsop studied at the University of Melbourne Architectural Atelier and was registered as an architect in December 1931. After working as a draftsman with the Melbourne Electricity Supply Company he gained a position in the office of Godfrey and Spowers in 1934. (Built Heritage 2017).

In April 1936, Alsop left Melbourne for an extended overseas tour of England (where he worked in the London office of Wallis, Gilbert and Partners), Germany, Scandinavia, Russia and the USA. After returning to Australia in July 1937, he opened an office in Melbourne. His first client was Ivan Holyman of ANA, who commissioned the young architect to design the new airline terminal and hangar complex at Essendon Aerodrome. Subsequently appointed as the company's official architect, Alsop continued to design buildings for ANA until the airline merged with Ansett in 1957 (Built Heritage 2017).

In 1946, Alsop renamed his practice H Garnet Alsop and Partners, architects and engineers. The firm thrived in the postwar era, with Alsop's practice expanding to include factories, multi-storey city offices, and health-related projects. (Built Heritage 2017).

In 1978, Alsop retired as senior partner of the firm bearing his name. The business was carried on by four remaining partners: long-time staff members Hugh Pettit and Ian Freeland, and Alsop's two architect sons, David and John. Alsop's brother Dennis and other son Rodney also remained involved, in their respective capacities of consulting engineer and quantity surveyor. In 1982, the office merged with another long-running practice of pre-war origin, Leighton Irwin Australia, to create a new entity, Leighton Irwin-Garnet Alsop Pty Ltd, abbreviated as the Irwin-Alsop Group.

Howard Garnet Alsop died on 3 October 1994, aged 85 years. His practice continued to operate as the Irwin-Alsop Group until 2008, when it merged with Whitefield McQueen to form Whitefield

McQueen Irwin Alsop, or WMIA. The practice was subsequently absorbed in 2012 by Group GSA, a large international and multi-disciplinary practice that continues to this day (Built Heritage 2017).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The former Atlas Assurance Building is an 11-storey steel framed reinforced concrete office building with a basement and mezzanine. An early example of curtain wall construction, it incorporates marble spandrel panels within the facade design (Figure 1). The façade curtain wall system is constructed of anodised aluminium framed with marble spandrels and 'Polyglass' (originally specified as 'Thermopane') double glazed polished plate window units.

Internally, the service core is arranged along the west wall with stairs at either end and a light court midway on the east wall. Suspended plaster ceilings are used throughout with air-conditioning as an advance on the natural ventilation. The floor slabs are turned up at the façade edge to provide fire-rated spandrels to sill height with the sills finished in reconstructed granite.

The ground level has a grand folding glass door set across the entry at the west end of the façade, leading to a glass lobby screen and terrazzo paving beyond. It features a bronze statue of Atlas at the front of the building, originally part of the Mutual Assurance Society of Victoria building that formerly occupied the site.

INTEGRITY

The ground level interior and façade were modified in the 1980s and the statue of Atlas relocated to a niche at the west end (although a panel on the wall states that the statue is in its original position). However, the upper-level façade remains generally as built. The building was refurbished internally in 1993 and the façade in 2001.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The former Atlas Assurance Building at 404-406 Collins Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of 1950s multi-storey commercial building design.

There are a number of buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the former Atlas Assurance Building. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A comparative example in the City of Melbourne which is located immediately adjacent to the Hoddle Grid is ICI House, 1-4 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1958). This place is included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H0786).

Locally-significant places

Precinct Heritage Overlay

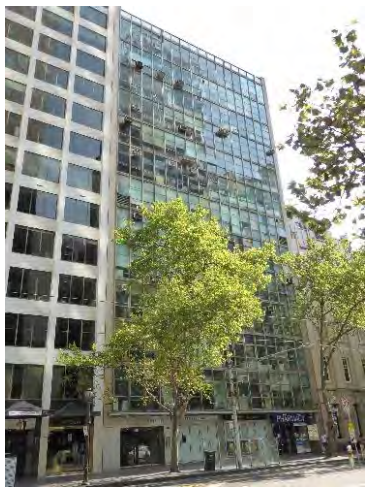
As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from the early postwar period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme. Those from the 1950s that are included in the Heritage Overlay are currently included as part of Heritage Precincts, but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places. These places are:



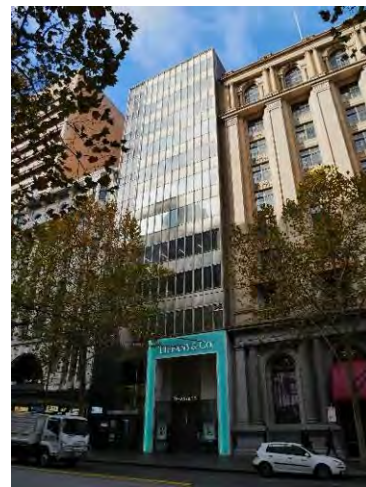
Former Gilbert Court, 100-104 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1954-55) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Hosie's Hotel, 1-5 Elizabeth Street & 288-290 Flinders Street (Mussen McKay & Potter, 1954-55), included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct as a Significant place.



Coates Building, 18-22 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1958-59) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Bank of Adelaide Building, 265-269 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, 1959-60) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Allans Building, 276-278 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Merton and Lobb with Charles N Hollinshed, 1956-57) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Significant place.

Other Examples

Despite the demolition of many 1950s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the initial period of curtain wall construction in Melbourne and demonstrate similar characteristics to the subject building. The following examples are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as individually significant heritage places as part of the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review:



Lauren's House, 414-416 Lonsdale Street (Harold Bloom, 1956) (Interim HO1254).



Former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange, 376 Flinders Lane (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1957).



Former London Assurance House, 468-470 Bourke Street (B Evans & Partners, 1960) (Interim HO1006).



Former AMP Building, 402-408 Lonsdale Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1956-59).



Former Ajax House, 103-105 Queen Street (HD Berry, 1956).



HC Sleigh Building, 166-172 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1953-55).



Coles & Garrard Building, 376-378 Bourke Street
(Meldrum & Noad, 1957).

Canton Insurance Building, 43-51 Queen Street (Bates
Smart & McCutcheon, 1957).

Analysis

404-406 Collins Street, has been refurbished at ground level and the interior, a common occurrence with many postwar office buildings. It is however more intact than its neighbour at 410 Collins Street and 170 Queen Street where there has been a complete renewal of the curtain wall façade. 404-406 Collins Street is still legible as a commercial office of the 1950s, retaining its façade and scale. It is an intact representative example of a 1950s office building and very few of these places are yet to be included on the Heritage Overlay.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

✓

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*

Fowler, Lyle 1961, 'Atlas Assurance building, 406 Collins Street', State Library of Victoria: Harold Paynting collection. H series, accessed online June 2019.

Goad, P 1999, *Melbourne Architecture*.

Goad, P & Willis, J(eds.) 2012, *An Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press.

Google Street View 2017, 404-406 Collins Street, Google Maps, accessed online 27 June 2017.

Lewis, Miles 2012 'Curtain Wall' in Goad, Philip & Willis, Julie (eds) 2012, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Marsden, Susan 2000, *Urban Heritage: the rise and postwar development of Australia's capital city centres*, Australian Council of National Trusts and Australian Heritage Commission, Canberra.

'National Mutual Life Association of Australasia (1869-)' 2011, via *Trove*, <https://nla.gov.au/nla.party-636066>, accessed online 12 June 2019.

National Trust Classification Report

National Trust of Australia Victoria (NTAV) 2014, *Melbourne's Marvellous Modernism*, National Trust (Victoria), Melbourne.

The following sources and data were used for this assessment (Graeme Butler, 2011). Note that the citation prepared in 2011 did not provide in text referencing.

Storey, Rohan 2008, 'Skyscrapers' in *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, <http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM01383b.htm>, accessed 13 June 2017.

General sources

The following data was typically drawn from:

Historic Buildings Preservation Council reports on the Melbourne Central Business District from the 1970s;

Melbourne City Council on-line i-Heritage database;

Mahlstedt fire insurance map series held in the State Library of Victoria collection and Melbourne University Archives;

Daily newspaper reports such as 'The Argus';

Australian Architecture Index (AAI), prepared by Professor Miles Lewis and others;

Melbourne City Council building application drawings and files held at Melbourne City Council and the Victorian Public Records Office.

Twentieth Century Architecture Register of Royal Australian Institute of Architects

Graeme Butler, 1982-3, Twentieth Century Architecture Register of Royal Australian Institute of Architects: cites Building Permit Applications;

Building Permit Applications

9/6/1957, 31535 £310,000 ;

24/10/1960, 34487 added storeys to 406, £238,000. (not at VPRO)

National Trust of Australia (Vic) File B5345

Contains article in Architecture in Australia June 1959 David Saunders, 'Office Buildings in Melbourne' examining recent office construction types and costs.

'Building Ideas' 1965 guide

March 1965: included on the architectural guide for the Australian architectural convention- 'Royal Exchange Assurance 406 Collins Street H. Garnet Alsop and Partners, Six storeys, 1958; additional four floors, 1961.

The Argus

Tuesday 3 February 1953 City Personal

Tuesday 10 February 1948 City Personal

Monday 15 September 1902

Sands & McDougall Melbourne or Victorian Directories

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** C

**Central City Heritage
Study Review 1993** C

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** C

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** C

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Atlas Assurance Building

PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The former Atlas Assurance building at 404-406 Collins Street, Melbourne, completed in 1958-1961 to a design by H Garnet Alsop.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing; and
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations, particularly at street level, are not significant.

How it is significant?

The former Atlas Assurance building at 404-406 Collins Street is of historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The former Atlas Assurance building is historically significant for its association with postwar development, and with the expansion of large companies undertaking construction and naming rights of new city office buildings as a form of promotion and fund investment. A related object, the Federation-era statue of Atlas is historically significant as an artefact from the Mutual Assurance Society of Victoria that occupied the same site. (Criterion A)

The former Atlas Assurance building is significant as a relatively intact, curtain-walled office building from the postwar period and demonstrating the style embraced by local architects by the late 1950s. In

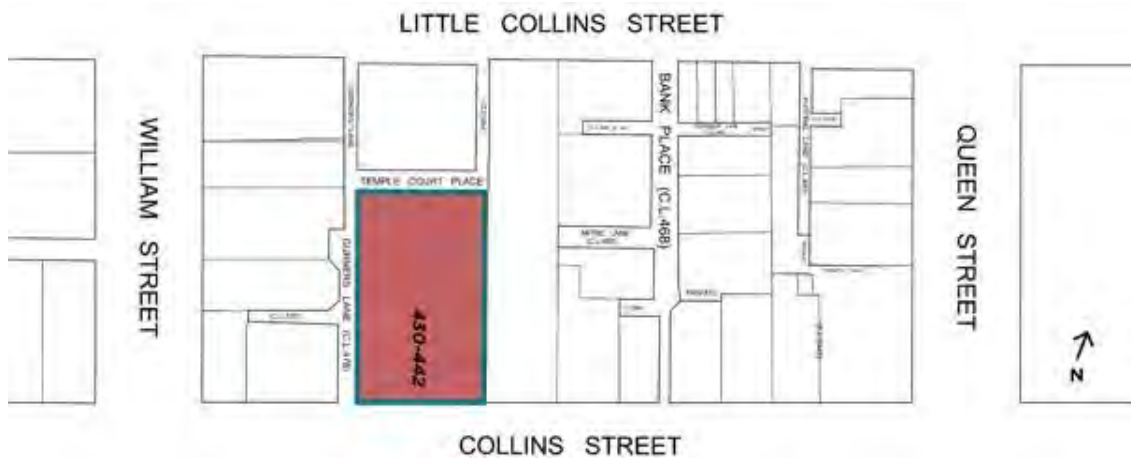
particular it employs a curtain-wall façade that makes the transition from the all-glass wall to the combination of solid spandrels of masonry, coloured glass or enameled metal sheeting of the 1960s. (Criterion D)

Aesthetically, the former Atlas Assurance building presents a sealed aluminium-framed curtain wall just a few years after the first multi-storey glass box was built in Australia. The use of marble spandrels on the curtain wall and granite at the base of the building emulated in a modern manner the stone clad classical facades favoured previously by financial institutions. Attributes of the building that demonstrate aesthetic value include the façade curtain wall system with anodised aluminium frames with marble spandrels and 'Polyglass' double glazed polished plate windows, all of which were remarked upon in the architectural periodical *Cross-section*. (Criterion E)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Royal Insurance Group building
STREET ADDRESS	430-442 Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	102124



SURVEY DATE: May 2017		SURVEY BY: Context	
HERITAGE INVENTORY	N/A	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	Yes – interim controls HO1010
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER GRADE	A
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Yuncken Freeman	BUILDER:	E A Watts Pty Ltd
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1965)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1966

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Hotel
1920s	Hotel
1960s	Office

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

The Royal Insurance Group building is a 17-storey modern office building designed by Yuncken Freeman Architects and built in 1966. It represents the continuing importance of the banking, finance and insurance industries in the remaking of Melbourne in the postwar period.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding,

screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17).

Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

In 1860, Edward Scott purchased the Clarendon Hotel and constructed the much grander Scott's Hotel on the site. After being purchased by the Royal Insurance Co. in 1961, Scott's Hotel was demolished the following year to make way for the current office tower (Spicer 2008). The Royal Insurance Company Ltd was established in London in 1845. By the 1960s, they had built up national head offices, branches and subsidiaries in Australia.

The company's new head office was designed by Yuncken Freeman Architects Pty. Ltd., and constructed by builders, E A Watts Pty Ltd. The total cost was estimated at £3 million.

Yuncken Freeman was awarded the Victorian Architecture Medal in 1967 for 430-442 Collins Street. The building in 1967 can be seen in Figure 1. The building is included on the Australian Institute of Architects Twentieth Century Buildings Register.



Figure 1. Royal Insurance Group building in 1967. (Source: Fowler 1967, SLV H92.20/9742 [copyright](#)).

Yuncken Freeman, architects

In the 1960s Melbourne-based practice Yuncken Freeman was one of the largest architectural firms in Australia, with a reputation for modern, high quality design and meticulous detailing. The firm originated in 1933 when Otto Abrecht Yuncken (1903-1951) and brothers John (1898-1962) and Tom Freeman (1904-1971) set up practice. In the 1930s the firm's work concentrated on hospital design and high-quality residential work. The commercial and corporate side of the business was built by Barry Patten (1927-2003) and John Gates (1924-1996), when they joined the firm as partners in 1951. Yuncken Freeman was the most successful and prolific architectural practice during the 1960s and 70s, designing many award-winning office buildings in the city. These included Eagle House at 473 Bourke Street, in 1971, (VHR1807, HO901) the BHP tower at 130-148 William Street (VHR1699, HO767) and the Royal Insurance building at 430-442 Collins Street (1965). Yuncken Freeman had an unequalled national reputation for superb architectural detailing and classically simple forms. The firm continued until the late 1980s, completing work for the University of Melbourne, amongst many large institutional and corporate clients (Goad & Willis eds., 2012:781-2).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Royal Insurance Company head office is a 17-storey office building with three basement levels of parking and ground level retail. Designed by Yuncken Freeman Architects it was built in 1965. The building was awarded the RVIA Medal for outstanding building of the year in 1967. It was refurbished between 1994-1996.

Reconstructed black granite gives the tower its characteristic dark profile where the stone grains are cast into pre-glazed concrete panels with structural ribs at the vertical joints. The separation of each component, by sophisticated detailing, follows the Modernist principles of the building as an assembly of functional parts rather than a decorated monolith.

The building has a podium with giant colonnades that transition smoothly to the tower above. This remains legible across the façades as a series of tall plate glass windows. Internally, the lofty space created was used skilfully to accommodate a mezzanine level.

INTEGRITY

The building was refurbished in 1994-1996 but still retains its integrity from the exterior.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Royal Insurance Group building is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of 1960s to mid-1970s multi-storey building design. The structure, including the form at street level, remains highly intact to its original design.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the Royal Insurance Group building. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 19741-73 included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street
(Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



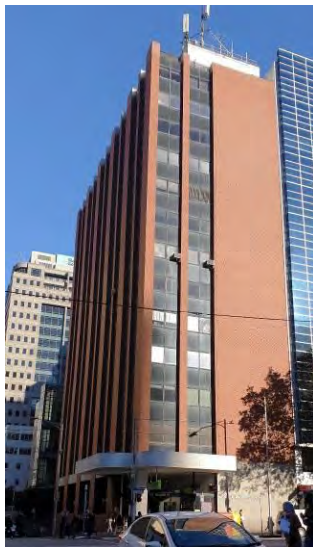
Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street
(Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street
(Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building, 359-373 Collins Street
(Bates Smart & McCutcheon, c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street
(Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

Yuncken Freeman's contribution to the design of commercial office building's in Melbourne is unparalleled as they continued to define and re-define the way in which office buildings were formed and the expression of their facades presented. This has been recognised by numerous architectural awards. 430-442 Collins Street has survived relatively intact and continues to demonstrate the aesthetic values of its time.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

✓

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Clinch, R J 2012, 'The places we keep: the heritage studies of Victoria and outcomes for urban planners', PhD thesis, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, The University of Melbourne.

Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*

Goad, P & Willis, J (eds.) 2012, *An Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press

Fowler, Lyle 1967, 'Royal Insurance Group building', State Library of Victoria: Harold Paynting collection. H series, accessed online June 2019.

Marsden, Susan 2000, *Urban Heritage: the rise and postwar development of Australia's capital city centres*, Australian Council of National Trusts and Australian Heritage Commission, Canberra.

Spicer, Christopher J 2008, 'Scott's Hotel' *eMelbourne*, School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, <http://www.emelbourne.net.au/>, accessed 21 June 2017.

The following sources and data were used for this assessment (Graeme Butler, 2011). Note that the citation prepared in 2011 did not provide in text referencing.

General sources

Historic Buildings Preservation Council reports on the Melbourne Central Business District from the 1970s;

Melbourne City Council on-line i-Heritage database;

Mahlstedt fire insurance map series held in the State Library of Victoria collection and Melbourne University Archives;

Australian Architecture Index (AAI), prepared by Professor Miles Lewis and others;

Melbourne City Council building application drawings and files held at Melbourne City Council and the Victorian Public Records Office.

Historic Buildings Preservation Council

Keith and John Reid, CBD Study Area 7 Historic Buildings Preservation Council, 1976

State Library of Victoria collection

Royal Insurance Group office building, 430-442 Collins Street, Melbourne [picture]

* Author/Creator: Wolfgang Sievers 1913-2007;

* Contributor(s): Yuncken Freeman Architects;

* Date(s): 1965

Part of a series showing immaculate interiors, furnishings and spaces

Twentieth Century Architecture Register

Graeme Butler, 1982-3, Twentieth Century Architecture Register of Royal Australian Institute of Architects: architects as Yuncken Freeman Architects Pty. Ltd.; RAI (Vic) medal 1967 General

Building; Building Permit Application 17/8/1962, 35720; 9/2/1965 for signs indicating open; RAIA (vice) Library of Works card; H. Weston, Summary of Awards for Architecture, report to the R.A.I.A (Victoria) on awards given by the R.A.I.A. (Vic.) and R.V.I.A., (unpublished): 4; periodical articles 1/2/1965 (illus.), 1/5/1967. Est Cost £1,690,000; Roderick Ross & Associates consulting mechanical engineers; Frank C Dixon structural engineer; Lincolne Demaine Scott as electrical engineers; Rider Hunt & Partners QS. Panels have reconstructed black granite finish; typical floor area 12,036 square feet; floor to floor 12'.

Victorian Year Book (VYB) 1972: 662

National Trust of Australia (Vic):430-444 Collins Street, MELBOURNE, Melbourne City

File Number: B6854

Sands & McDougall Melbourne or Victorian Directories

Where required directory extracts were obtained chiefly from Sands & McDougall Melbourne or Victorian Directories dating from the 1850s to 1974.

(D1961 430-444 Scott's Hotel, Gullifer, Miss H confectioner, Mitchell's Dry Cleaning, W Parke Shoe repair, D.J. Buchanan)

Other sources

Goad, P., 1999 *Melbourne Architecture*

Goad, P. & Willis, J.(eds.), 2012, *An Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press

Marsden, Susan 2000, *Urban Heritage: the rise and postwar development of Australia's capital city centres*, Australian Council of National Trusts and Australian Heritage Commission, Canberra.

National Trust of Victoria, Australia, 2014, *Melbourne's Marvellous Modernism, A Comparative Analysis of Post-War Modern Architecture in Melbourne's CBD, 1955 -1975*

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** B

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** B

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** B

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** A

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Royal Insurance Group Building



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Royal Insurance Group Company's head office at 430-442 Collins Street, Melbourne, completed in 1966 and designed by Yuncken Freeman.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing; and
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations, particularly at street level, are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Royal Insurance Group building at 430-442 Collins Street is of local historic, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The Royal Insurance Group building is historically significant for its association with the rapid growth of high-rise office buildings in the 1960s-mid 1970s postwar period, and with the expansion of large companies undertaking construction and naming rights of new city office buildings as a form of promotion and fund investment. (Criterion A)

The Royal Insurance Group building is a fine, intact and representative example of a modern office tower, many of which were designed by the prominent architectural practice of Yuncken Freeman during the 1960s. As one of the largest architectural firms in Australia, with a reputation for modern, high quality design and meticulous detailing, Yuncken Freeman were one of the most successful and prominent

architectural practices during the 1960s and 70s. The Royal Insurance Company's head office building is a fine example of its class, having retained most of its original external features. (Criterion D)

The Royal Insurance Group building is aesthetically significant for its attributes that include the black granite pre-glazed concrete panels that are expressed in the façade, its podium level of tall glazing carried on columns and its mezzanine level. The aesthetic value of the building is expressed through its highly repetitive façade reflecting the construction system but exploiting this through refined detailing of the jointing design and the colour and finish of the concrete panels. The Royal Insurance Group building is recognised through the awarding of the Victorian Architecture Medal in 1967 and by inclusion on the Australian Institute of Architects Twentieth Century Buildings Register. (Criterion E)

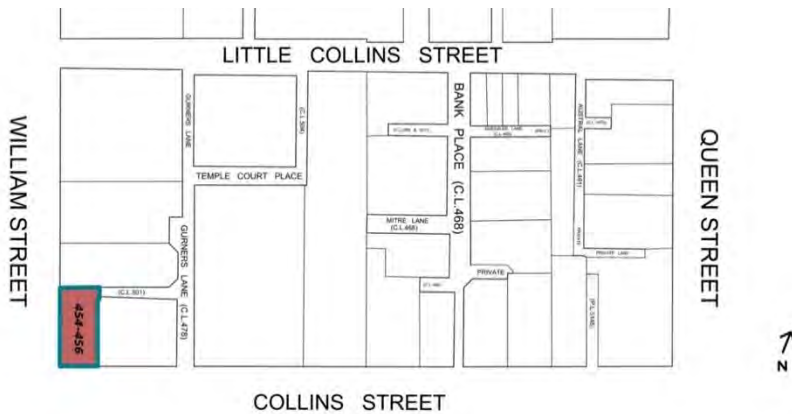
Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME Former Guardian Building [also known as Christie Offices (current name)]

STREET ADDRESS 454-456 Collins Street, Melbourne

PROPERTY ID 102122



SURVEY DATE: October 2019

SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage

HERITAGE INVENTORY No

EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY No

PLACE TYPE Individual Heritage Place

PROPOSED CATEGORY Significant

FORMER GRADE C

DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST: Bates Smart & McCutcheon

BUILDER: J C Taylor & Sons

DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: Postwar Period (1945-1975)

DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION: 1960-1961

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Buiness and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Office, Studio, Caretaker, Merchant
1920s	Office, Studio, Caretaker, Merchant, Workshop, Hairdresser, Retail
1960s	Under construction

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The Former Guardian Building on the corner of William and Collins streets was built for owners, Guardian Assurance Co Ltd, in 1960-61, to a design by architects Bates Smart & McCutcheon.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The Guardian Building on the corner of William and Collins streets was built for owners Guardian Assurance Co Ltd in 1960-61, to a design by architects Bates Smart & McCutcheon (Goad 2004:180). The Guardian Assurance Co occupied an earlier building on the site from c1955, also called the 'Guardian Building', before redeveloping the site. The company appears to have had an earlier presence in the area, occupying an adjacent property 452 Collins Street from c1910 to c1920 (S&Mc).

At the time of construction, the Guardian insurance group had long-established branches in all Australian states. An article published in *The Canberra Times* in June 1960 (18 Jun 1960:11) reported that a Canberra office had just opened, a large building was planned for Sydney, and 'construction of a new 10-storey building at the corner of Collins and William Streets has just been started for the group'.

In September 1959, the University of Melbourne's Department of Architecture publication *Cross-Section* reported that a new building was to be erected for Guardian Assurance at the subject site, at a cost of £350,000, to be faced with Stawell freestone. The City of Melbourne received a building permit application for the multi-storey office building in March 1960 (BAI). W E Bassett & Partners were the mechanical engineers and J C Taylor & Sons the builders. The total cost of the building was approximately £500,000 (*Cross-Section*, Apr 1962).

Photos of the newly completed building showed its external form including the entrance and foyer (Figure 3 - Figure 5). *Cross-Section* published an article on the newly completed building in April 1962, providing the opinion that:

This is prestige-type architecture, conservative, dignified, sober, and rather stuffy. Handsomely proportioned windows sit in a natural stone façade.

The article stated that the building was serviced by air conditioning that was a 'high velocity perimeter induction system with individual controls below window sills', and was built with double glazed windows with heat resistant glass in the outer panes (Figure 6).

The 1965, the Sands & McDougall Directory listed the 'Guardian Building' at 454-456 Collins Street as being occupied by Guardian Assurance Co Ltd, amongst other companies. In 2019 the entrance on the Collins Street elevation bears the name 'Christie Offices'.

Bates Smart & McCutcheon

Bates, Smart & McCutcheon was formed when Osborn McCutcheon joined the existing firm of Bates & Smart in 1926. Bates & Smart had itself been born out of previous iterations of a firm that could be traced back to Reed & Barnes, making it one of the oldest practices in the country (Goad 2012:72). By the 1960s the firm had become one of Australia's largest architectural firms. It exists today as Bates Smart (Goad 2012:72).

During the 1930s, Bates, Smart & McCutcheon had earned a reputation for designing Georgian-style residences, but also went on to win RVIA awards for their work on the AMP Building in Collins Street (1926-31), Buckley & Nunn Building in Bourke Street (now David Jones, 1933), and the Second Church of Christ Scientist in Camberwell (1936-37).

By the 1950s, Bates, Smart & McCutcheon had become Australia's 'expert' in high-rise office buildings design (Goad 2012:73). Much of their work at this time was large structures with glass curtain walls. In Melbourne this was exemplified by ICI House, which broke the city's existing 132-foot (40m) height limit in 1955-8 (Goad 2012:73). Other work completed by the firm in the 1950s included the first of the Sleigh Buildings at 158-172 Queen Street Melbourne (1953-55 & 1964), Union House at 43-51 Queen Street Melbourne (1957) and the AMP Building at 402-408 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne (1956-58).

Bates, Smart & McCutcheon continued to expand into the 1960s and 70s, with its design approach shifting from glazed curtain walls to facades of artificial stone or prefabricated concrete panels. Works in Melbourne during this period included AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, Bourke Street (1965-69) in association with US firm, Skidmore Owings and Merrill; the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61); the Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building at 155-161 Queen Street (1961-62) and the Methodist Church Centre at 130-134 Little Collins Street (1966-67) with F C Armstrong.

In the 1970s the firm designed the Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street, Melbourne (c1972-75); the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73) and the double tower and plaza complex of Collins Place, Collins Street (1970-80), undertaken in collaboration with international architecture practice, I M Pei. Other notable works by the firm include the large collaborative designs of Melbourne Central with Kisho Kurokawa (1983-92) and Federation Square with Lab Architecture Studio (1997-2002) (Goad 2012:74).



Figure 3. The newly completed building for Guardian Assurance, photo dated 1961 (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H99.50/58).



Figure 4. The entrance to the building in 1961 (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H99.50/57).



Figure 5. The foyer to building, photo dated 1961 (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H99.50/60).



Figure 6. An image of the building published in 1962 (*Cross-Section* No. 114, Apr 1962).



Figure 7. Detail of a 1967 photo showing the corner building (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H99.50/402).



Figure 8. The building in 1982 (City of Melbourne Libraries online Heritage Collection, Reference no. Butler16202).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street is a 10-storey commercial building located at the north-east corner of Collins and William streets. Constructed in 1960-61 to a design by Bates, Smart & McCutcheon, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

The building is rectangular in plan with a broad frontage to William Street and a narrow frontage containing the main entrance to Collins Street. Both facades are treated in an identical manner with floors above street level containing rows of rectangular windows, with opaque black spandrel panel, set in a grid-like pattern. Minor facades to the north and east are largely obscured by adjacent buildings, however a vertical strip of openable windows in the east façade is visible at the end of a narrow lane which is accessed from Collins Street, via Gurners Lane. These facades are of concrete block infill with render applied to surface columns and beams.

The building is of concrete encased steel column and beam construction with facades of stone-faced precast concrete panels and individual inset aluminium-framed windows (some with central pivot) with slim expressed stone frame. In contrast, the upper storey of the building incorporates a set of closely spaced stone mullions which mask aluminium-framed windows behind. Originally housing the board room and other facilities, this detailing continues across the Collins Street façade and, in part, the William Street façade.

At street level, facades are fully glazed between solid piers. An inscribed edge to the stone-faced spandrel above is a simple, yet distinctive, detail.

The building has been reglazed at the ground level in both Collins and William Streets. Originally recessed behind the line of the upper floors, the Collins Street façade at ground level has been reconstructed in line with the face of the building above. The Collins Street entrance remains in the same location however it has been modified. Street level glazing in William Street has been replaced and intermediate stone-clad piers have been removed.

INTEGRITY

The Former Guardian Building, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building above street level, remains highly intact to its original construction in 1960-61. Works to the building at street level has altered the original design of this frontage.

Overall, the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone alterations at street level, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey commercial building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Former Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of 1960s to mid 1970s multi-storey commercial building design. The building's two grid-like curtain walls of regularly spaced rectangular windows set in plain facades of stone-faced precast concrete panels, and contrasting upper level of closely spaced stone mullions, can be clearly observed from both Collins Street and William Street. Despite the redesign of the street-level facade, the upper facades of the Former Guardian Building remain highly intact to their original design.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the Former Guardian Building. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



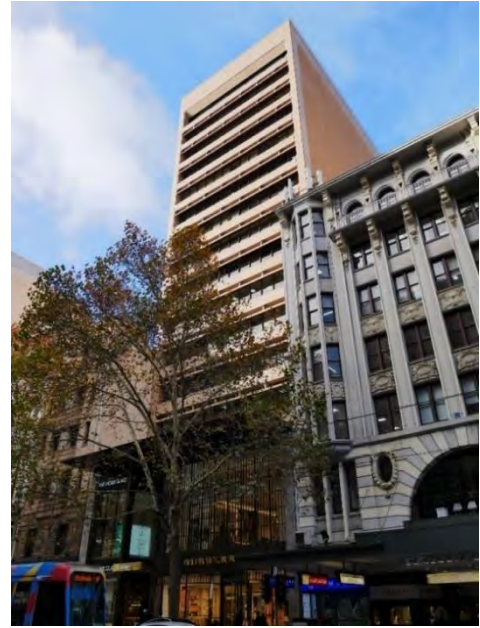
Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 19741-73 included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of

design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



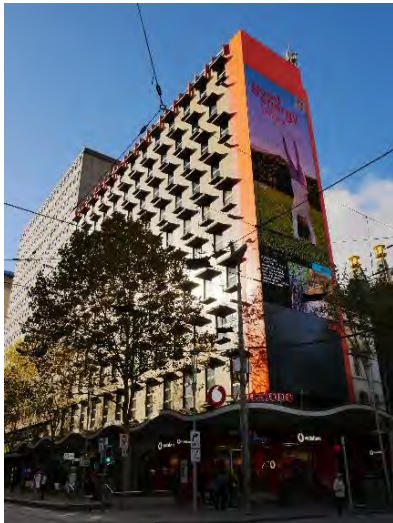
Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kollé & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street
(Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243
Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton
and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins
Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street
(Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb,
1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street
(unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478
Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle
Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building, 359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

As a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building, the Former Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey office buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne. Similar to the small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings presently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme – and a number of other examples identified above – the Former Guardian Building clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

- City of Melbourne Libraries online Heritage Collection, reference nos. as cited.
- Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*
- Building Application Index (BAI) for the City of Melbourne.
- Building Application Plans (BAP), City of Melbourne.
- Butler, Graeme (1983), *Twentieth Century Architecture and Works of Victoria* (also titled *Twentieth Century Architecture Register of Royal Australian Institute of Architects*), Selected Data Sheets Vol 2, prepared for the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.
- Cross-Section*: No. 83, September 1959; No. 114, April 1962.
- Goad, Philip's 'Moderate Modernism, 1945-77' in Goad, Philip & Bates Smart (Firm) (2004), *Bates Smart : 150 years of Australian architecture*, Fishermans Bend [Vic], pp146-213.
- Goad, Philip (2012), 'Bates Smart & McCutcheon' in Philip Goad & Julie Willis's (Eds.) (2012), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Port Melbourne.
- National Trust of Australia, Victoria (NTAV) (September 2014), *Melbourne's Marvellous Modernism, A Comparative Analysis of Post-War Modern Architecture in Melbourne's CBD 1955 -1975*.
- Sands & McDougall Directories (S&Mc).
- State Library of Victoria (SLV), picture collection, photographers and images as cited.
- The Canberra Times* [A.C.T.]

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** C (as 454-458 Collins Street)

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** C (as 454-458 Collins Street)

**Review of Heritage
Overlay Listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

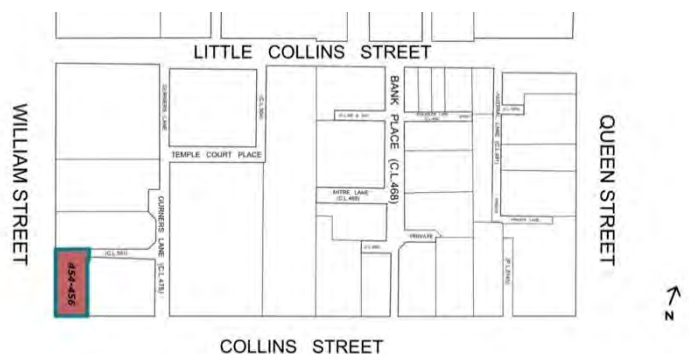
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Guardian Building



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street, a multi-storey office building constructed in 1960-61.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made to the street level facades are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed in 1960-61 to a design by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, the Former Guardian Building has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and the prestige afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

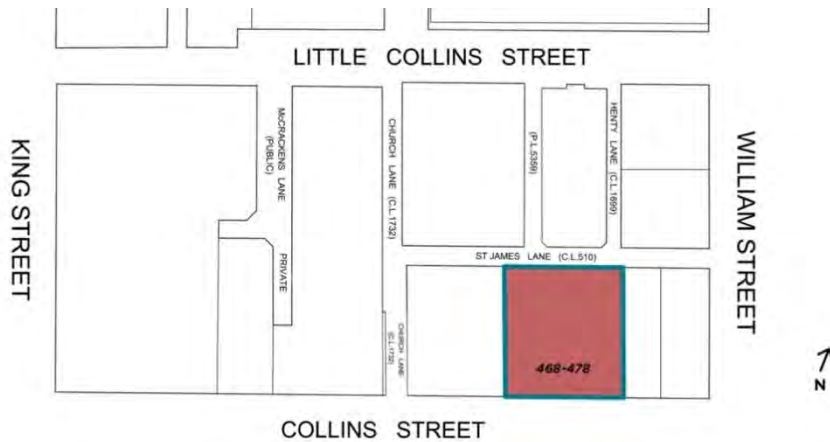
The Former Guardian Building is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building. The building strongly reflects the style which was popular in the 1960s through to the mid 1970s, particularly in central Melbourne. Constructed as a 10-storey building on a prominent corner site, the Former Guardian Building clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a

1960s to mid 1970s structure, including a solid external appearance with two grid-like curtain walls of regularly spaced rectangular windows set in plain facades, a contrasting upper level of closely spaced mullions, and the use of materials such as stone-faced precast concrete panels. These demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style (Criterion D).

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former Australia-Netherlands House [also known as Christie's Building]
STREET ADDRESS	468-478 Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	102119



SURVEY DATE: October 2019	SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage
HERITAGE INVENTORY No	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY No
PLACE TYPE Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY Significant
	FORMER GRADE Ungraded
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST: Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners	BUILDER: E A Watts Pty Ltd
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION: c1968-1970

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the post-war history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Buiness and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Office, Carrier, Hairdresser, Café/Restaurant, Merchant, Studio, Caretaker, Workshop
1920s	Office, Carrier, Hairdresser, Café/Restaurant, Merchant, Studio, Caretaker, Retail/Workshop, Club
1960s	Office, Carrier, Hairdresser, Café/Restaurant, Merchant, Studio, Caretaker, Workshop, Club

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The former Australia-Netherlands House was designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker of Sydney in association with Melbourne-based architects Meldrum & Partners, for owners Australia-Netherlands Properties Pty Ltd. Construction of Australia-Netherlands House was completed in 1970, by builders E A Watts Pty Ltd.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

Australia-Netherlands House was designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker of Sydney in association with Melbourne-based architects Meldrum & Partners, for owners Australia-Netherlands Properties Pty Ltd. The names of both firms appear on the drawings dated August 1968 (Figure 1 - Figure 4) (BAF; BAP). The City of Melbourne received a permit application for the project in October 1968, with an estimated project cost of \$3,000,000 (BAI). Construction of Australia-Netherlands House was completed in 1970, by builders E A Watts Pty Ltd (NTAV; BAF). Rankine & Hill were the consulting engineers (BAP).

Australia Netherlands Properties Pty Ltd, Melbourne was associated with the Associated National Insurance Co, Sydney, Australia Netherlands Holding Pty Ltd, Canberra, and Australia Netherlands Investments Pty Ltd, of Sydney. The companies were subsidiaries of the large Dutch insurance group, Nationale-Nederlanden NV, Delft (European Intelligence Ltd, 1968:L; S&Mc). The Associated National Insurance Co. purchased the subject site from the Church of England in 1967 (*Age*, 16 Aug 1968:7).

The 1968 drawing of the south (Collins Street) elevation (Figure 1) was annotated with specifications noting that the building was to be constructed with double-glazed reversible windows, glass spandrels and precast structural mullions with glass tile facing. The building was designed with a narrow

forecourt, entered by stairs (this space was later infilled, extending the interior space of the lower floors) (Figure 3). The stairs comprised precast terrazzo treads and risers (BAF; BAP).

Photos dating to the early 1970s show the original entrance and foyer space (Figure 6 – Figure 8). Australia-Netherlands House was primarily occupied by the offices of the Banque National de Paris (BNP) in the early 1970s (not known to what date), along with Australia Netherlands Properties Pty Ltd, the Associated National Insurance Co., and a number of other companies, mainly in investment, finance and insurance (SLV, Image H2000.195/17; S&Mc).

The building has been referred to as 'Christie's' in recent years (NTAV), presumably referring to later owners/occupants.

Peddle Thorp & Walker, architects

James Peddle (1862-1930) arrived in Australia and practiced as an architect in Sydney from 1889. In 1902, Peddle employed an articulated student (Samuel) George Thorp (1889-1967). Peddle left Thorp in charge of the Australian practice in 1911 and travelled to the United States where he established a practice in California. The partnership of Peddle & Thorp was formed in 1914. From 1920, Frederick H E Walker (1900-1950) served his articles at the firm before completing his studies, working in the United States and travelling. Walker re-joined the firm as partner in 1924, which established the firm Peddle, Thorp & Walker. Frank Thorp (1903-1968; George Thorp's younger brother) became the fourth partner in 1929. George Thorp travelled in 1953 and 1960 to review the latest overseas architectural developments and trends (Goad & Higham 2012:535-6).

From the 1950s, Peddle, Thorp & Walker asserted itself as a major Sydney postwar practice. The firm's design for AMP's Sydney headquarters on Phillip Street (1962) brought them international attention for designing the first skyscraper completed in Sydney (Goad & Higham 2012:535-6; Taylor 2001:58). The curved and glazed curtain wall tower broke the 150 foot (c45.75m) height limit and 'signalled a new era of skyscraper design and a race for height' (Goad & Higham 2012:536). The firm continued designing tall buildings in Sydney, including Sun Alliance House, Bridge Street (1964-65; demolished), Goldfields House, Pitt Street (1966), the Royal Exchange Building, Bridge Street (1967) and the ANZ Bank and Offices, Pitt Street (1972) (Goad & Higham 2012:535-6). In Melbourne, the firm designed Dalgety House on Bourke Street (1966-68) and Australia-Netherlands House on Collins Street (c1968-70), both in association with Melbourne-based architects Meldrum & Partners, as well as the multi-storey office building at 601 Bourke Street (1974).

By the 1980s the firm had grown substantially, with offices established interstate and in New Zealand, and by 2010, a number of offices were located throughout Asia. Since c2008, the firm has been called PTW Architects, with Peddle Thorp Architects continuing to operate in Melbourne, Brisbane and Auckland as separate offices and entities (Goad & Higham 2012:535-6).

Meldrum & Partners, architects

Percy H Meldrum (1887-1968) was born in Casterton, Victoria and studied architecture before being articulated to A A Fritsch from 1907. He remained with Fritsch until 1913 before travelling to the United States and working in England. Meldrum returned to Australia in 1921 and joined A G Stephenson in practice as Stephenson & Meldrum from 1921 to 1937. Meldrum subsequently partnered with Arthur A Noad (1903-1973), forming Meldrum & Noad, before establishing Meldrum & Partners in 1959 (Willis 2012:450).

Meldrum & Noad are known to have designed the Coles and Garrard Building at 376-78 Bourke Street (1957) and the National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch at 85-91 Queen Street (1973).

Meldrum & Partners designed the multi-storey State Savings Bank building at 258-264 Little Bourke Street (1961) with Robert Cousland, and the State Electricity Commission building at 15 William Street (1965) (AIA). Meldrum & Partners acted as the local architects for Sydney-based firm Peddle Thorp & Walker, in the design and construction of Dalgety House on Bourke Street (1966-68) and Australia-Netherlands House on Collins Street (c1968-70).

Meldrum partnered with Sydney-based architect Bill Burrows to form Meldrum Burrows, before Meldrum’s son, Richard J Meldrum (1928-2004), joined the firm and Percy Meldrum retired in 1965. Meldrum Burrows gained prominence in the 1970s and ‘80s with large interstate and international projects (Willis 2012:450).

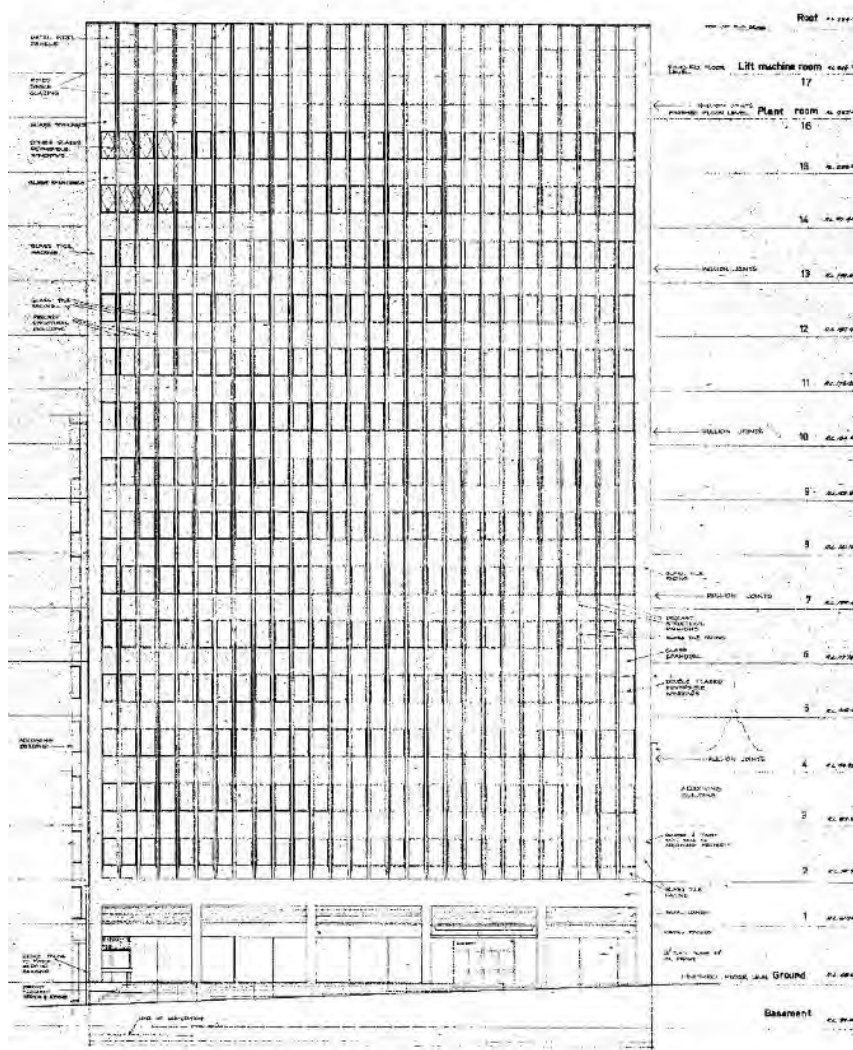


Figure 1. Architectural drawing of the south elevation to Collins Street, dated 1968 (BAP).

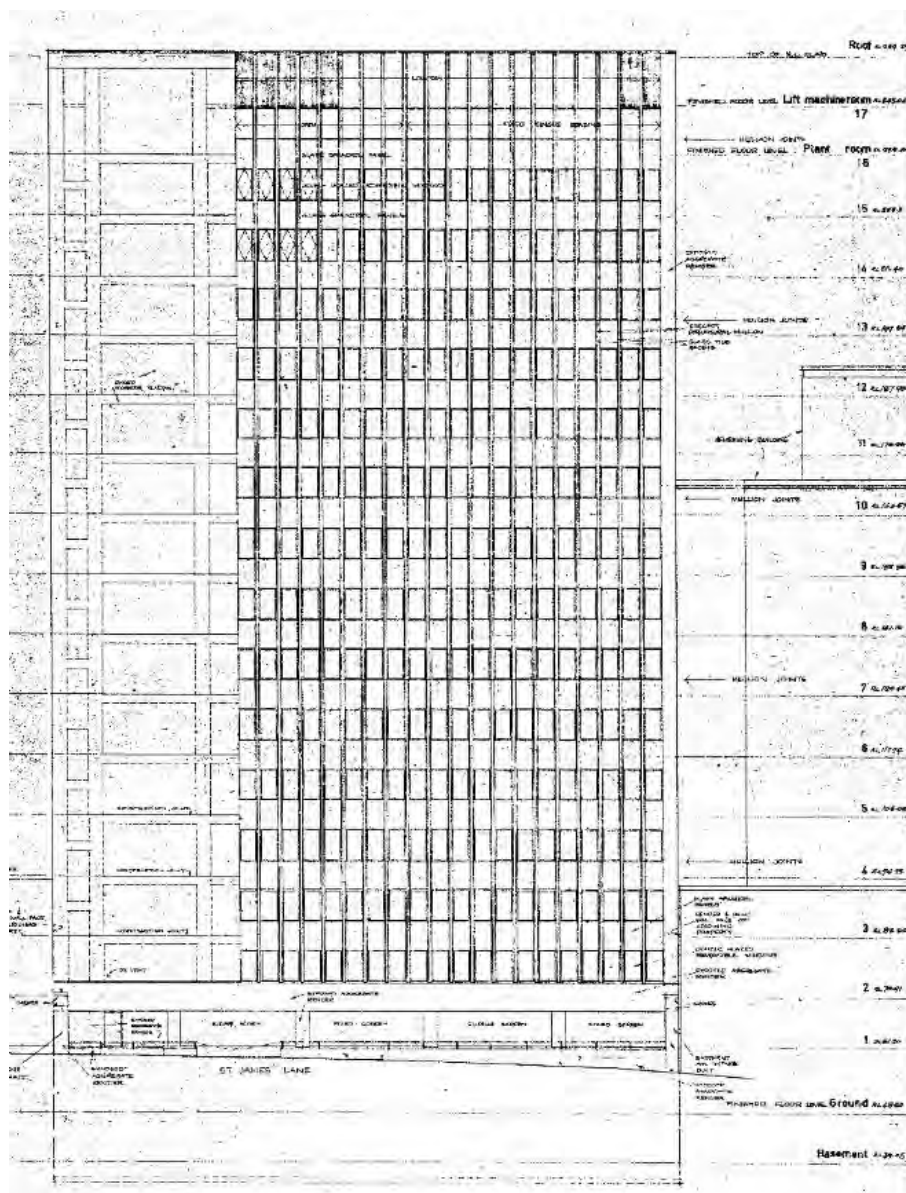


Figure 2. The north elevation; with a higher ground level at St James Lane (BAP).

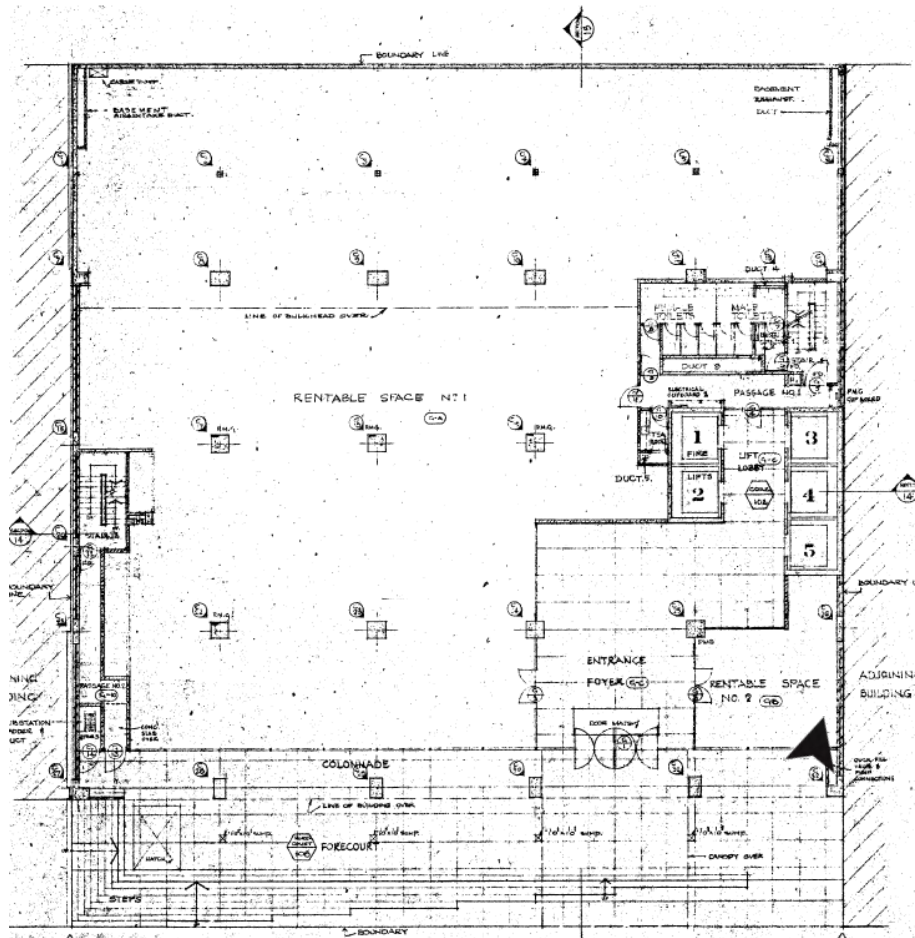


Figure 3. Architectural plan of the ground floor and forecourt, dated 1968. The ground floor is shown to extend to the rear boundary, which is below ground when it reaches St James Lane due to a higher ground level to the north (BAF).

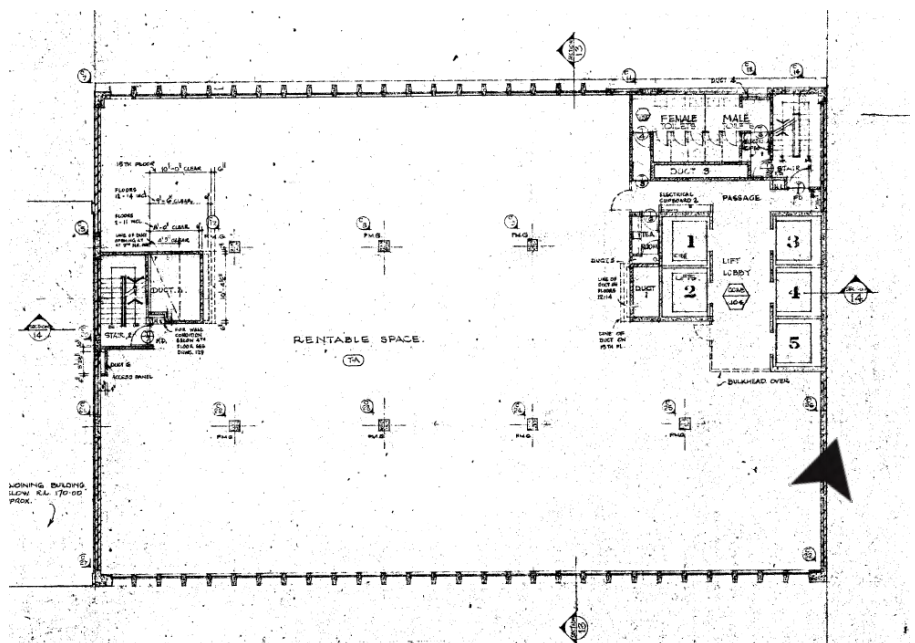


Figure 4. A typical floorplan for the 2nd-14th floors. Drawing dated 1968 (BAP).



Figure 5. Part of an advertisement published in *The Age* in March 1970, advertising new office space to let, available from mid-1970 (*Age*, 11 Mar 1970:19).



Figure 6. The forecourt and entrance; photo dates to 1970s (BAF).

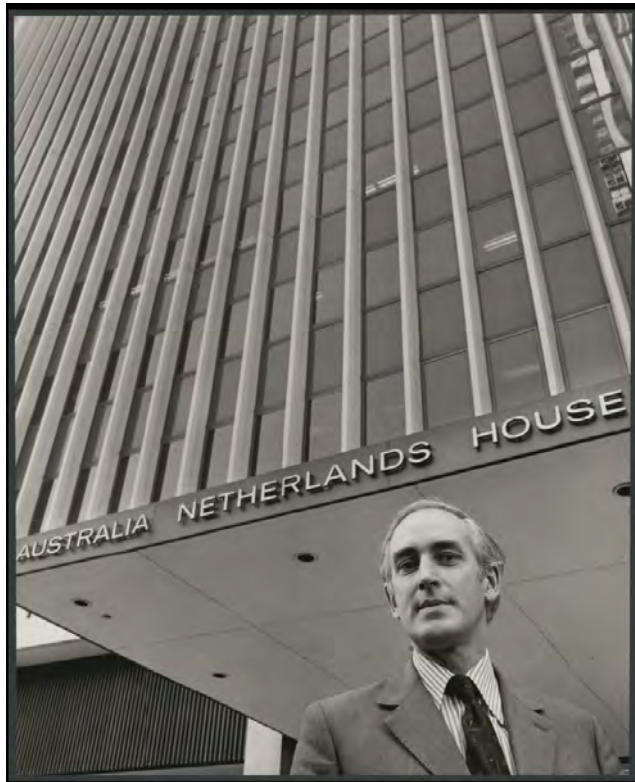


Figure 7. The building in 1973, and manager of the Banque National de Paris (NLA, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, object 161692991).



Figure 8. The foyer of the building in 1973. The caption noted that the photo shows the manager of the Banque National de [Paris] in the bank's offices, Australia-Netherlands House at 470 Collins Street (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H2000.195/17).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former Australia-Netherlands House at 468-478 Collins Street is a 17-storey commercial building located on the north side of Collins Street between King and William streets. Constructed in 1968-70 to a design by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

Of rectangular plan with broad frontages to both Collins Street to the south and St James Lane to the north, the building comprises a basement, a car park at first floor level, 15 floors of office space and a plant room at roof level. As the ground level slopes significantly from north to south, the car park is accessed from an open concourse at the rear of the building from St James Lane. Both the front and rear facades of the building are glazed in a similar manner, with side facades largely obscured by adjacent buildings.

The building is of reinforced concrete column and slab construction with solid rendered brick and concrete masonry side walls. The latter is partially visible on the east side, above the adjacent building. The main north and south glazed façades are dominated by closely spaced continuous vertical mullions which are precast structural elements that help support the internal concrete floor slabs. Set behind these precast concrete mullions are rows of aluminium framed windows – some double glazed and vertically pivoted – and brown glass spandrels (described as ‘nut brown glass Armourclad spandrels’ on the original architectural drawings), typical of curtain wall construction of the period. A portion of sheer rendered façade facing St James Lane indicates the location of the service core at the north-east corner of the building.

At ground level in Collins Street, the building has been substantially altered with the removal of the original entry stairs and the insertion of shopfronts which obscure the original pier and beam construction. It appears that this work was undertaken in the 2010s.

INTEGRITY

The Former Australia-Netherlands House, including the original form and detailing of the exterior of the building above street level, remains highly intact to its original construction of 1968-70. Works to the building at Collins Street street level in the 2010s has altered the original design of this frontage.

Overall, the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone alterations at street level, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey commercial building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of 1960s to mid-1970s multi-storey commercial building design. The building’s two grid-like walls of expressed vertical mullions and rows of aluminium framed glazing and brown glass spandrels can be clearly observed from both Collins Street to the south and St James Lane to the north. Despite the redesign of the street-level facade, the upper facades of the Former Australia-Netherlands House remain highly intact to its original design.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the former Australia-Netherlands House. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



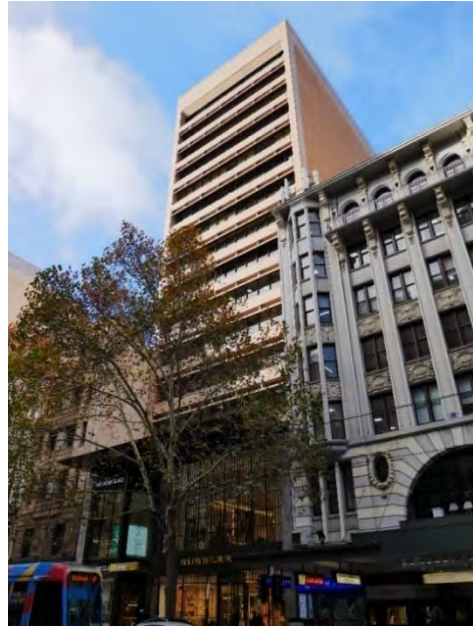
Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 19741-73 included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of

design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street
(Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street
(Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street
(B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street
(Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street
(unknown architect, 1968)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street
(McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



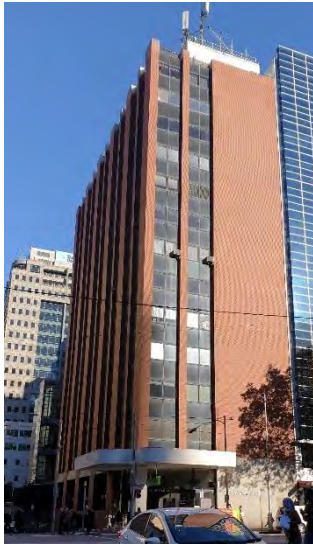
Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building, 359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

As a fine, intact and highly representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building, the Former Australia-Netherlands House at 468-478 Collins Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey office buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne. Similar to the small number of 1960s to mid-1970s buildings presently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme – and a number of other examples identified above – the Former Australia-Netherlands House clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*

Australian Institute of Architects (AIA), Victorian Chapter, *Register of Notable 20th Century Architecture*, Victoria's State List, <https://dynamic.architecture.com.au/i-cms_file?page=4048/VicRegister08xls.pdf>, accessed October 2019.

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State Library of Victoria (SLV), picture collection, photographers and images as cited.

Taylor, Jennifer & Susan Stewart (2001), *Tall buildings : Australian business going up : 1945-1970*, Sydney [NSW].

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Willis, Julie (2012), 'Percy Meldrum' in Philip Goad & Julie Willis's (Eds.) (2012), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Port Melbourne.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

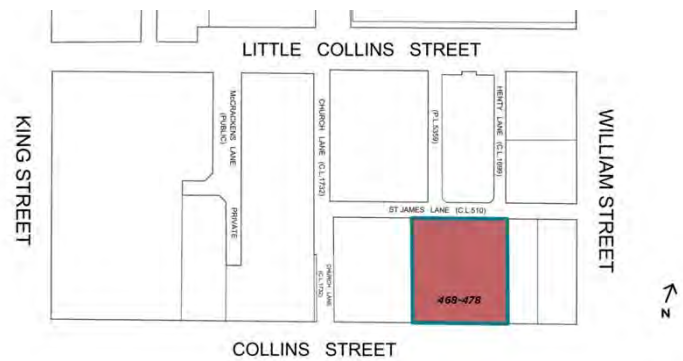
**Review of Heritage
Overlay Listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Australia-Netherlands House

PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, a multi-storey office building constructed in 1968-70.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made to the street level foyer are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former Australia-Netherlands House at 468-478 Collins Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed in 1968-70 to a design by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners, the Former Australia-Netherlands House has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and the prestige afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

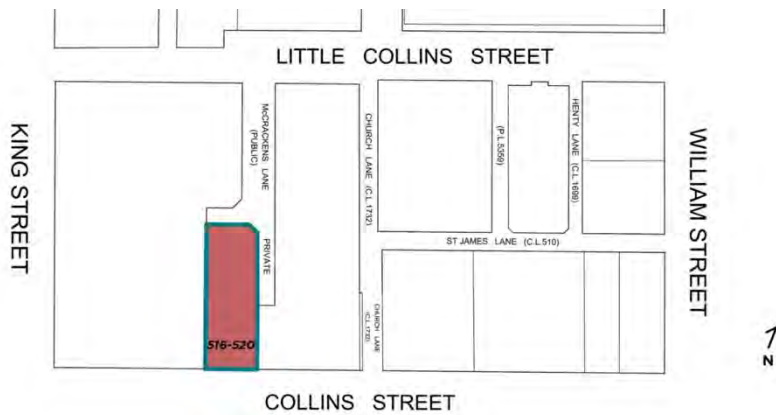
The Former Australia-Netherlands House is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building. The building strongly reflects the style which was popular in the

1960s to the mid-1970s, particularly in central Melbourne. Constructed as a 17-storey building, the Former Australia-Netherlands House clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a postwar structure, with a curtain wall facade incorporating structural components. The front façade, displaying a regular grid composed of horizontal bands of glazing with dark spandrels and contrasting vertical mullions, and the use of a variety of materials, including granite and marble cladding and aluminium window frames, demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style (Criterion D).

Primary source

Hodde Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Office Building
STREET ADDRESS	516-520 Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	102116



SURVEY DATE: October 2019

SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage

HERITAGE INVENTORY No

EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY No

PLACE TYPE Individual Heritage Place

PROPOSED CATEGORY Significant

FORMER GRADE Ungraded

DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST: Not known

BUILDER: Not known

DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: Postwar Period (1945-1975)

DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION: c1974

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Buiness and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Brewery, Merchant
1920s	Office, Car Park
1960s	Bank, Office

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The office building at 516-520 Collins Street was constructed c1974 in the Post-War Modernist style for owners, Hanover Developments Pty Ltd, a land development company.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The City of Melbourne received a building permit application for a '16 storey office building' in May 1973, with a total estimated cost of \$2,399,000 (BAI). An architectural drawing dated July 1973 shows the south elevation (architect not recorded) (Figure 1).

The multi-storey building was constructed c1974 for owners, Hanover Developments Pty Ltd, a land development company (LV:V9074/V693; S&Mc; *Age*, 13 Jun 1980:15). While the 1974 rate books recorded that 516-520 Collins Street remained 'land', the 1974 Sands & McDougall Directory listed the property as a 'development site'. In July 1978, the *Age* published an advertisement for space to let in the 'new prestige building' at 520 Collins Street (26 Jul 1978:40). The architect and exact built date has not been confirmed.

Binate Pty Ltd purchased the property in January 1979 and the property has had a number of subsequent owners (LV:V9074/V693). In March 1979, owners lodged a building permit application for 'two additional levels' (does not appear to have been carried out; current number of above ground floors matches 1973 drawing at Figure 1) (BAI).

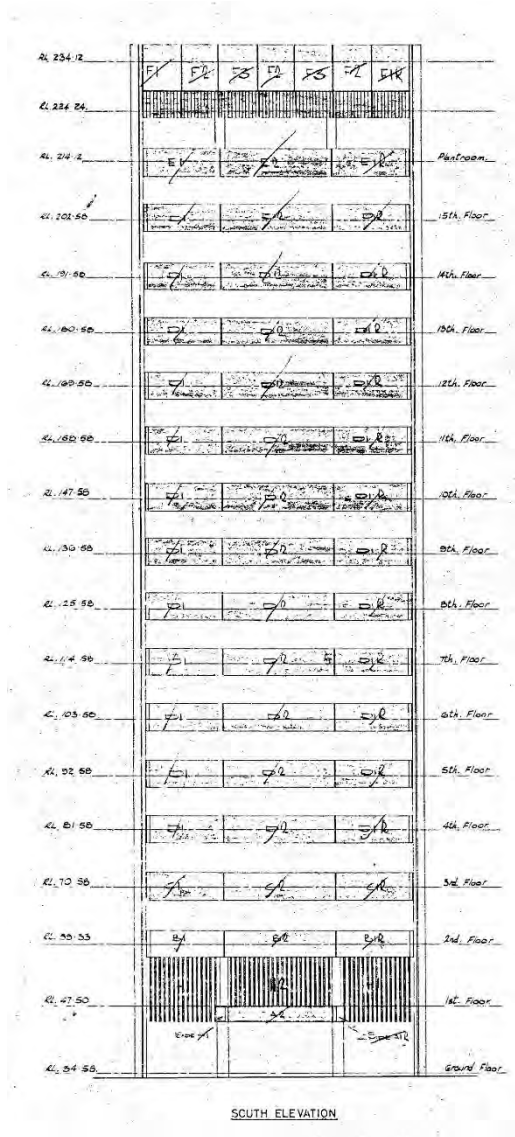


Figure 1. South elevation to Collins Street. Drawing dated July 1973 (no architect recorded) (BAP).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The office building at 516-520 Collins Street is a 16-storey commercial building located on the north side of Collins Street between King Street and William Street. Constructed in c1974, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

The building is of rectangular form with narrow frontage to Collins Street. The narrow rear façade is set well back from Little Collins Street but is clearly visible behind an open allotment which enables access to the rear of the building. The north end of the long east façade is partially visible from the adjoining McCrackens Lane.

The building is of either reinforced concrete or concrete-encased steel construction. Set between brick side walls, the Collins Street façade above street level is a curtain wall with strong horizontal bands of continuous aluminium-framed glazing and alternating solid pre-cast concrete spandrels. The extremities of the pre-cast concrete spandrels of the strongly horizontal façade bend forwards and project beyond the side walls in a highly distinctive manner. The pre-cast concrete parapet above is a

heavy projecting band with vertical incisions at the base which reflect vertical elements that screen a car park which is located at first-floor level.

Divided by a solid splayed corner, the rear façade and the rear portion of the east façade contain alternating bands of glazing and solid spandrels.

At street level the façade has a broad central entrance porch with shopfronts either side. The horizontality of the upper façade is reinforced by the heavy fascia (re-clad) above this entrance bay. Low stone-faced walls enclose a small plaza at the front of the building.

INTEGRITY

The office building at 516-520 Collins Street, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building, remains highly intact from its original construction in c1974. Works to the building at street level have had minimal impact on the overall intactness of the place.

Overall, the building retains a very high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone some alterations at street level, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey commercial building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The office building at 516-520 Collins Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of 1960s to mid-1970s multi-storey commercial building design. The building's strong horizontal emphasis, highly distinctive spandrels and clearly articulated podium, can be clearly observed from Collins Street. Despite some modifications made to the building at street level, the building remains highly intact to its original design.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the office building at 516-520 Collins Street. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently

included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1974-73) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, c1972-73)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



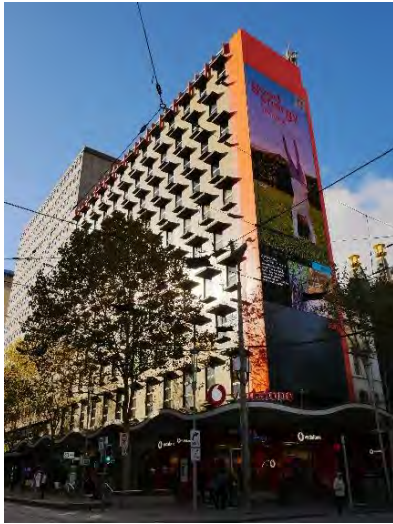
Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



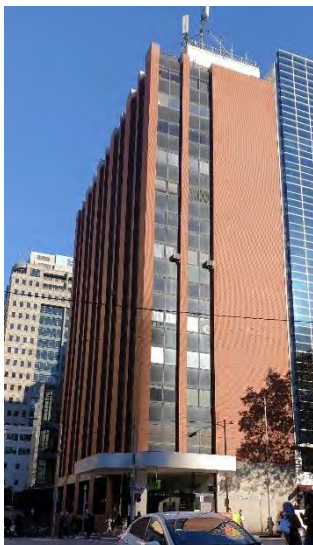
Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building, 359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

As a fine, highly intact and highly representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building, the building at 516-520 Collins Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey commercial buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne. Similar to a number of 1960s to mid-1970s buildings listed above, the subject building clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Context History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*

Building Application Index (BAI), City of Melbourne.

Building Application Plans (BAP), City of Melbourne. One drawing of the south elevation was accessible (with no architect recorded); the remaining drawings and property file could not be located within City of Melbourne's archives.

City of Melbourne Rate Books (RB), Lonsdale Ward, VPRS 5708, P9, Vol 150 (1974), entry 899. In 1974 the rate books recorded 516-520 Collins Street as 'land'.

Landata Victoria (LV), Certificates of Title, as cited.

Sands & McDougall Directories (S&Mc).

The Age.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Study Review 1993** Ungraded

**Review of Heritage
Overlay Listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

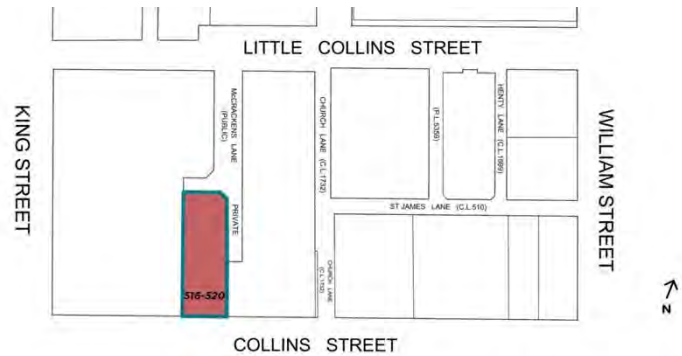
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Office Building



PS ref no: HOXXXX

**What is significant?**

The office building at 516-520 Collins Street, a multi-storey commercial building constructed c1974.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made to the lower levels of the building are not significant.

How it is significant?

The office building at 516-520 Collins Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed in c1974, the office building at 516-520 Collins Street has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and the prestige afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

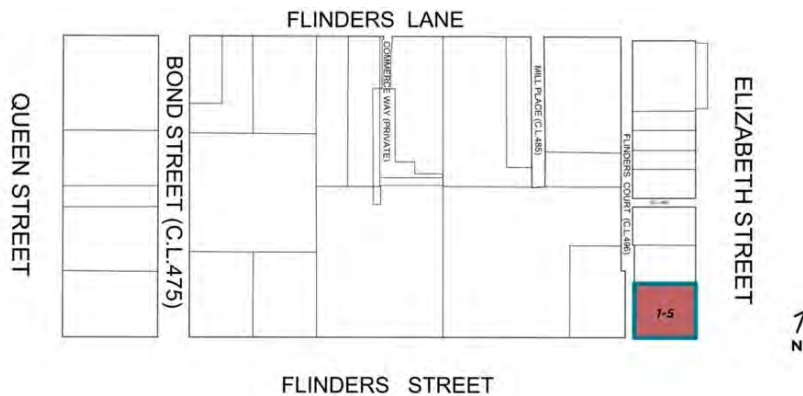
The office building at 516-520 Collins Street is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building. The building strongly reflects the style which was popular in the 1960s through to the mid 1970s, particularly in central Melbourne. Constructed as a 16-storey structure, the building clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a later postwar commercial building, including

a strong horizontal emphasis and highly distinctive spandrels. These demonstrate important aspects of the Modernist style (Criterion D).

Primary source

Hodde Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former Hosie's Hotel [also known as Hosie's Building (current name)]
STREET ADDRESS	1-5 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	103165



SURVEY DATE: October 2019		SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage	
HERITAGE INVENTORY	No	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	HO505 & HO938 (VHR H2094 'Hosies Hotel Mural' & part VHR H1083 'Flinders Street Railway Station Complex', to extent of cantilevered awning)
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER CATEGORY	Significant
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Mussen Mackay & Potter	BUILDER:	E A Watts Pty Ltd
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1954-1956

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style
5 Living in the city centre	5.2 Hotels
8 Enjoying the city	8.2 Melbourne's introduction to the world stage

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Hotel, Café/Restaurant
1920s	Hotel, Café/Restaurant
1960s	Hotel

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The Former Hosie's Hotel was built in 1954-1956 to a designed by architects and civil engineers Mussen Mackay & Potter for owners, Carlton and United Breweries Ltd. It was constructed by builders E A Watts in time to provide modern accommodation for the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Hotels

The lack of hotel accommodation was a cause for concern in central Melbourne in the 1950s and 1960s. In the lead up to the 1956 Olympic Games, it was reported that the city's hotel accommodation was not only far below international standards, but did not provide enough beds to host large numbers of tourists. Up until that time, hotels primarily focused on the provision of food and drink; there was no legal requirement to provide accommodation. To boost the number of hotel beds in the lead up to the 1956 Games, amended liquor laws were introduced that made it essential for every hotel to offer lodgings. This new law contributed to the closure and demolition of an unprecedented number of city hotels in the postwar period. Between 1951 and 1961, 23 hotels in central Melbourne closed, with only five top city hotels from Melbourne's bygone era – Scott's, Menzies', the Oriental, the Windsor and the Federal – remaining. Within a decade, all but one (the Windsor) had been demolished (Annear 2005:193).

Despite a push to provide more hotels with higher standards in time for the Olympic Games, ultimately only a handful were constructed. Hosie's Hotel (1954-56) at the corner of Elizabeth and Flinders streets, was one of the first modern hotels to be built in central Melbourne (NTAV 2014:42).

The 1960s saw the opening of Australia's first high-rise, American-style hotel. With the increasing use of faster jet planes, international travel for both luxury and business purposes became a glamorous pursuit. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, US-based hotels such as the Hilton and the Pan Am-owned Intercontinental began establishing the first international hotel chains.

The Southern Cross Hotel (now demolished) opened in 1962 as Australia's first modern hotel of the jet age – a sign that the city had established itself as an international destination (Annear 2005:186). It occupied a large site on Bourke Street in central Melbourne, formerly occupied by the grand Eastern Market. The hotel, owned by Pan American Airways, set the new standard for city hotels in Melbourne and its central plaza, shopping arcades, and ten-pin bowling alley represented a new concept of public space (Goad). The Southern Cross Hotel remained Melbourne's premier hotel into the early 1980s, famously hosting The Beatles during their 1964 tour and national events such as the Logies and the Brownlow (Brown-May 2005). The Bryson Centre (now Rydges Hotel), 174-192 Exhibition Street (1970-72), was one of a number of high-rise buildings planned for the eastern end of the city in the early 1970s to 'meet the tourist boom expected with the opening of the new airport at Tullamarine' (Age 1970:2). The 23-storey Bryson Centre incorporated office space, a 600-seat cinema, restaurants, convention centres and a 292-room hotel, named Hotel Melbourne, which was located on the upper 13 floors of the building. The Bryson Centre was described by the Age as a 'city within a city – every need is either within the hotel walls or within walking distance outside' (Age 1972:19).

Melbourne's introduction to the world stage

The staging of the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne gave the city a major boost as an international tourist destination and won for Melbourne the reputation as the 'friendly city' (Context 2012:93).

As early as 1948, discussions had commenced regarding the 'immediate development of important public works in the city' to 'merit selection of Melbourne for the 1956 Olympic Games' (Age 15 October 1948: 8). Works proposed included the construction of subways and underground railways and a new Spencer Street station, as well as better parking facilities; reconstruction of leading hotels and the erection of new hotels; and modifications to the present licensing laws (Age 15 October

1948:8). Melbourne was announced as the host city of the 1956 Olympic Games at a meeting of the International Olympic Committee in Rome in 1949.

As the first Olympic Games to be held in the Southern Hemisphere, there was a public awareness that 'we must not under-estimate the importance of the Games in presenting Australia to the world... Australians, particularly Victorians, should realise that the standard of preparation for the games must be of the highest order' (*Age* 30 June 1950:2). Following the announcement in 1949 that Melbourne would host the games, there was a flurry to update the city's image and, as Barry Humphries has wryly noted, "half of Victorian Melbourne was torn down in the stampede to be modern" (Heritage Alliance 2008:41).

A key concern was the low standard of Melbourne's hotels, with the *Age* reporting that 'it is apparent to all Australian travellers going abroad that our existing hotel accommodation is far below world standard. Staging the Games therefore gives Australia a chance to lift this standard, and to attract more visitors to the Commonwealth.' (*Age* 30 June 1950:2) It was further reported that 'hotels to accommodate visitors to the 1956 Olympic games in Melbourne will be designed on the most modern lines and will be situated mainly within the city limits' (*Age* 23 March 1950:4).

Ultimately, only a handful of hotels were constructed in the city for the Olympic Games. Hosies Hotel (1954-56, Figure 17) at the corner of Elizabeth and Flinders streets, designed by architects Mussen, Mackay and Potter and the Town Hall Hotel (now demolished) were two hotels built in the city centre in anticipation of the Games.

Another widely reported issue at the time was Melbourne's constrained licensing laws. Newspaper editorials raised the issue of Victoria's restrictive liquor licensing laws from as early as 1949, stating that Olympic hospitality was a national matter and the licensing laws 'should be changed so that city hotels can capture the 'community atmosphere' of American hotels' (*Herald*, 25 June 1949:9). A Victorian referendum was held in March 1956 to extend hotel closing hours from 6pm to 10pm, but was defeated, with only six of the 66 state electorates voting in favour of ten o'clock closing. The 'six o'clock swill' ultimately remained in place during the Games. It proved somewhat of a curiosity for international visitors accustomed to more relaxed drinking and café cultures (Reeves 2016).

The 1956 Olympic Games were an important milestone in the city of Melbourne's maturation and growth (Reeves 2016). The international event was a coming of age for Australian sport and proved that Melbourne, and Australia, was capable of hosting a global event never before held outside of Europe or the United States of America (ABC Archives).

SITE HISTORY

Hosie's Hotel was built in 1954-56, designed by architects and civil engineers Mussen Mackay & Potter for owners, Carlton and United Breweries Ltd (BAP; Goad 2012:485; NTAV 2014:42). It was constructed by builders E A Watts (*Cross-Section*, Apr 1954). Hosie's Hotel was one of the first modern high-rise hotels to be built in central Melbourne (NTAV 2014:42; NTAV 1999).

A hotel was first established on the site in a former warehouse in the late 1860s, called the Hobson's Bay Railway Terminus Hotel. Hosie's Hotel (also known as Hosie's Hotel and Café in its earlier incarnation) occupied the building from the 1880s, named after its owner – James S Hosie – who was also known for his Scotch Pie House and Turkish Bathing Palace in Melbourne (S&Mc; *Age*, 31 Aug 1895:2; Spicer). Mr J Richardson purchased the hotel from Hosie and it was on-sold to Carlton and United Breweries Ltd in 1945 (*Age* 18 Jul 1953:4).

In October 1952, Carlton and United Breweries Ltd announced that all of their freehold hotels in Victoria were to be reconstructed and modernised. First was the Town Hall Hotel, Swanston Street, and second, the 'Famous Hosie's' on the corner of Flinders and Elizabeth streets, which was to be replaced by a multi-storey residential hotel (*Age*, 10 Oct 1952:13; *Argus*, 10 Oct 1952:1). The two hotels were to be completed in time to provide modern accommodation for the 1956 Olympic Games (*Herald*, 4 May 1954:12; VHR: citation).

In July 1953, *The Age* (18 Jul 1953:4) reported on the demolition of the earlier 99-year-old Hosie's Hotel, scheduled for August 1953. Construction of the new hotel was expected to be completed about January 1955. The hotel was to be 11-storeys and accommodate 48 guests, with bedrooms set back from the streets to avoid noise, overlooking a fourth-floor guests' roof garden. The article further reported:

The design of the new building is described by the architects, Mussen Mackay and Porter [sic], of Melbourne, as "contemporary hotel style." It will contain all modern amenities.

Hosie's is the second major city hotel rebuilding project by the Carlton and United Breweries, which bought the hotel from the late Mr. J. Richardson in 1945, since the war. The other project, the Town Hall Hotel, in Swanston Street, has commenced.

In August 1953, Mussen, Mackay and Potter called for tenders for the 'rebuilding' of Hosie's Hotel (*Age*, 29 Aug 1953:47). Two months later in October 1953 the City of Melbourne received a building permit application to erect the new building (estimated total cost of £350,000) (BAI). By May 1954, construction was in its initial stages, with excavators preparing the site for foundations (*Herald*, 4 May 1954:12; BLE, 24 Apr 1954:35).

The principal architect on the project was reportedly Keith Mackay, who had been involved with the design of Australia Hotel in the 1930s, with Leslie M Perrott (NTAV 1999). The design of Hosie's Hotel was different to other high-rise projects within the city, featuring interlocking volumes, solid and glass curtain walls and a colourful multi-storey mural on the east elevation (ultimately executed by Richard Beck) (NTAV 1999). A 1954 newspaper article noted the building was 'of contemporary American design' (*Herald*, 4 May 1954:12). Some sources suggest that the design reflected the earlier styles of the European Mondrian or Dutch avant-garde art movement 'De Stijl' ('The Style'), with its smooth finishes and integration of art and architecture, with Beck's mural a major feature of the building (Butler 1985: citation; VHR: citation).

Architectural drawings dated August 1953 indicate that the finish to the west and north elevations was cement render with a ruled grid (Figure 1; south and east elevation drawings not located). The ground floor was designed with entrance lobbies off Flinders Street and Elizabeth Street (Figure 2). The architectural plans show public bars at the basement and ground levels, a public lounge to the first floor, public dining room to the second floor, private dining room to the third floor, hotel reception lobby, cocktail bar, guest lounge and terrace to the fourth, staff amenities to the fifth, manager's flat on the sixth, and accommodation from the seventh to tenth floors (BAP).

The hotel development was discussed in contemporary newspapers and architectural publications and later commentary suggests that Hosie's Hotel was considered as important for its time as the Hotel Australia development (*Age*, 27 Nov 1997:24). The Australia Hotel was completed in 1939 (demolished in 1989) at 262-270 Collins Street, replacing an earlier hotel of the same name. The 12-

storey hotel's influential modernist architecture was the work of Leslie M Perrott in association with Colin McKenzie and Keith Mackay. The hotel developed a reputation as one of the finest in Australia, its bars, cinemas, kitchens and shopping arcades serving as a hub for contemporary Melbourne's social scene. Australia Hotel was an important cultural venue and a symbol of Melbourne's modernity (Spicer; NTAV citation).

The Melbourne University publication *Cross-Section* commented on Hosie's Hotel in April 1954, during the early construction stages. The article discussed the design, with four floors of fully air-conditioned public rooms (bars, lounges and dining rooms) and guest garden. The structure was to comprise a reinforced concrete frame, aluminium windows and spandrels, ceramic veneer and travertine finishes (Figure 3) (*Cross-Section*, Apr 1954).

The *Age* further noted that the hotel was to comprise large areas of glass framed in satin finished aluminium spandrels. The concrete walls were to be faced with ceramic tiles. The article described the internal spaces and noted that the six upper floors were to provide 'high class residential accommodation' (*Age*, 12 Nov 1954:3).

In July 1955, *Cross-Section* reported that Hosie's Hotel was still under construction and 'promises still to be a city [building] of more individual character than its contemporaries' (*Cross-Section*, Jul 1955). Also at this stage, in July 1955, a permit application was lodged with the City of Melbourne to construct a cantilever verandah (BAI). Photographs show the stages of construction (Figure 4 - Figure 7).

The completed hotel features a three-storey modernist mosaic mural on the Elizabeth Street elevation, created by artist Richard Beck (1912-1985) in 1955. Beck was an English and German trained graphic designer and one of the leading modernist graphic designers in Melbourne at the time. The abstract image is made of ceramic panels and represents three glasses (or pots) clinking together. The mural expressed the modernist movement in architecture and design in Melbourne. This modernism was important as the city of Melbourne attempted to present itself to the world as a modern, contemporary city at the time of the 1956 Olympic Games (Goat 2012:485; VHR: citation). The mural was included in the Victorian Heritage Register in 2006.

In November 1956, an American attending the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games reported back to an American newspaper (*News-Journal*, 23 Nov 1956:19) on the institution of the 'Six O'Clock Swill', and a visit to the 'pub in Hosies Hotel' which he noted had lately been rebuilt and described as 'rather shiny with blond panelling'.

The building was refurbished in the late 1980s (BAI) and continued to serve as Hosie's Hotel until at least the mid-1990s (*Age*, 25 Sep 1996:41). In 2019 the building is called Hosie's Building (CoMMaps).

Mussen Mackay & Potter, architects

Mussen, Mackay and Potter was established in c1950 by architect, Keith Mackay, and civil engineers, Norman Henry Mussen and Charles Potter. The firm undertook a range of commercial, educational and industrial work in the 1950s. Mussen was also a lecturer at the University of Melbourne in the 1940s and 1950s – his teaching on structural engineering influenced architects like Peter McIntyre and Kevin Borland.

The firm's commercial work in Melbourne included a store for Sportsgirl in Collins Street (1955) and Hosie's Hotel in Flinders Street (1954-56), which was constructed in readiness for the 1956 Olympic

Games. The firm became Mackay and Potter in c1958, after which it designed offices for the Gas & Fuel Corporation in St Kilda Road, Albert Park and the State Accident and Motor Car Insurance on Collins Street, Melbourne (1965).

Richard Beck, artist

Richard Beck (1912-1985), was known nationally for his graphic design work in the mid-twentieth century. Before coming to Australia in 1940, Beck had his own design consultancy in London working on London Transport Posters, for Shell Mex Ltd and for the Orient Line. In Australia, Beck worked as a commercial designer. He designed the only poster commissioned to officially promote and commemorate the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne. His most recognised work was his label for Coonawarra wines featuring a woodcut of the winery, which is still in use. He also designed stamps and was on the panel for the design of the Australian decimal currency. Richard Beck was a member of the design committee for the Olympic Street decorations and was represented in the Design Section of the Olympic Arts festival. His work is held by the National Gallery of Victoria, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the London Transport Museum and the London Design Museum (VHR: citation).

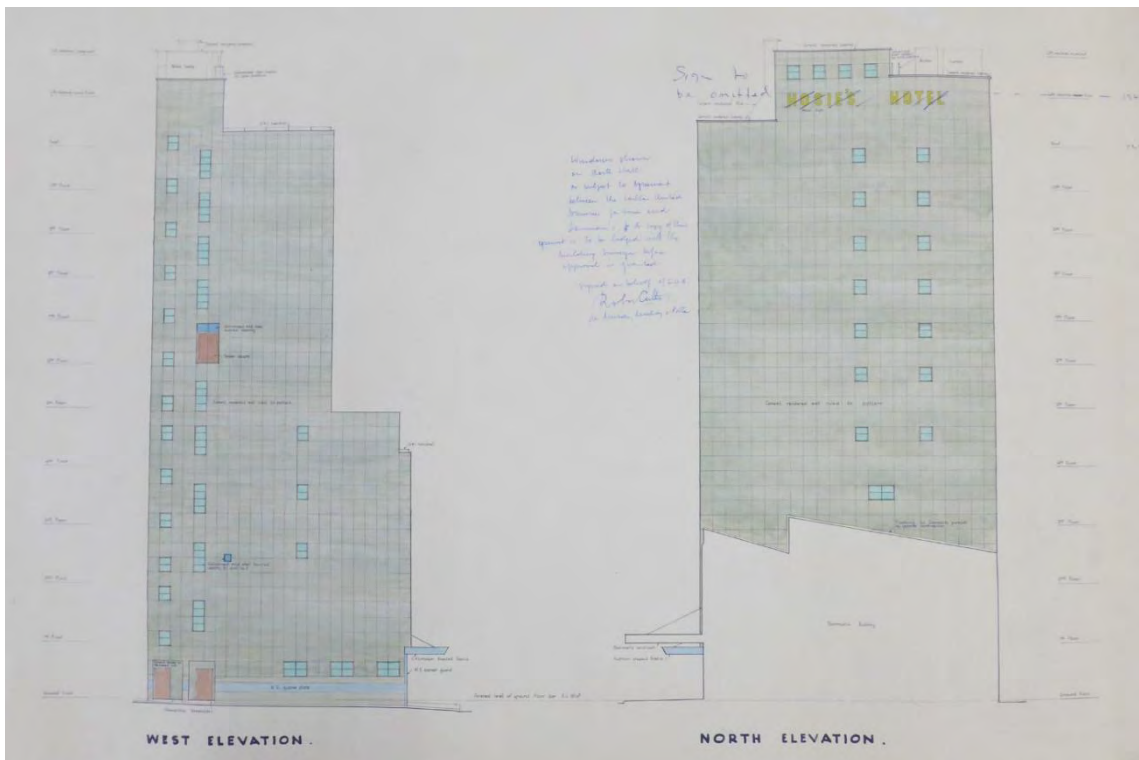


Figure 1. West and north elevations. Annotation notes that the 'Hosies Hotel' metal sign to the north elevation was to be omitted. Drawings by Mussen Mackay & Potter, dated August 1953 (BAP; south and east elevation drawings not located) (BAP).

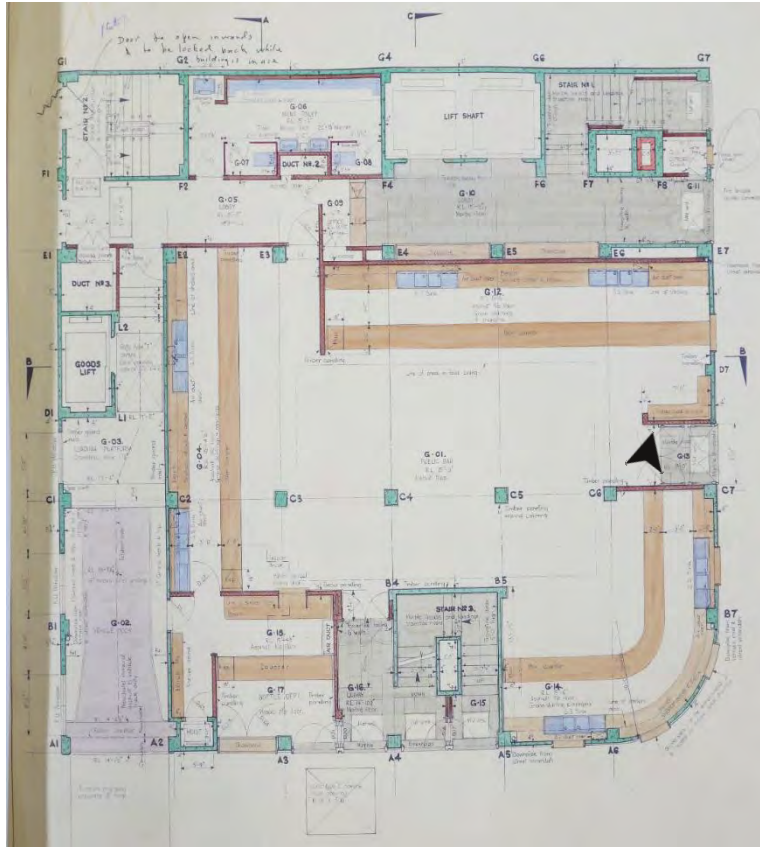


Figure 2. Plan of the ground floor, with a public bar and lobby entrances off both main streets (in grey). Drawing by Mussen Mackay & Potter, dated August 1953 (BAP).

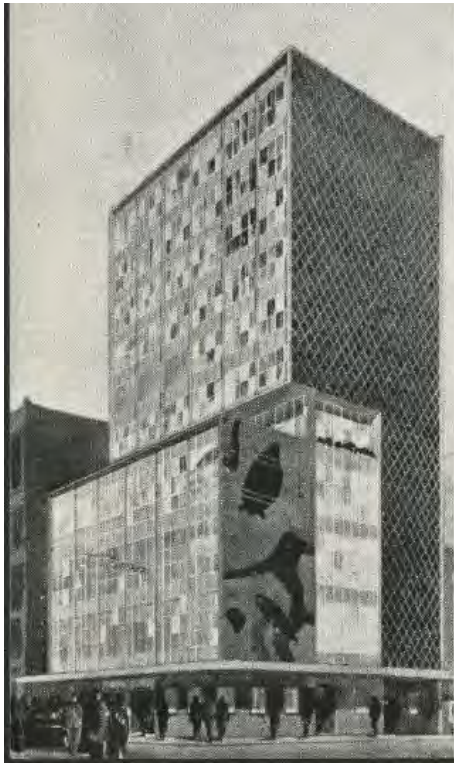


Figure 3. Illustration of the proposed hotel, which was under construction when the image was published in April 1954 (*Cross-Section* No. 18, Apr 1954).



Figure 4. The hotel under construction in February 1955 (SLV, Lyle Fowler, photographer, Image H92.20/5269).



Figure 5. Construction phase, in 1955 (SLV, Mark Strizic, photographer, Image H2008.11/1086).



Figure 6. The construction phase, July 1955 (*Cross-Section*, Jul 1955).



Figure 7. The construction phase. Photo probably dates to 1955-56 (SLV, Peter Wille, photographer, Image H91.244/3970).



Figure 8. Hosie's Hotel. Photo probably dates to c1955, before the mural was installed (SLV, Rose Stereograph Co, Image H32492/8571).



Figure 9. Hosie's Hotel. Photo is dated c1957-63 (NAA, J2669, 463).



Figure 10. Hosie's Hotel. Photo is dated c1957-63 (NAA, J2669, 464).

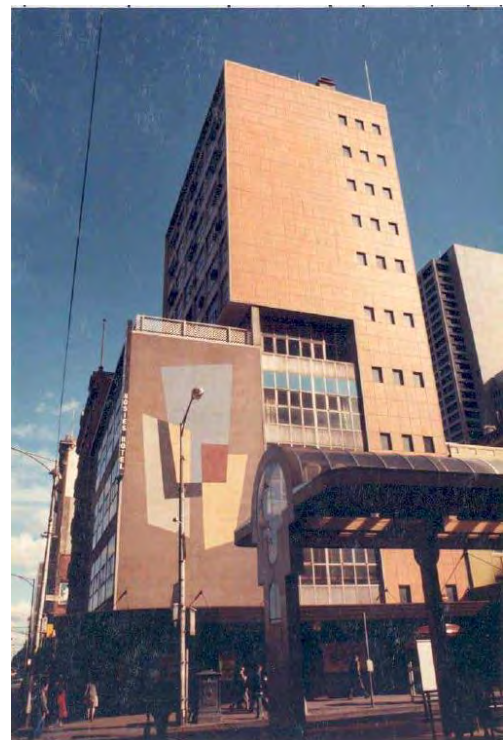


Figure 11. The hotel in 1985 (Butler 1985: Building ID Form).



Figure 12. The hotel in 1985 (Butler 1985: Building ID Form).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former Hosie's Hotel at 1-5 Elizabeth Street is a 10-storey commercial hotel building with basement, located on the north-east corner of Elizabeth and Flinders streets. Situated on this prominent site opposite Flinders Street Station, the building has main frontages to both these streets. Constructed in 1954-56 to a design by Mussen Mackay & Potter, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

Set on a square site, Flinders Court forms the western boundary and an adjacent low-rise building forms the northern boundary. The building presents as a complex composition of two overlapping and interlocking rectangular forms – a low-rise block of four floors to the south and a high-rise tower to the north.

The building is of reinforced concrete column and slab construction with the two main facades of each building block presenting as curtain wall to the south and contrasting solid masonry walls to the east. Facing south, the upper and lower sections of the Flinders Street façade are glazed curtain walls with large sets of windows arranged in a heavy grid of aluminium window frames, sashes and spandrel facings. In contrast the east façade is formed from a complex of solid masses with a glazed central section dividing the two main building volumes when viewed from Elizabeth Street.

These main facades display contrasting finishes and colours. This includes a large distinctive and colourful mosaic mural, depicting an abstraction of three overlapping glasses, which covers the otherwise blank three-storey façade of the low-rise southern section. Rows of small fixed inset windows provide the only relief to the sheer ceramic tile-clad facade of the high-rise tower.

Other than a vertical row of small window openings facing Flinders Court, the west and north facades present as plain cement rendered walls, ruled with a rectangular pattern.

Rows of shopfronts with cantilever verandahs occupy the building at street level in both Flinders and Elizabeth Streets.

INTEGRITY

The Former Hosie's Hotel, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building above street level, remains highly intact to its original construction in 1954-56. Modifications to the building at street level, and the re-glazing of large windows to the main facades, have altered the original design. The overall grid of window openings has been retained, however larger panes of glass have replaced the previously multi-paned windows.

Overall, the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone alterations at street level, and the window glazing has been replaced, these changes do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey hotel building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Former Hosie's Hotel at 1-5 Elizabeth Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of the emerging multi-storey commercial building design of the mid-1950s. The building's grid-like, south-facing curtain walls and contrasting complex of tile-clad solid masses of the east façade (incorporating the distinctive and colourful mural) can be clearly observed from Flinders Street and Elizabeth Street. Despite the redesign of the façade at street level, the upper facades of the Former Hosie's Hotel remain highly intact to its original design.

Hotels in Melbourne

Available evidence suggests that only two new hotels were constructed in the 1950s in the Melbourne CBD in preparation for the 1956 Olympic Games—Hosie's Hotel and the Graham Hotel, which replaced the Town Hall Hotel. Both were designed in a Post-War Modernist style for owner Carlton and United Breweries Ltd.

Designed by Best Overend and built in 1954-55, the Graham Hotel was a small hotel constructed in Swanston Street. It replaced the Town Hall Hotel which had been damaged in an explosion in 1950. As recorded in the *Herald* (17 September 1954, p13), the Graham Hotel was built with an unusual front façade of stainless steel and glazed terracotta, as indicated by early images of the building.

The Graham Hotel remains in Swanston Street and the original wrought iron sign, high on the north façade, remains clearly visible above the low-scale southern section of the adjacent Wales Corner building at the corner of Swanston and Collins streets. However, the main façade of the Graham Hotel has been substantially altered with a cement render applied to the entire surface and no remnants of the distinctive original finishes are visible.



Figure 13. The Graham Hotel, *Herald* (17 Sep 1954:13)



Figure 14. The Graham Hotel, 1955 (SLV, Mark Strizic, photographer)



Figure 15. The Graham Hotel (GJM Heritage, February 2020)

The Former Hosie's Hotel retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. In comparison, changes made to the Graham Hotel – in particular changes to the fabric – have reduced the place's architectural integrity.

Other Post-War Modernist buildings in the Hoddle Grid

There are a number of buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the Former Hosie's Hotel. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A comparative example in the City of Melbourne which is located immediately adjacent to the Hoddle Grid is ICI House, 1-4 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1958). This place is included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H0786).

Locally-significant places

Precinct Heritage Overlay

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from the early postwar period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme. Those from the 1950s that are included in the Heritage Overlay are currently included as part of Heritage Precincts, but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places. These places are:



Former Gilbert Court, 100-104 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1954-55) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Allans Building, 276-278 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, 1956-57) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Significant place.



Coates Building, 18-22 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1958-59) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Bank of Adelaide Building, 265-269 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, 1959-60) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Contributory place.

Other Examples

Despite the demolition of many 1950s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the initial period of curtain wall construction in Melbourne and demonstrate similar characteristics to the subject building. The following examples are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places as part of the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review:



Lauren's House, 414-416 Lonsdale Street (Harold Bloom, 1956) (Interim HO1254).



Former Atlas Assurance Building, 404-406 Collins Street (H Garnet Alsop & Partners, 1958-61) (Interim HO1008).



Former London Assurance House, 468-470 Bourke Street (B Evans & Partners, 1960) (Interim HO1006).



Former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange, 376 Flinders Lane (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1957).



Former Ajax House, 103-105 Queen Street (HD Berry, 1956).



HC Sleigh Building, 166-172 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1953-55).



Coles & Garrard Building, 376-378 Bourke Street (Meldrum & Noad, 1957).



Canton Insurance Building, 43-51 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1957).



Former AMP Building, 402-408 Lonsdale Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1956-58).

Analysis

As a fine and highly intact representative example of its type, the Former Hosie's Hotel at 1-5 Elizabeth Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne. Similar to the small number of 1950s buildings presently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme – and a small number of other examples identified throughout the Hoddle Grid and listed above – the Former Hosie's Hotel clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

- Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*
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<<https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/14057>>, accessed October 2019.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** B

**Central City Heritage
Study Review 1993** B

**Review of Heritage
Overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

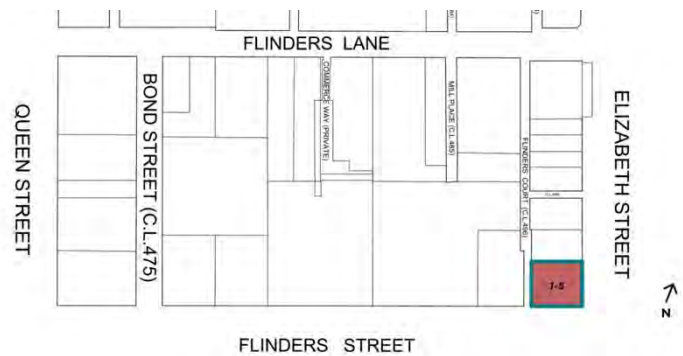
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Hosie's Hotel



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Former Hosie's Hotel, 1-5 Elizabeth Street, a multi-storey hotel building constructed in 1954-56.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made to the street level facade are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former Hosie's Hotel at 1-5 Elizabeth Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed in 1954-56 to a design by Mussen Mackay & Potter, the Former Hosie's Hotel has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. Built in preparation for the Olympic Games in Melbourne in 1956, the Former Hosie's Hotel appears to be one of only two new hotels constructed in central Melbourne in the 1950s (Criterion A).

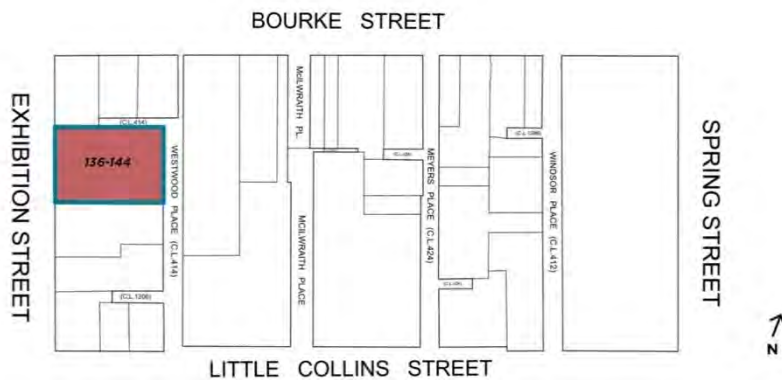
The Former Hosie's Hotel is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial hotel building. The building strongly reflects the style which was emerging in the mid-1950s and was popular in the late 1950s, particularly in central Melbourne. Constructed to the prevailing 40m (132 foot) height limit of the time, the Former Hosie's Hotel clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a 1950s structure with a grid-like south-facing curtain wall façade and contrasting east-facing solid

masses, as well as the use of materials such as aluminium window frames, sashes and spandrel facings and ceramic tile cladding. These demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style (Criterion D).

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former Australia Pacific House [also known as CAGA Building]
STREET ADDRESS	136-144 Exhibition Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	103623



SURVEY DATE: October 2019

SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage

HERITAGE INVENTORY No

EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY No

PLACE TYPE Individual Heritage Place

PROPOSED CATEGORY Significant

FORMER GRADE Ungraded

DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST: McIntyre McIntyre & Partners

BUILDER: Sapis Constructions Pty Ltd

DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: Postwar Period (1945-1975)

DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION: 1975-1978

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Buiness and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Merchant, Trade, Retail
1920s	Merchant, Retail
1960s	Merchant, Retail

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

Australia Pacific House is a 13 storey reinforced concrete building designed by architects McIntyre McIntyre & Partners for owners Australia Pacific Investment Corporation Pty Ltd. Construction of the building was undertaken from 1975-1978.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

Australia Pacific House was designed by architects McIntyre McIntyre & Partners for owners Australia Pacific Investment Corporation Pty Ltd (also known as Aust-Pacific Investment Corporation Pty Ltd), with construction from 1975-1978. The City of Melbourne received a building permit application for construction of a 13 storey reinforced concrete office building at 136-144 Exhibition Street in August 1974 (with an estimated cost of \$3,132,000) (BAI; BAF; McIntyre). The building was designed for owners Australia Pacific Investment Corporation Pty Ltd, to serve as Australia Pacific House. In 1975, the beneficial owners Commercial & General Acceptance Ltd (CAGA) appointed Sapis Constructions Pty Ltd as the builders (Aust-Pacific Investment Corp still held the property in trust) (BAF). The structural consultants were Parkhill and Freeman (BAP).

Commercial & General Acceptance Ltd (CAGA) was a national finance company established in the 1950s, sponsored by the CBC Bank Group (Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Limited). Associated companies included Commercial & General Insurance Ltd, CAGA Personal Credit Pty Ltd, and CAGA Acceptance Pty Ltd, amongst others (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 Nov 1960:31; CBC Officers Club). Contemporary newspapers addressed Commercial & General Acceptance Ltd to 136 Exhibition Street from 1979 to 1981 (may extend beyond 1981; not confirmed) (*Age*, 24 Feb 1979:83; 21 Feb 1979:49).

Specifications dating to 1974 described the 'eleven storey office building', to be constructed of reinforced concrete, an indoor restaurant and outdoor garden court at basement level, a foyer and rentable space at ground level, rentable office spaces on the 1st to 10th floors and a plant room and roof area on the 11th floor (BAF). Architectural drawings dated 1974 and 1975 show the elevations and proposed basement and ground floor plans, with an east and west plaza at ground level and basement level garden court and restaurant (Figure 1 - Figure 6). Two photos show the building in 1984 (Figure 8 & Figure 9).

McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, architects

McIntyre McIntyre & Partners was established in 1962 as McIntyre, McIntyre & Associates following the merger of Peter and Dione McIntyre's architectural practice with that of Peter's father, Robert A McIntyre. From 1967 to 1972, the firm practiced as McIntyre, McIntyre & Partners, before changing to its current iteration, McIntyre Partnership. The amalgamation was a commercial move to gain larger commissions.

Prior to this, Peter and Dione's work involved small-scale domestic projects. Peter's work in particular focused on the interplay of function and structure, where he experimented with cantilevered and tensile structures, and the Ctesiphon arch. He gained public recognition with the commission for the Melbourne Olympic Swimming Stadium (1952-6) in collaboration with architects, Kevin Borland and John & Phyllis Murphy, and engineer Bill Irwin.

Following the McIntyre merger, the new firm designed a significant number of hotels and hospitality ventures (inherited from McIntyre Snr's practice), as well as skiing and alpine architecture. In central Melbourne, the firm completed the innovative Kings Parkade car park in Little Collins Street (1966), and commercial office buildings including 170 William Street (1968), 150 Lonsdale Street (1969), 178-188 William Street (1972-73) and Australia Pacific House at 136-144 Exhibition Street (1975-78). Other notable work included the adaptive reuse and conversion of the early twentieth century Henry Jones Jam Factory in Prahran into an up-market shopping centre (1974) and the design for Melbourne's Parliament Station (1973-82).

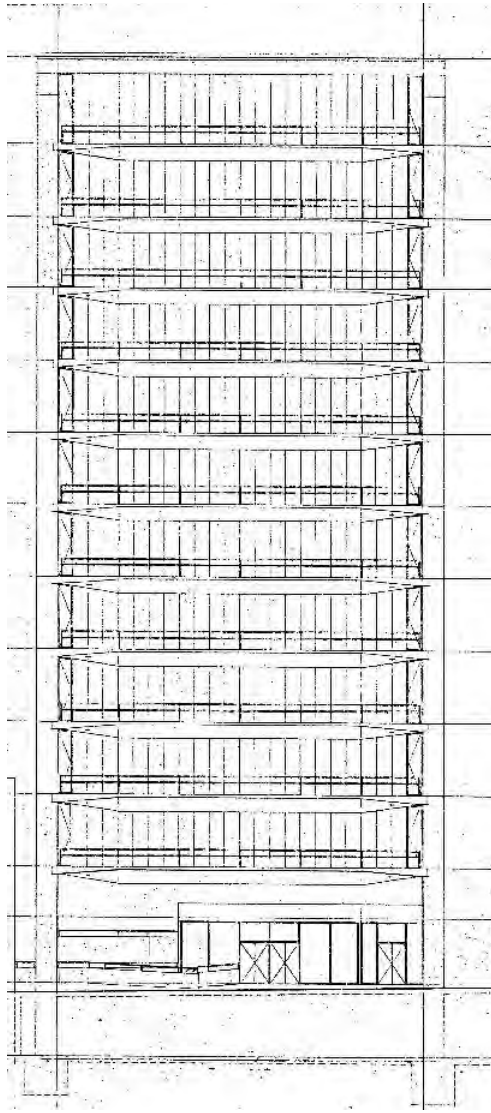


Figure 1. Architectural drawing of the west elevation (fronting Exhibition Street), dated 1965 (BAP).

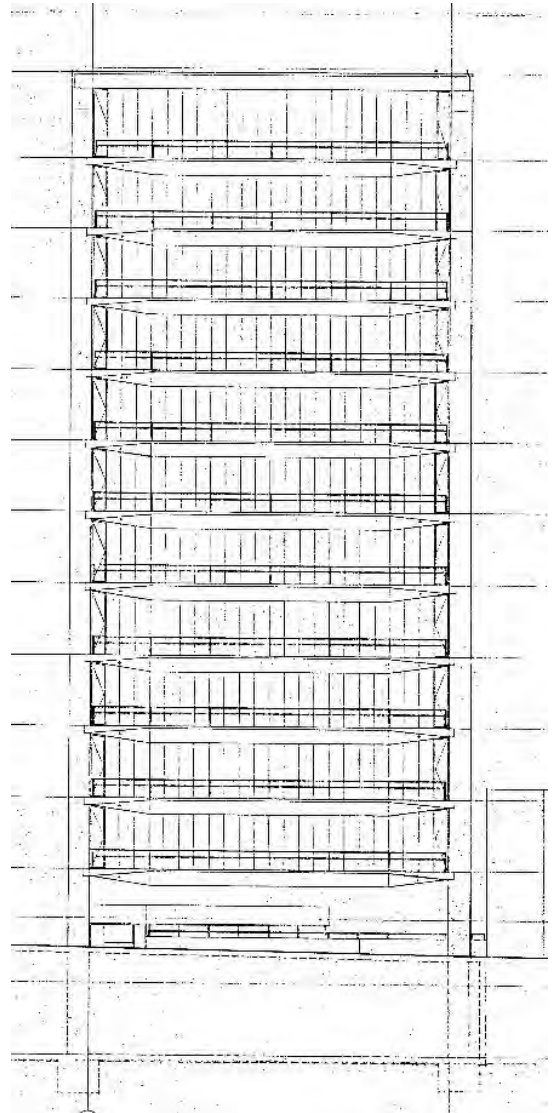


Figure 2. East (rear) elevation, dated 1975 (BAP).

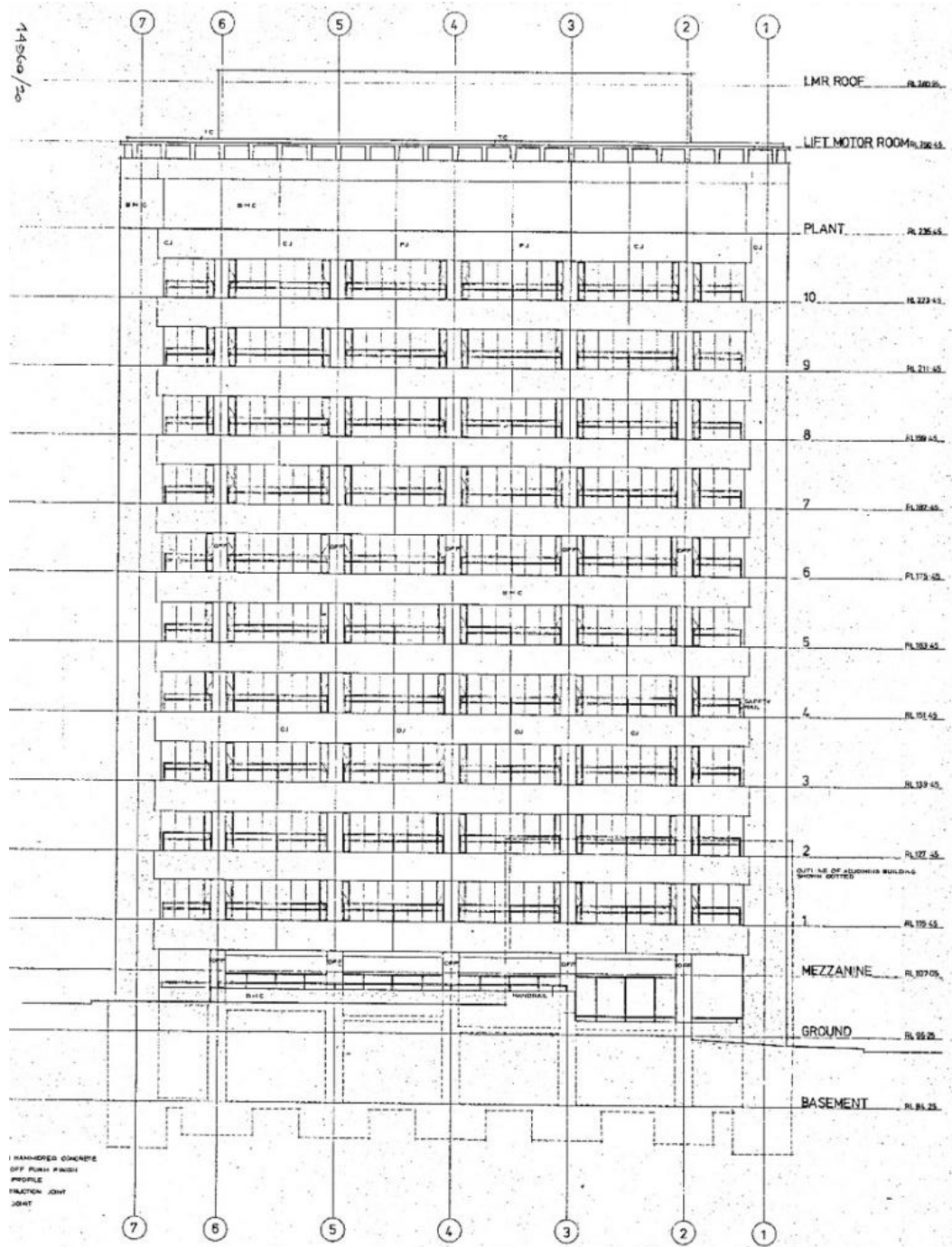


Figure 3. Architectural drawing of the north elevation, dated 1975 (BAP).

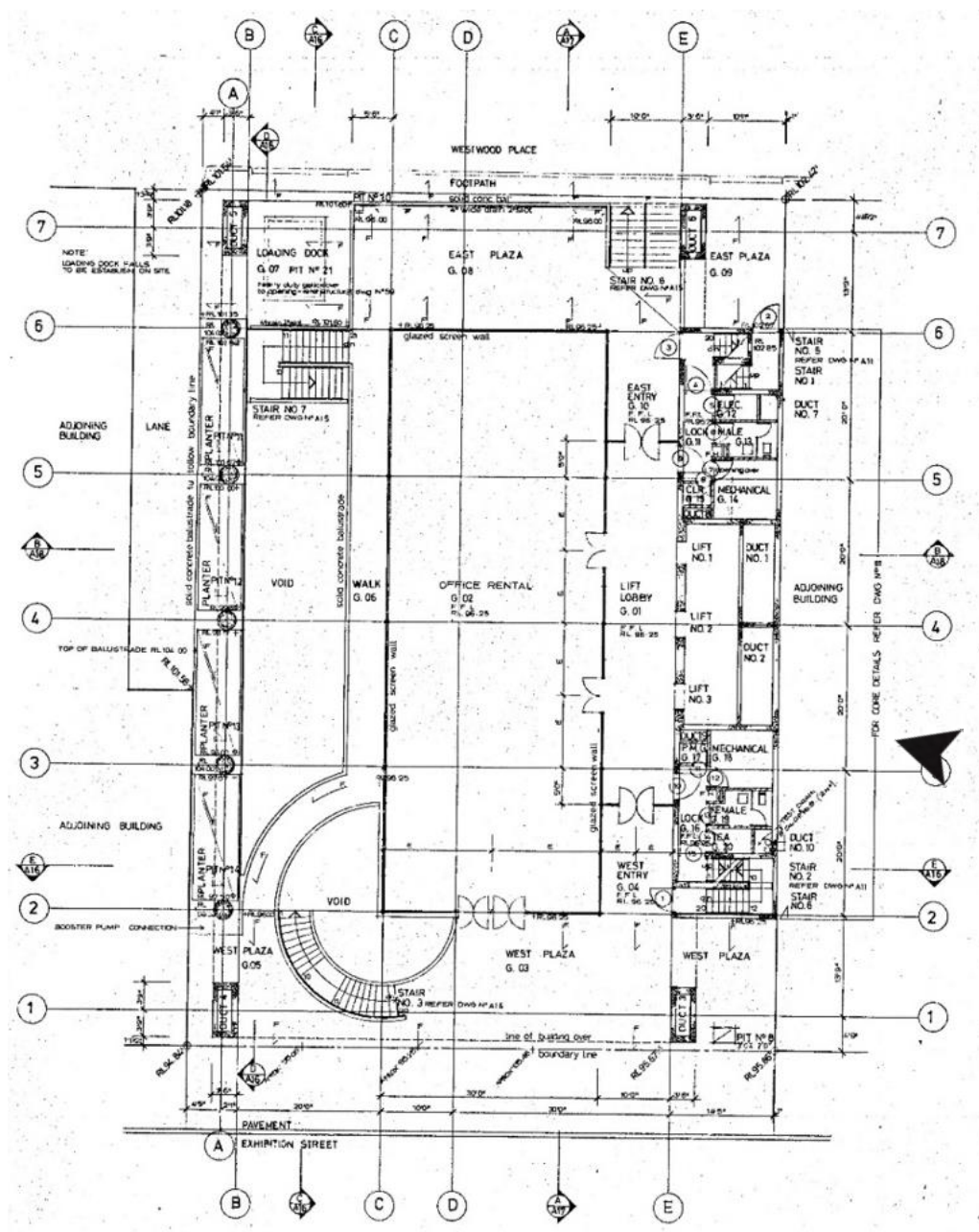


Figure 4. Detailed ground floor plan, dated 1975 (BAP).

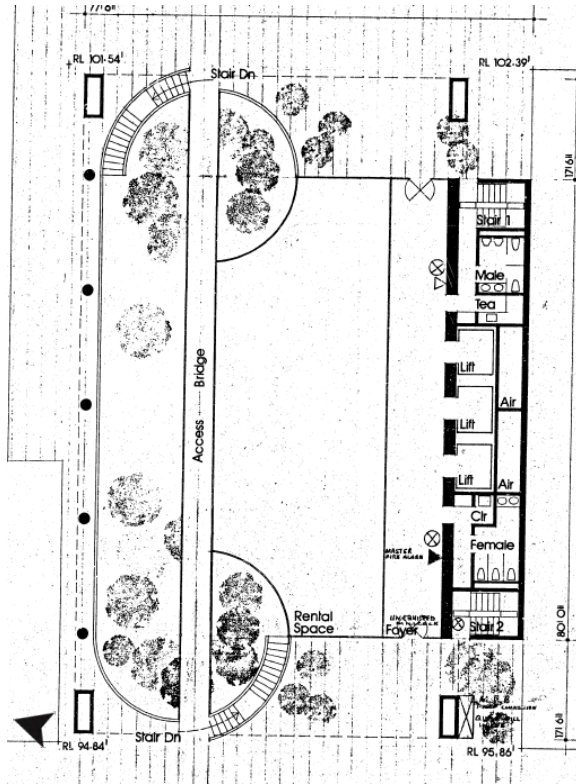


Figure 5. Ground floor plan, stamp dated 1974 (BAP).

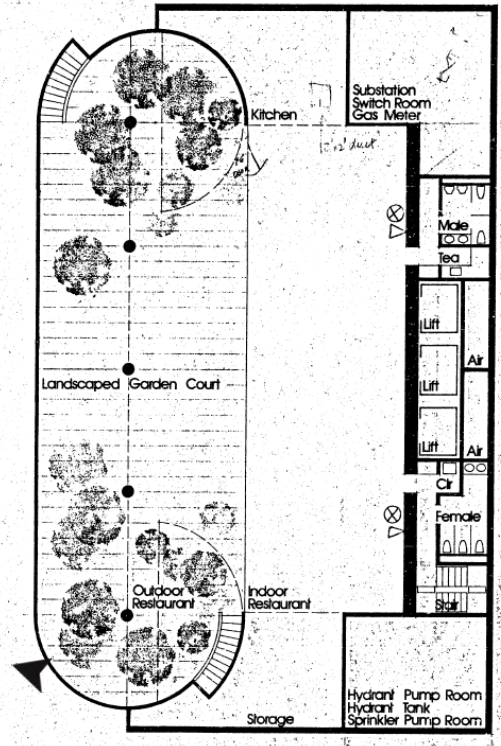


Figure 6. Basement floor plan, stamp dated 1974 (BAP).

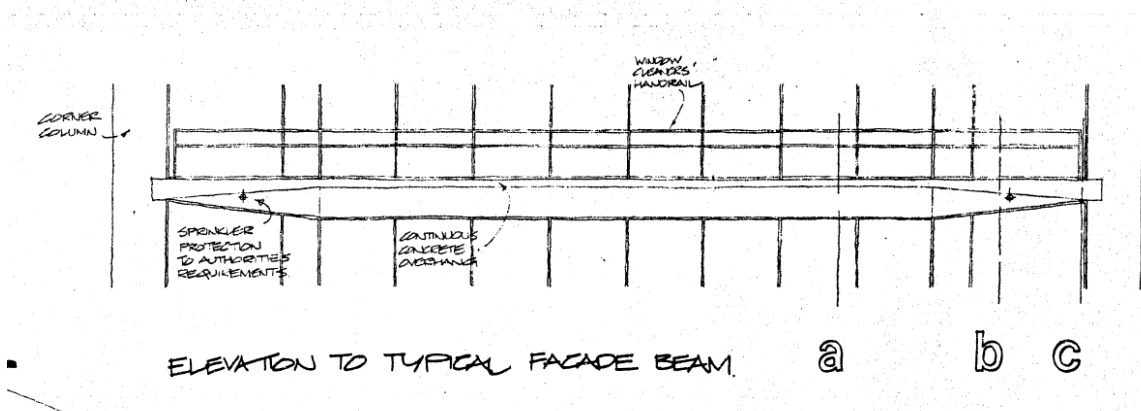


Figure 7. Detail drawing of a façade beam (BAP).



Figure 8. The building in 1984 (City of Melbourne Libraries online Heritage Collection, Reference no. Butler13724).



Figure 9. The ground and lower levels of the west elevation in 1984 (City of Melbourne Libraries online Heritage Collection, Reference no. Butler13723).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former Australia Pacific House at 136-144 Exhibition Street is an 11-storey commercial building located on the east side of Exhibition Street between Bourke Street and Little Collins Street.

Constructed from 1975-1978 to a design by McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

The building is rectangular in form with narrow front and rear facades facing Exhibition Street and Westwood Place at the rear, and broad facades parallel to Bourke Street. Although not located on a corner site, the adjacent low-rise building at the corner of Bourke Street enables a clear view of the north façade of the building. The service core abuts an adjacent building to the south and is recessed at both the west end (Exhibition Street) and the east end (Westwood Place), allowing the insertion of windows in the upper levels of the south wall. A single storey shopfront has been inserted in the recess at Exhibition Street.

The structure of the tower results in a contrasting articulation of the main facades to the west and north. The building is of reinforced concrete column and slab construction throughout with prestressed and post-tensioned concrete T-beams, running in a north-south direction across all floors as a single span, providing support to the concrete floor slabs. Clearly expressing the structure of the building, the ten bow-shaped edge beams of each floor form part of the front (west) and rear (east) facades. These distinctively shaped T-beams span between concrete corner piers and alternate with continuous strips of lightly framed glazing, forming a distinctly horizontal composition.

In contrast, the north façade is a glazed screen which is set behind a grid of round concrete columns and broad concrete spandrels, with safety rails set between columns. A deep concrete parapet, which crowns this façade, has been used for large visible signage.

Architectural drawings indicate that a bush hammered concrete finish was applied to the main façade and an off-form concrete finish was applied to the columns. It appears that these finishes may have been retained.

The ground floor foyer, with mezzanine level, has been modified with shopfronts inserted in Exhibition Street. As a result, the lower concrete T-beam on the front façade has been obscured (or possibly removed). The original architectural scheme included a basement garden court accessed by a curved stair and ground level bridge. This is no longer evident from the public realm.

INTEGRITY

The Former Australia Pacific House, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building above street level, remains highly intact from its original 1975-1978 construction. Works to the building at street level have altered the original design at this frontage.

Overall, the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone alterations at street level, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Modernist multi-storey commercial building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Former Australia Pacific House at 136-144 Exhibition Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of a 1960s to

mid-1970s multi-storey commercial building design. In its use of prestressed and post-tensioned concrete beams, the building demonstrates the advances made in concrete technology from the 1960s, while the trabeated structural system is clearly expressed on the north façade of the building with a grid of concrete columns and broad concrete spandrels set in front of a glazed screen. Despite modifications made to the building at street level, the upper facades of the Former Australia-Pacific House remain highly intact to its original design and can be clearly observed from Exhibition Street and Bourke Street.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the Former Australia Pacific House. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

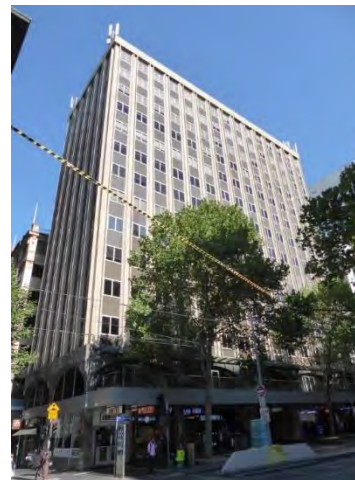
Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 19741-73 included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kollé & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



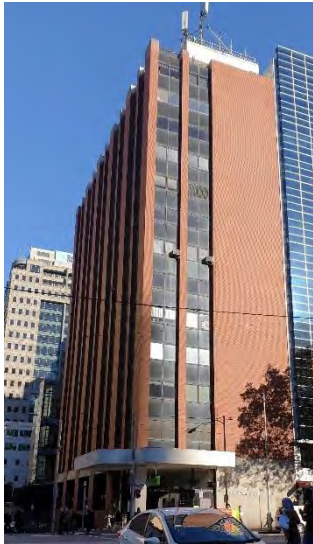
Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building, 359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

As a fine, highly intact and highly representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building, the Former Australia-Pacific House at 136-144 Exhibition Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey office buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne. Similar to a number of 1960s to mid-1970s buildings listed above, the subject building clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*

Architecture Australia (June 1990), 'Peter McIntyre: RAIA Gold Medal 1990'.

Building Application File (BAF), No. 44960 (1974), City of Melbourne.

Building Application Index (BAI), City of Melbourne.

Building Application Plans (BAP), City of Melbourne.

CBC Officers Club, 'CAGA',

<<http://www.cbcbank.com.au/images/Matters%20of%20Interest/CAGA/CAGA.htm>> accessed 23 January 2020.

City of Melbourne Libraries online Heritage Collection, reference nos. as cited.

Goad, Philip (1983), 'Peter McIntyre: Early Work 1950 – 1961' Investigation project, University of Melbourne, Department of Architecture,.

Goad, Philip (2012), 'McIntyre Partnership' in Philip Goad & Julie Willis's (Eds.) (2012), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Port Melbourne.

Goad, Philip (2012), 'McIntyre, Peter & Dione' in Philip Goad & Julie Willis's (Eds.) (2012), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Port Melbourne.

McIntyre Partnership, 'About', <<https://mcintyrepartnership.com/about-1>>, accessed 2 July 2019.

The Age.

The Sydney Morning Herald.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

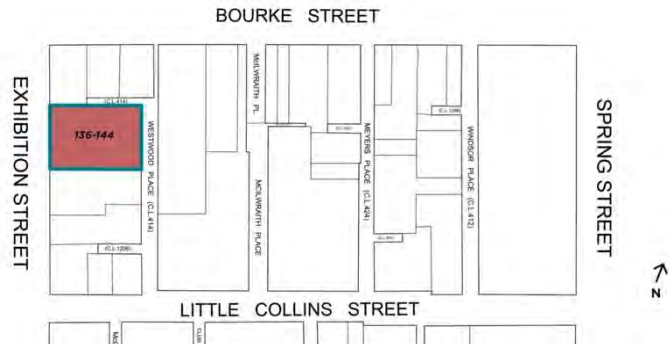
**Review of Heritage
Overlay Listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former
Australia Pacific House

PS ref no:
HOXXXX

**What is significant?**

The Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street, a multi-storey office building constructed from 1975-1978.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's structural system
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made at street level are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former Australia Pacific House at 136-144 Exhibition Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed from 1975-1978 to a design by McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, the Former Australia Pacific House has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and the prestige afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

The Former Australia Pacific House is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist building. The building strongly reflects the style which was popular in the 1960s to the mid-

1970s, particularly in central Melbourne. Constructed as an 11-storey structure, the Former Australia Pacific House clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a later postwar commercial building, including walls which clearly express the trabeated structural system with alternating horizontal strips of glazing and distinctive solid spandrels to the front and rear facades, as well as a grid of solid spandrels and round columns to the north, and the use of materials such as precast concrete. These demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style (Criterion D).

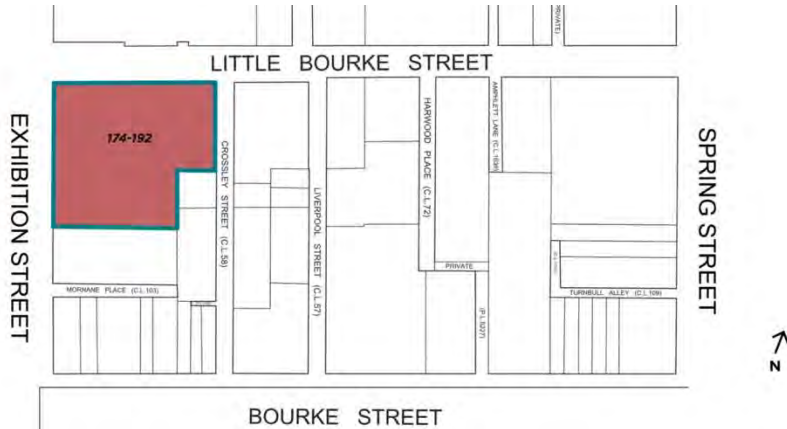
Primary source

Hodde Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME Former Bryson Centre [also known as Hotel Melbourne, Rydges Hotel (current name)]

STREET ADDRESS 174-192 Exhibition Street, Melbourne

PROPERTY ID 103621



SURVEY DATE: October 2019

SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage

HERITAGE INVENTORY No

EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY No

PLACE TYPE Individual Heritage Place

PROPOSED CATEGORY Significant

FORMER GRADE Ungraded

DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST: Perrott Lyon Timlock & Kesa

BUILDER: CDF Hooker Ltd

DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: Postwar Period (1945-1975)

DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION: 1970-1972

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Buiness and finance
5 Living in the city centre	5.2 Hotels

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Café/Restaurant, Hairdresser, Office, Retail/Takeaway, Club, Workshop, Stables, Medical
1920s	Café/Restaurant, Retail/Workshop, Office, Club, Motor Garage
1960s	Retail, Merchant

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The Former Bryson Centre, located on the north-east corner of Exhibition and Little Bourke streets, was designed by architects Perrott Lyon Timlock & Kesa for owners, the Australian Mutual Provident Society (AMP) as an investment property. The consulting engineers were W E Bassett & Partners. The building was constructed between 1970 and 1972, by builders CDF Hooker Ltd. The 23-storey building incorporated office space, a 600-seat cinema, restaurants, convention centres and a 292-room hotel, named Hotel Melbourne, which was located on the upper 13 floors of the building. The Bryson Centre was described at the time of its opening as a 'city within a city – every need is either within the hotel walls or within walking distance outside'.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

Hotels

The lack of hotel accommodation was a cause for concern in central Melbourne in the 1950s and 1960s. In the lead up to the 1956 Olympic Games, it was reported that the city's hotel accommodation was not only far below international standards, but did not provide enough beds to host large numbers of tourists. Up until that time, hotels primarily focused on the provision of food and drink; there was no legal requirement to provide accommodation. To boost the number of hotel beds in the lead up to the 1956 Games, amended liquor laws were introduced that made it essential for every hotel to offer lodgings. This new law contributed to the closure and demolition of an unprecedented number of city hotels in the postwar period. Between 1951 and 1961, 23 hotels in central Melbourne closed, with only five top city hotels from Melbourne's bygone era – Scott's, Menzies', the Oriental, the Windsor and the Federal – remaining. Within a decade, all but one (the Windsor) had been demolished (Annear 2005:193).

Despite a push to provide more hotels with higher standards in time for the Olympic Games, ultimately only a handful were constructed. Hosie's Hotel (1954-56) at the corner of Elizabeth and Flinders streets, was one of the first modern hotels to be built in central Melbourne (NTAV 2014:42).

The 1960s saw the opening of Australia's first high-rise, American-style hotel. With the increasing use of faster jet planes, international travel for both luxury and business purposes became a glamorous pursuit. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, US-based hotels such as the Hilton and the Pan Am-owned Intercontinental began establishing the first international hotel chains.

The Southern Cross Hotel (now demolished) opened in 1962 as Australia's first modern hotel of the jet age – a sign that the city had established itself as an international destination (Annear 2005:186). It occupied a large site on Bourke Street in central Melbourne, formerly occupied by the grand Eastern Market. The hotel, owned by Pan American Airways, set the new standard for city hotels in Melbourne and its central plaza, shopping arcades, and ten-pin bowling alley represented a new concept of public space (Goad). The Southern Cross Hotel remained Melbourne's premier hotel into the early 1980s, famously hosting The Beatles during their 1964 tour and national events such as the Logies and the Brownlow (Brown-May 2005). The Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (1970-72), was one of a number of high-rise buildings planned for the eastern end of the city in the early 1970s to 'meet the tourist boom expected with the opening of the new airport at Tullamarine' (*Age* 1970:2). The 23-storey Bryson Centre incorporated office space, a 600-seat cinema, restaurants, convention centres and a 292-room hotel, named Hotel Melbourne, which was located on the upper 13 floors of the building. The Bryson Centre was described by the *Age* as a 'city within a city – every need is either within the hotel walls or within walking distance outside' (*Age* 1972:19).

SITE HISTORY

The Former Bryson Centre on the north-east corner of Exhibition and Little Bourke streets was designed by architects Perrott Lyon Timlock & Kesa for owners, the Australian Mutual Provident Society (AMP) as an investment property. The consulting engineers were W E Bassett & Partners (LV:V9047/F279; *Age*, 27 Nov 1972:19-20). The City of Melbourne received a building permit application for the multi-storey building in March 1970 (with a total estimated cost of \$5,070,000) (BAI). The building was constructed between 1970 and 1972, by builders CDF Hooker Ltd (*Age*, 27 Nov 1972:19).

Architectural drawings date stamped 1970 show the original designs of the elevations and ground floor layout of The Bryson Centre (Figure 1 - Figure 3). The building was let in part to the hotel group Noahs Ltd from July 1972, Bryson Industries Ltd from April 1973 and Town Cinema Investments Pty Ltd from October 1973 (LV:V9047/F279). Bryson Industries Ltd was the Australian distributor of Jaguar cars. In the postwar period, Bryson Industries owned showrooms and workshops in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide (Bryson).

The development was discussed in contemporary newspapers and architectural journals. *The Canberra Times* reported in June 1970 (27 Jun 1970:8) that the AMP Society had announced plans for a \$6,500,000, 23-storey building on the corner of Exhibition and Little Bourke streets, to be called the 'Bryson Centre' (*Canberra Times*, 27 Jun 1970:8). An advertisement published in June 1972 advertised that 'Motor hotel group Noahs Ltd has added the 297-room Bryson Centre Motor Hotel in Melbourne's Exhibition Street, to its rapidly growing chain.' Advertisements noted that 'Noah's Hotel Melbourne' was due to open in late 1972 (Figure 4) (*Canberra Times*, 2 Jun 1972:15; 20 Oct 1972:4).

Upon completion of the new building in late 1972, *The Age* (27 Nov 1972:19-20) featured 'The Bryson Centre' in a two-page spread. The building was 'planned as a city within a city' comprising '40,000 square feet of office space, a 600-seat cinema, restaurants, taverns and convention centres', a 292-room hotel (which started at the 10th floor) and a rooftop heated swimming pool, supposedly Melbourne's highest swimming pool at the time. A Jaguar showroom occupied the northern, low-scale section of the building. Hotel Melbourne was opened by the Victorian Premier (Figure 5 - Figure 8) (*Age*, 27 Nov 1972:19-20; AIA, 1972:22).

The interior of Hotel Melbourne was designed by Peter J Murphy, in conjunction with the architects. The public areas of the hotel were named after a historical theme which was incorporated into the design of the spaces, such as 'The Federation Tavern' (AIA, 1972:23). Artist Robin Angwin was commissioned by AMP to create a number of paintings and prints for the hotel and potter Rynne Tanton was commissioned to create works that were displayed in the foyer (*Age*, 27 Nov 1972:19-20).

A 1984 photo shows the building with the name 'Hotel Melbourne' at parapet level and 'Bryson Centre' above the lower floors (Figure 10). In 1985, Hospitality Holdings Ltd purchased the '24-storey Bryson Centre, which included the 300-room Noahs Hotel Melbourne and a nine-storey office and cinema centre' (*Canberra Times*, 24 Jul 1985:9).

Bobby McGees entertainment venue is a long-term occupant of the building, first advertising at the location in the early 1990s (*Age*, 13 Nov 1991:78). In the 1990s the complex was called 'The Bryson, a Rydges Hotel' (*Age*, 6 Jun 1993:80). The building continues to serve as Rydges Hotel in 2019.

Perrott Lyon Timlock & Kesa, architects

Perrott Lyon Timlock & Kesa was established in 1971 from Leslie M Perrott & Partners, becoming Perrott Lyon Mathieson in 1976.

Leslie Marsh Perrott was born in Gippsland, Victoria and studied architecture at the Melbourne Technical College. Following a stint in New York, he established his own Melbourne-based practice in 1914 and specialised in residential design, with a particular emphasis on reinforced concrete for domestic construction.

Perrott's son, Leslie Junior joined the firm following graduation in 1951 and set about expanding the office to capitalise on the postwar boom. One of their early works was the Southern Cross Hotel, in association with the American architect Welton-Becket, which opened in 1962. They were also engaged on the Princes Gate Project (1963), which included the Gas & Fuel Buildings on Flinders Street, later demolished to make way for Federation Square (Statham 2012:537-8).

In 1971, the firm became Perrott Lyon Timlock and Kesa. Within central Melbourne, the firm designed the Bryson Centre at 174-192 Exhibition Street (1970-72), Nauru House at 80 Collins Street (1972-77), MMBW House at 120 Spencer Street (1976) and the polygonal Ansett House at 501 Swanston Street (c 1976-78). The firm was also responsible for the design of Museum underground station (now Melbourne Central) which formed part of the Melbourne City Loop rail project (Statham 2012:537-8).

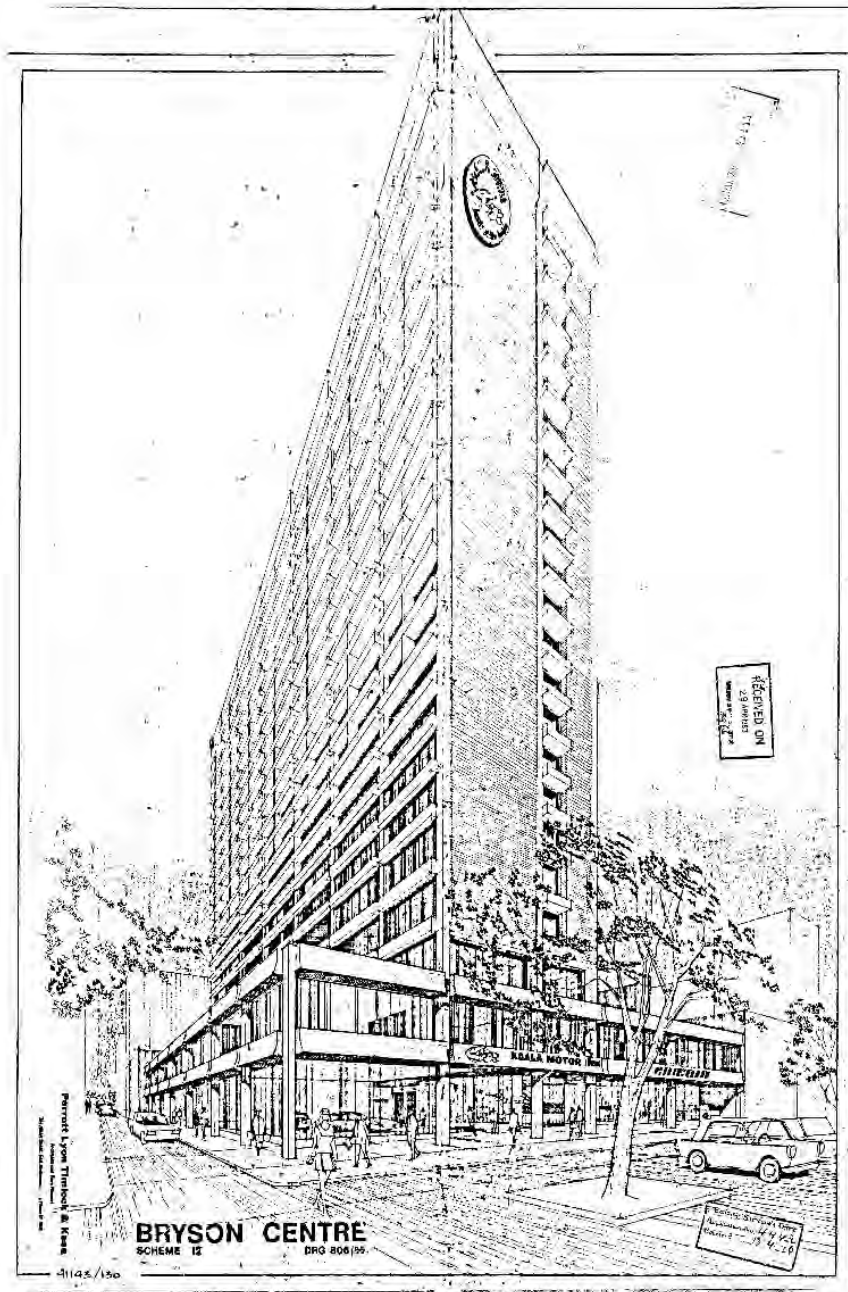


Figure 1. Architectural drawing of The Bryson Centre. Drawing by Perrott Lyon Timlock & Kesa, date stamped 1970 (BAP).

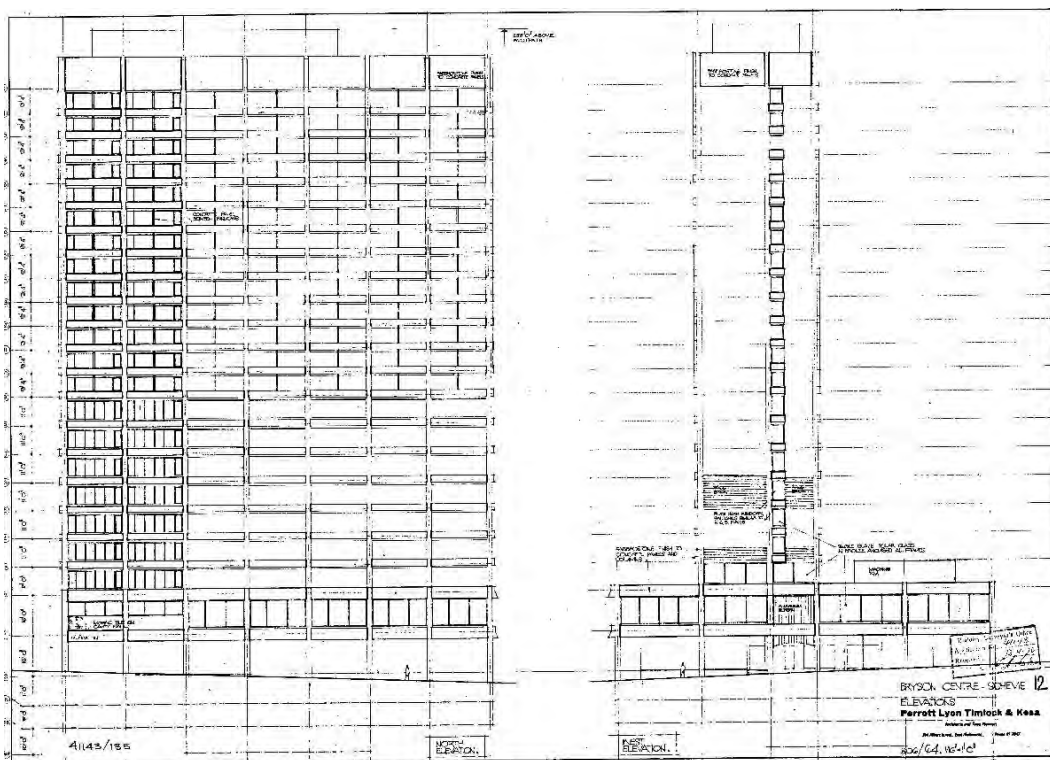


Figure 2. North elevation (left) to Little Bourke Street and west elevation (right) to Exhibition Street. The Bryson Centre, drawing by Perrott Lyon Timlock & Kesa, date stamped 1970 (BAP).

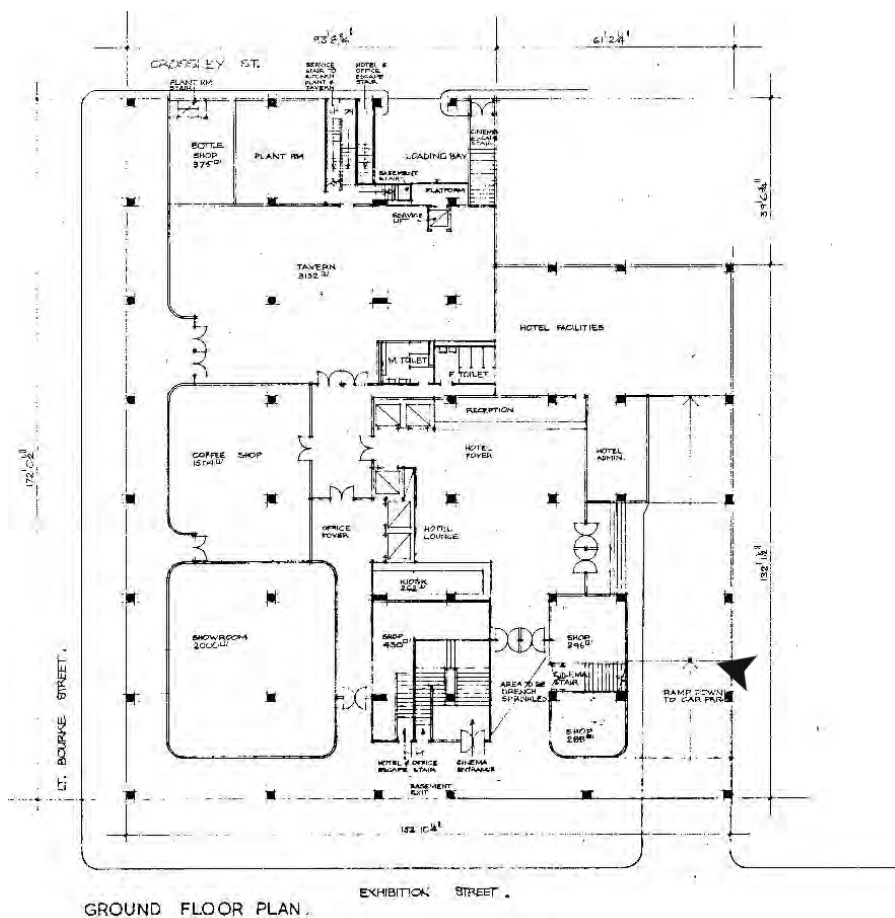


Figure 3. Ground floor plan. Drawings by Perrott Lyon Timlock & Kesa, date stamped 1970 (BAP).



Figure 4. An illustration of the building, published in October 1972, noting that Noah's Hotel Melbourne was due to open late 1972 (*Canberra Times*, 20 Oct 1972:4).

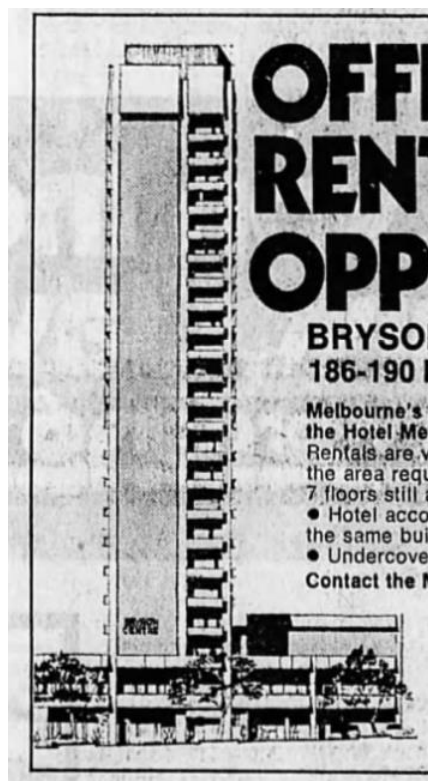


Figure 5. An illustration published in November 1972 (*Age*, 9 Nov 1972:15).



Figure 6. Photo of the newly completed hotel, published in the November/December 1972 issue of *Architecture in Australia* (AIA, Nov/Dec 1972:22).



Figure 7. An image of the newly completed building published in *The Age* in November 1972 (*Age*, 27 Nov 1972:19).

A guide to the 272 ft. Centre

Construction on the 272 ft. Bryson Centre was begun on 16 April, 1970, and completed on November 3.

Apart from the Hotel Melbourne, the complex contains an underground car park, a ground floor car showroom, a 600-seat cinema and seven floors of office space.

The Hotel Melbourne's facilities include three bars, a restaurant, coffee lounge, a complete floor for conventions and heated rooftop swimming pool.

Locations of these are:
 Ground Floor: the Port Side Inn, The Federation Tavern.
 First Floor: Noah's Restaurant, the Golden Nugget Cocktail Bar, the Playbill Coffee Lounge.
 Second Floor: Four convention rooms catering for up to 300.
 Roof: heated pool.

Hotel guests will check in at the ground floor reception lobby and be taken by express lifts to their suites, which run from the 10th to the top 23rd floor of the building.

The Bryson centre is an AMP Society development and was built by CDF Hooker Ltd. Perrott, Lyon, Timlock and Kesa were architects.

LEFT: The centre as it is seen from Exhibition Street.

Figure 8. An explanation of the occupancies of the newly completed building, published in *The Age* in November 1972 (*Age*, 27 No 1972:19).



Figure 9. Detail of a c1975 photo showing Hotel Melbourne in the background (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers photographer, Image H2000.195/28).



Figure 10. The subject site in 1984 (City of Melbourne Libraries online Heritage Collection, reference no. Butler 13733).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former Bryson Centre is a 23-storey commercial building located on the south-east corner of Exhibition Street and Little Bourke Street. The building has main frontages to both streets and a secondary frontage to Crossley Street to the west. Constructed in 1970-72 to a design by Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

The dominant element of this building is a tall, slim central tower which sits on an expansive double-storey podium that extends to the boundaries of the site. Running in an east-west direction across the site, the tower is flanked to the north and south by the lower podium. A two-level basement carpark under the whole building is accessed from the south end of the complex in Exhibition Street.

The building is of reinforced concrete column and slab construction, with the structure clearly expressed on the external facades. The north façade of the tower and sections of the other tower facades, contain sets of glazing with projecting precast concrete spandrels and balconies which span between the structural columns, forming a strong grid-like pattern. Precast concrete elements have an exposed aggregate finish. Framed with bronze anodised aluminium frames, the window mullions and transoms are indistinct, enabling the glazing to appear as strong horizontal elements. Intermediate mullions divide the upper bays and window sets into two parts, providing a subtle contrast between the upper and lower facades of the tower. This also reflected the original dual function of the tower - the upper floors provided hotel accommodation and the lower floors were designed for office use. The building is crowned by a solid parapet, divided into bays by vertical insets which continue the line of the façade columns below, which has provided a name plate for the building. Large vertical expanses of face brickwork on the south, west and east facades contrast with the glazed areas of these facades.

The form of the two-level podium at the base of the building, with continuous glazing and broad fascias, has been retained; however the original concrete columns and fascias have been recently reclad. Sections of face brickwork (some overpainted) have been retained at the rear of the building. At ground level, the building is recessed to form a raised balcony to the main frontages to Little Bourke Street and the northern end of Exhibition Street. The main entrance to the building is located in Exhibition Street, flanked by the raised balcony and the entrance to the underground carpark at the southern extremity. A low brick façade with deep fascia is just visible behind the lower podium to the south of the central tower. This large section of the complex originally housed a cinema.

INTEGRITY

The Former Bryson Centre, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building above street level, remains highly intact to its original 1970-72 construction. Recent recladding of the structure and associated works at street level has altered the original design at this frontage.

Overall, the building retains a very high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone alterations at street level, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Former Bryson Centre at 174-192 Exhibition Street was constructed as a large multi-functional building containing office space, hotel accommodation with roof top swimming pool, cinema,

restaurants and retail space at the ground floor, however the external appearance of the place is similar to the typical multi-storey city office building of the period. It is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of early 1960s to mid-1970s multi-storey commercial building design. Set on a double-storey podium base, the trabeated structural system of the building is clearly expressed on the grid-like external facades of the slim central tower. This is of particular note across the broad north façade where sets of glazing and projecting precast concrete spandrels and balconies span between structural columns. Despite modifications made to the building at street level, the upper facades of the Former Bryson Centre remain highly intact to their original design and can be clearly observed from Exhibition Street and Little Bourke Street.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the Former Bryson Centre. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay

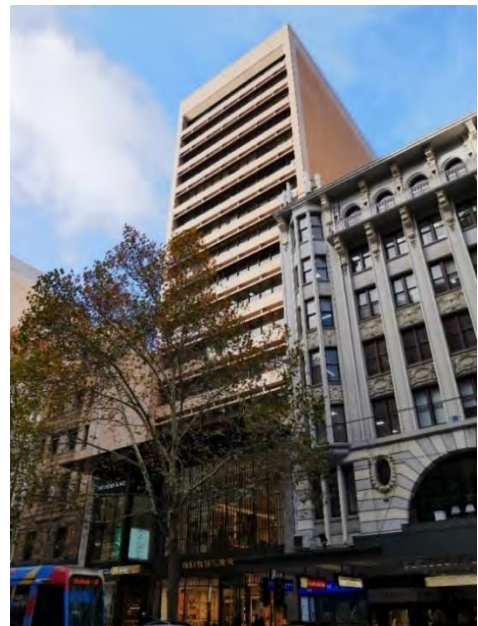
Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 19741-73 included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street
(Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street
(Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building,
359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon,
c1972-75)



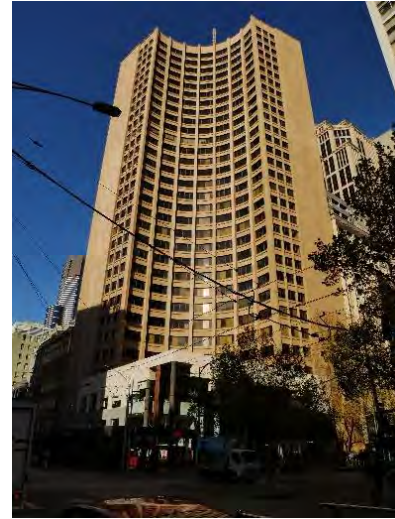
Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street
(Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

As a fine, highly intact and highly representative example of a Post-War Modernist style building, the Former Bryson Centre clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey commercial buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne. Similar to a number of 1960s to mid-1970s buildings listed above, the subject building clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

- Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*
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- The Age*.
- The Canberra Times* [A.C.T.]

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

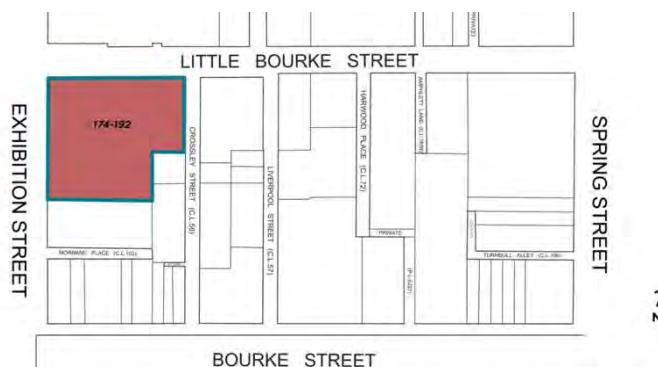
**Review of Heritage
Overlay Listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: The Former Bryson Centre

PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street, a multi-storey commercial building constructed in 1970-72.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made to the lower levels of the building are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former Bryson Centre at 174-192 Exhibition Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed in 1970-72 to a design by Perrott Lyon Timlock & Kesa, the Former Bryson Centre has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and the prestige afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

Containing a range of facilities for both tourists and businesspeople, the Former Bryson Centre was described on opening in 1972 as a 'city within a city'. Together with the earlier Southern Cross Hotel, which was described in a similar manner on opening in 1962 (since demolished), and Collins Place (completed 1981), this building demonstrates the development of this multi-functional building type in central Melbourne (Criterion A).

The Former Bryson Centre is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building. The multi-functional building combining office space, hotel accommodation, public amenities and retail space, strongly reflects an architectural style which was popular from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s, particularly in central Melbourne, and demonstrates an innovative approach to commercial development in the 1970s. Constructed as a 23-storey structure, the Former Bryson Centre clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a later postwar commercial building, including a dominant podium base, grid-like walls which clearly express the trabeated structural system and alternating horizontal strips of glazing and solid projecting spandrels/balconies, as well as the use of materials such as precast concrete panels. These demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style (Criterion D).

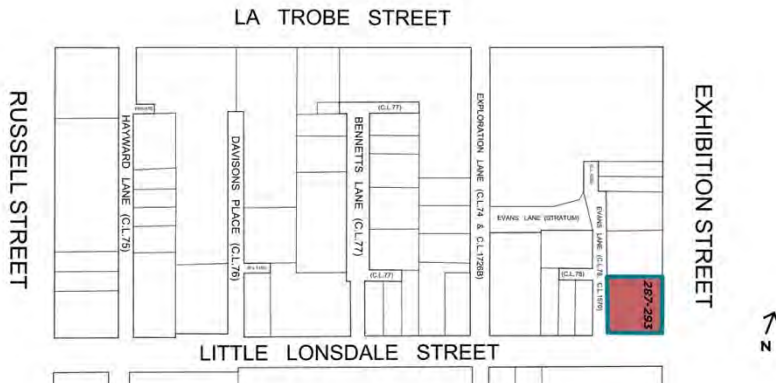
Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME Former Exhibition Towers [also known as Exhibition Apartments (current name)]

STREET ADDRESS 287-293 Exhibition Street, Melbourne

PROPERTY ID 103609



SURVEY DATE: October 2019

SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage

HERITAGE INVENTORY No

EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY No

PLACE TYPE Individual Heritage Place

PROPOSED CATEGORY Significant

FORMER GRADE Ungraded

DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST: Kenneth McDonald & Associates

BUILDER: Not known

DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: Postwar Period (1945-1975)

DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION: 1969-1971

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
5 Living in the city centre	5.1 Housing and lodging

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Retail, Hairdresser, Workshop
1920s	Retail
1960s	Café/Restaurant, Retail, Workshop, Manufacturer, Carrier

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The Former Exhibition Towers, a multi-storey building on the north-west corner of Exhibition and Little Lonsdale streets was designed by architect Kenneth McDonald & Associates, for owners Danbry Pty Ltd. The building was constructed in 1969-1971. It was initially designed and advertised as residential apartments but opened as the Courtesy Inn Motel in 1971.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Housing and lodging

The provision of accommodation has always been a major function of Australian city centres, and has included the establishment of hotels, hostels, boarding houses and serviced apartments, as well as terraces, flats and medium-density housing. Since the 1950s, the market sought by inner-city

developers has moved to an almost exclusively middle- to higher-income group. New forms of accommodation from the 1950s replaced older buildings with high-cost, high-rise buildings for a restricted range of users (Marsden 2000:53).

The postwar era saw the introduction of apartments and flats in the well-established inner suburbs of South Yarra and St Kilda, spreading to Caulfield, Malvern, Camberwell, Hawthorn and Prahran. Victoria's first block of 'own-your-own' or 'OYO' flats were built in Hawthorn in 1949 and the subsequent introduction of strata title legislation by architect and Lord Mayor Bernard Evans led to the proliferation of this housing type from the early 1950s (Heritage Alliance 2008:23).

The apartment boom reached the inner city in the late 1960s, facilitated by the *Conveyancing (Strata Titles) Act* of 1961. An Australian innovation, the legislation allowed each lot or apartment to have its own title deed (Stent 2018). Many émigré architects, who were experienced in higher density living in Europe, specialised in apartment design. Viennese-born architect Kurt Popper, for example, built two blocks of residential flats in central Melbourne – Park Tower, 199-207 Spring Street (1969) and 13-15 Collins Street (1970) (Heritage Alliance 2008:21).

Although marketed as a glamorous and convenient lifestyle, high-rise city apartment living was not popularly embraced. Exhibition Towers, an 11-storey residential building located at the north-west corner of Exhibition Street and Little Lonsdale Street, was designed and built as a residential and commercial building. Constructed in 1968-69 to a design by Kenneth McDonald & Associates, the building was an endeavour to provide 'OYO' flats in the city centre. 'High prices, high bills and Melbourne's conservative living style' contributed to difficulties in finding buyers for the units and the building was converted to the Courtesy Inn Motel in 1971 (*Age* 17 February 1971:3). It was also reported in 1971 that Park Tower was using its tenants' car spaces as a public car park and the flats were being let on short-term leases. Similarly, the two-month-old 13-15 Collins Street apartments contemplated filling its lower four floors with shops, offices and medical practices (*Age* 17 February 1971:3, Figure 8).

In 1974, the MCC introduced a policy to encourage residents back to the city through the construction of a variety of residential typologies. However, because development was market driven, it was predominantly offices and retail spaces that were constructed in the city centre (Marsden 2000:54, 112).

SITE HISTORY

The multi-storey building on the north-west corner of Exhibition and Little Lonsdale streets was designed by architect Kenneth McDonald & Associates, for owners Danbry Pty Ltd. The building was constructed in 1969-1971, initially designed and advertised as flats. The consulting engineers were John Connell & Associates (BAP).

Architectural drawings for the project, dated June 1968 and entitled 'Flats at 287-293 Exhibition Street,' show the key elevations (Figure 1). One drawing dated June 1968 had an annotation that the 11-storey building was intended to have shops on the ground floor and a total of 55 flats comprising 44 one-bedroom units and 11 bachelor units. Later floor plans dated October 1970 show the layout of the ground floor with a reception area and dining room, and a typical floor plan comprising five units (Figure 2 & Figure 3) (BAP).

The City of Melbourne received a building permit application for the multi-storey building in March 1969 (with an estimated total value of \$600,000) (BAI). During the construction phase, the building

was advertised in newspapers and listed in the Sands & McDougall Directories as 'Exhibition Towers' (the directory annotated with 'Flats being built' in 1970) (S&Mc; *Age*, 7 Mar 1970:39). One advertisement described 'Exhibition Towers' with:

magnificent town units, designed for luxury living. Superb kitchen, fully laminated cupboards, ultra mod. bathrooms, separate laundry. Huge lounge and bedroom. From only \$10,000 (Age, 7 Mar 1970:39).

A photograph of the building under construction was published in May 1970 (Figure 4) with an advertisement entitled "'Exhibition Towers" O-Y-O (own your own) Flats in the heart of Melbourne,' with one-bedroom units priced from \$15,900 (*Age*, 2 May 1970:39).

In February 1971, *The Age* reported that the Exhibition Street development had changed from private flats to a motel use, opening as the Courtesy Inn Motel in February 1971. While the article stated that high-rise developers had difficulty finding buyers for highly-priced city units, it also quoted D J Ryan, the developer of the site, as saying, "I didn't convert this into a motel because the flats wouldn't sell, I turned it into a motel because a feasibility study shows that it would be more profitable as a motel' (*Age*, 17 Feb 1971:3).

The building served as the Courtesy Inn Motel and was occupied by the Lazy Leprechaun Restaurant in 1974 (S&Mc). In 1974, the high-rise units were again advertised for sale via strata title (*Age*, 14 Dec 1974:77). In 2019 the building is called Exhibition Apartments (CoMMaps).

Kenneth McDonald & Associates, architects

Kenneth McDonald (1927-1996) studied architecture at the University of Melbourne, during which period two of his student designs were published in the *Australian Home Beautiful* magazine. Following completion of his studies, McDonald gained employment in the Department of Works & Housing, at which time he also designed his own house in Balwyn North (1951). The residential design incorporated the innovative butterfly roof, not seen before in Melbourne, which was profiled in and popularised by a number of newspapers and magazines (Reeves).

In early 1953 McDonald published an article in the *Argus* that argued for the provision of modern hotels in central Melbourne, accompanied by his own scheme for a multi-storey hotel in Collins Street. Later in 1953 McDonald became advertising director of the influential Melbourne-based architecture magazine *Architecture & Arts*, and was Editor from 1953 to 1963 (Reeves).

McDonald continued his private architectural practice, with an interest in modern hotel architecture, designing Hotel International in Potts Point, Sydney (1956) and a holiday resort in Currumbin, Queensland (1960). One of his later designs was Exhibition Towers at 287-93 Exhibition Street, Melbourne, (1969-71), which opened as the Courtesy Inn Hotel. Other commissions in the 1950s and '60s primarily comprised residential projects and shopping centre developments (Reeves).

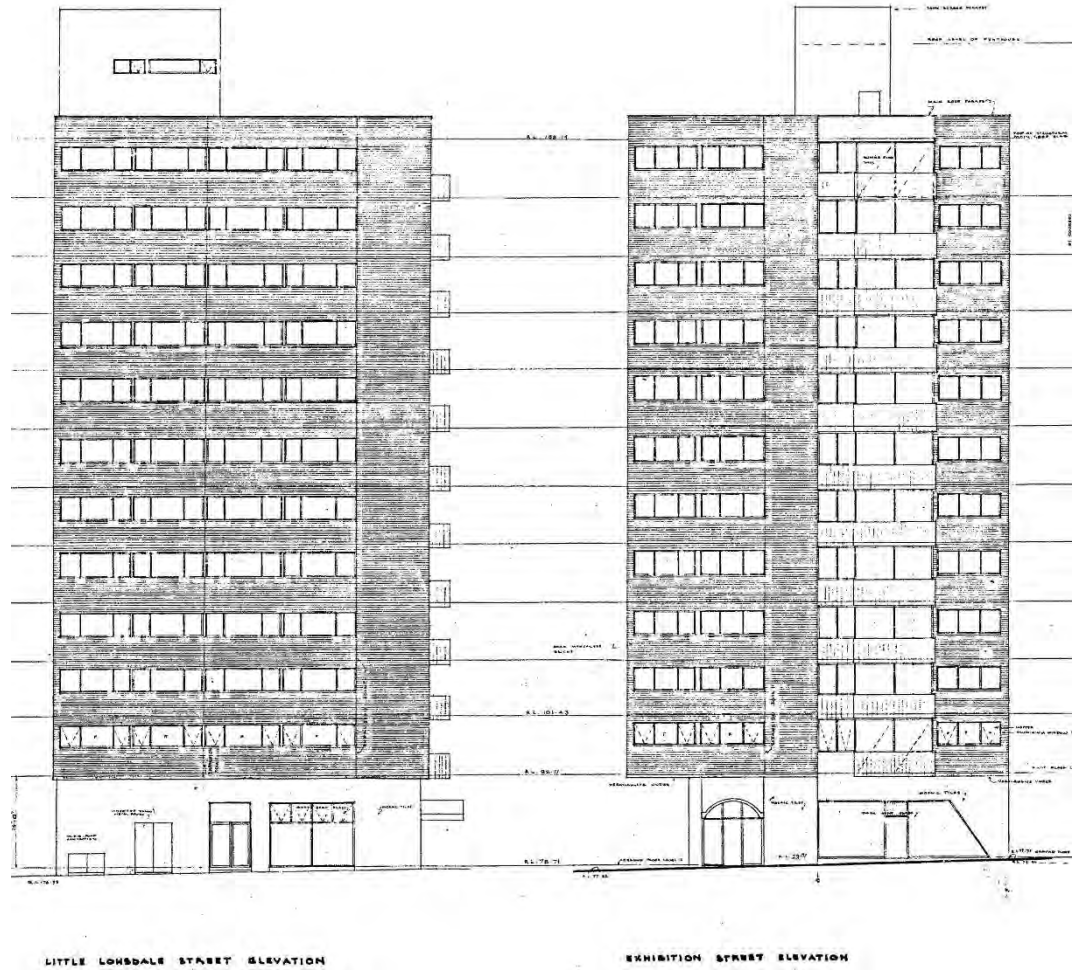


Figure 1. South elevation to Little Lonsdale Street (left) and east elevation to Exhibition street (right). Drawings by Kenneth McDonald & Associates, dated June 1968 (BAP).

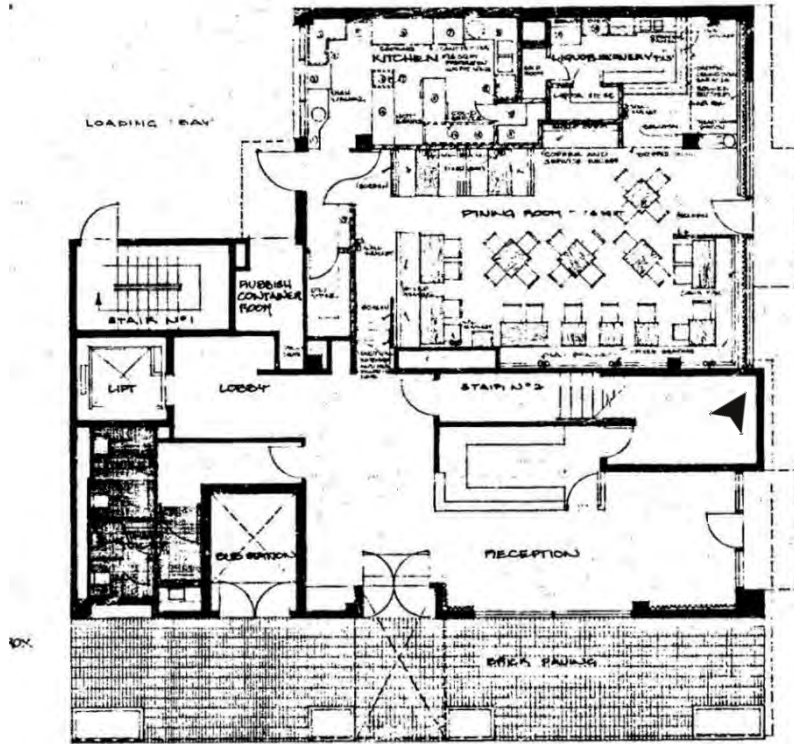


Figure 2. Ground floor plan detailing the reception and dining room areas. Drawing by Kenneth McDonald & Associates, dated October 1970 (BAP).

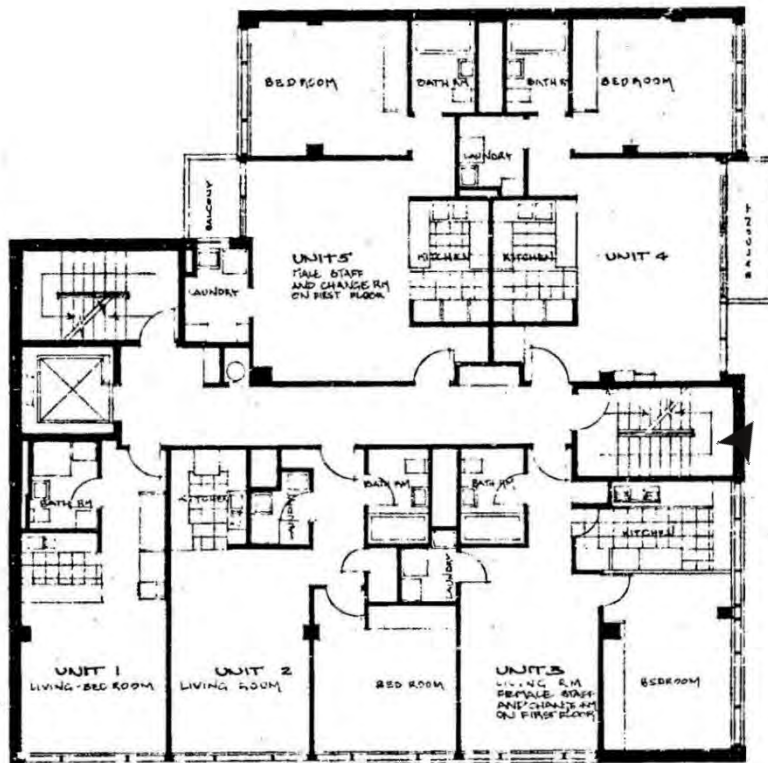


Figure 3. A typical floor plan of the residential floors, comprising five units. Drawing by Kenneth McDonald & Associates, dated October 1970 (BAP).



Figure 4. Image of the building under construction, published in May 1970 in a sales advertisement for the units (*Age*, 2 May 1970:39).



Figure 5. An image of the completed building, published in December 1974 as part of a sales advertisement for units (*Age*, 14 Dec 1974:77).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former Exhibition Towers at 287-293 Exhibition Street, is an 11-storey residential building located at the north-west corner of Exhibition and Little Lonsdale streets. The building has main frontages to both these streets and a secondary façade to Evans Lane which forms the western boundary of the site. Constructed in 1969-71 to a design by Kenneth McDonald & Associates, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

The building occupies the majority of the square corner site with a vacant loading dock area at the north-west corner. It is a reinforced concrete column and slab structure with curtain walls of beige brick, and sits on a prominent podium base which is deeply recessed under the south side of the tower. The main facades above street level contain rows of aluminium-framed windows which alternate with rows of brick spandrels. Both the Exhibition and Little Lonsdale street facades are asymmetrical with rows of windows which terminate at either broad or narrow brick piers at the corners of the building. The Exhibition Street façade contains a prominent contrasting bay of windows with rendered spandrels and a vertical stack of projecting balconies. A similar vertical row of balconies, and associated rows of windows, is located at the northern end of the west façade, facing Evans Lane. The remainder of the west façade is of plain face brickwork with the exception of a vertical row of hit-and-miss brickwork grilles which enable ventilation to each floor.

At street level, the tower cantilevers over the street level podium on the south side, creating a protected canopy to a deep Little Lonsdale Street entry, and a projecting arched canopy provides protection to the main Exhibition Street entrance. Street level openings to both Exhibition and Little Lonsdale streets appear to date from the original construction, however mosaic tile cladding (noted on the original architect's drawings) has been removed and alterations have been made recently to the northern window and door set in Exhibition Street. An arched canopy has been added to the Little Lonsdale Street entrance with later steel fencing enclosing the verandah space.

INTEGRITY

The Former Exhibition Towers, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building above street level, remains highly intact to its original construction in 1969-71. Works to the building at street level have altered the original design, although some original detailing remains.

Overall, the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone alterations at street level, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey residential building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Former Exhibition Towers at 287-293 Exhibition Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of 1960s to mid-1970s multi-storey residential building design. Located on a corner site, the building's solid external appearance with brick curtain walls, horizontal strips of aluminium-framed windows, prominent vertical row of projecting balconies and contrasting podium base, can be clearly observed from Exhibition Street. Despite minor changes to street-level facades, the upper facades of the Former Exhibition Towers remain highly intact to its original design.

Other Post-War Modernist residential buildings in the Hoddle Grid

The modern residential apartment building emerged as a building type in central Melbourne in the late 1960s and there are a small number of buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the Former Exhibition Towers. These are detailed below.



Park Tower, 199-207 Spring Street (Kurt Popper, 1969) (Interim HO1263)



Apartment Building, 13-15 Collins Street (Kurt Popper, 1970) Interim HO1265 & currently included as a Significant place in Collins East Precinct HO504



Treasury Gate, 93-101 Spring Street (Moore & Hammond, 1971) (Interim HO1262)

Analysis

As a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist residential building, the Former Exhibition Towers at 287-293 Exhibition Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey residential buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne. Similar to the three residential apartment buildings identified above and also recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as Individual Heritage Places, the Former Exhibition Towers clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*

Building Application Index (BAI), City of Melbourne.

Building Application Plans (BAP), City of Melbourne.

City of Melbourne Maps (CoMMaps), Site Details.

Reeves, Simon, 'Kenneth McDonald (1927-1996)', in Dictionary of Unsung Architects, accessed via <http://www.builtheritage.com.au/dua_mcdonald.html>, February 2020.

Sands & McDougall Directories (S&Mc).

The Age.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

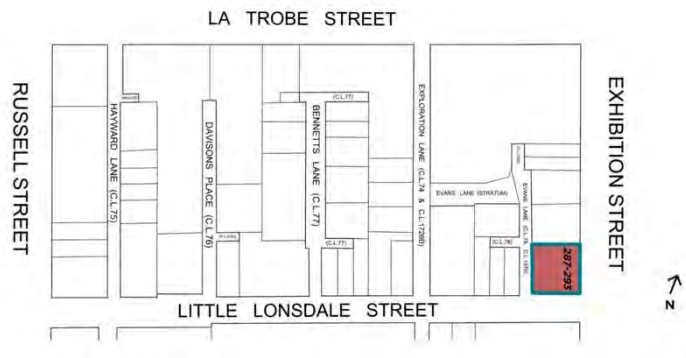
**Review of Heritage
Overlay Listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Exhibition Towers

PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Former Exhibition Towers at 287-293 Exhibition Street, a multi-storey residential building constructed in 1969-71.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made to the building at street level are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former Exhibition Towers at 287-293 Exhibition Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed in 1969-71 to a design by Kenneth McDonald & Associates, the Former Exhibition Towers has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. Architect designed multi-storey residential apartments were built in central Melbourne for a brief period from the late 1960s to the early 1970s and contributed to the high-rise character of the city (Criterion A).

The Former Exhibition Towers is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist residential building. The building strongly reflects the style which was popular in the late

1960s and early 1970s, particularly in central Melbourne. Constructed as an 11-storey building, the Former Exhibition Towers clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a late 1960s/early 1970s structure, including a solid external appearance with brick curtain walls, horizontal strips of aluminium-framed windows, a prominent vertical row of projecting balconies and contrasting podium base. These demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style (Criterion D).

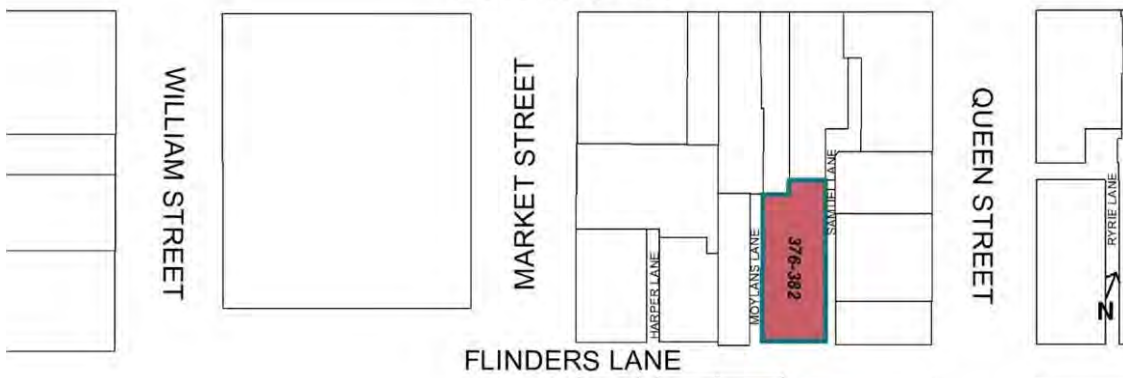
Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange
STREET ADDRESS	376-382 Flinders Land, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	103962



COLLINS STREET



SURVEY DATE: March 2019	SURVEY BY: Context
HERITAGE INVENTORY N/A	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY No
PLACE TYPE Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY Significant
	FORMER GRADE Ungraded
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST: Commonwealth Department of Works	BUILDER: McDougall & Ireland Pty Ltd
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION: 1957

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review Vols. 3 & 4 June 2016) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style
2 Governing, administering and policing the city	2.1 Commonwealth government

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Merchants
1920s	Offices
1960s	Telegraphic and telephonic

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

The former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange at 376-382 Flinders Land was built in 1957 to a design by the Commonwealth Department of Works. The builders were McDougall & Ireland Pty Ltd. The eight-storey curtain wall and masonry building exhibits elements of the Post-War Modernist style, but also aspects of the earlier Inter-War Functionalist style. The building was one of several telephone exchanges commissioned by the Commonwealth in the postwar era, in response to the rapid expansion of telephone subscriptions and of the technical advancements in telephonic services in the mid to late twentieth century.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

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Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

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Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Commonwealth government

In 1948, the Commonwealth Government compulsorily acquired land on either side of Little Lonsdale Street, between Spring and Exhibition streets. The Commonwealth Centre (now demolished) was subsequently constructed on this block of land (with a street address of 11-39 La Trobe Street) over the period 1958 to the early 1960s. Its construction transformed 'the image of the Federal government in central Melbourne into that of a modern corporation' (Lewis et al 1993:223-24, 255).

As Commonwealth powers increased after World War II, Commonwealth buildings in city centres rose in number. Of particular influence was the transfer in 1942 of income tax revenue from the states to the Commonwealth and the resultant construction of buildings for the Taxation Office, including a building in Bourke Street, which opened in 1958. Marsden writes that the Commonwealth government presence, including the establishment after the war of the new Department of Housing and Construction, reinforced Melbourne's continuing pre-eminence as Australia's financial centre, at least until the 1960s.

A telephone exchange and postal hall building was constructed by the Commonwealth government at 114-120 Russell Street in the period 1948-54. In 1956 the building served as a relay station for the broadcasting of newly arrived television. In 1959, the Commonwealth Arbitration Courts opened at 450 Little Bourke Street, and in 1965 the Reserve Bank of Australia opened at 56-64 Collins Street. A telephone exchange was also constructed by the Commonwealth Department of Works at 376-382 Flinders Lane and opened in 1957.

SITE HISTORY

The subject site at 376-382 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, part of Crown Allotment 12 of Block 3, was first purchased by W Powell for £17 in 1837 (Badman & S&Mc 1892; DCLS 1839). The subject site had a street frontage to Little Flinders Street (now Flinders Lane). It abuts Moylans Lane on the west and Samuel Lane on the east.

In 1888 two buildings occupied the subject site, which was addressed 376, 380 and 382 Little Flinders Street in 1895 (Mahlstedt Map no 3, 1888; MMBW Detail Plan no 1010, 1895). F Watmuff, printer, and H Dove and Co, carpenters, were the occupants of 45-47 Little Flinders Street, which comprised a two-storey building fronting Little Flinders Street and three single-storey timber structures at the rear of the allotment, facing Moylans Lane. Samuel E and Co, merchants and importers, were the occupants of number 376, an elongated two-storey brick building that was built to the boundary line (Mahlstedt Map no 3, 1888). By 1910, the assemblage of structures at 378 Flinders Lane had been replaced with a three-storey brick building built to boundary line, numbered 378 Flinders Lane, and occupied by the Master Builders Association of Victoria (Mahlstedt Map section 1 no 18, 1910). In 1951 the Master Builders Association was evicted under police supervision to make way for the construction of the new Batman Telephone Exchange (*Mercury* 20 February 1951:2).

The Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange was built in 1956-57 for the Postmaster General's Department, to the design of the Commonwealth Department of Works (then known as Department of Works and Housing) (National Trust 2014:23). Planning for the building had begun at least ten years earlier, by 1946. A notice to erect the building was announced by the Minister for Works in 1946 (*Age* 12 April 1946:8). The Minister planned for the Batman Telephone Exchange to accommodate the administrative staff of the Postal Department and to replace the City West automatic exchange on Little Bourke Street, built 1937, which had reached its capacity for line allocations (*Age* 12 April

1946:8). The switchboard of the manual exchange on Lonsdale Street, opened 1911, had by this point become worn out and superseded by automatic switchboards (*Age* 12 April 1946:8). The Minister gave the estimated cost of the building as £175,550, and the equipment as £554,900 (*Age* 12 April 1946:8). Construction of the building was delayed by the inflated costs of building materials and labour at the end of World War Two.

Melbourne's postwar recovery incorporated a period of rapid population growth. This rise in population, in turn, led to an increased demand for telephone line subscriptions. A Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works issued a report relating to the proposed Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange at Flinders Lane, noting that while the expected cost of the works had risen dramatically from the initial quote of £175,550 to £441,000, there remained an urgent need for the proposed works to meet the growing demand for subscription lines. The Committee report found that a new exchange to service the western area of the City of Melbourne was necessary, as were the building of the Russell Street Exchange and Civic Exchange on Elizabeth Street, both constructed concurrent to the subject building (Commonwealth of Australia 1946).

In 1949 amendments were made to the original plans for the Batman Telephone Exchange, which included the elimination of a cantilevered section of the building to comply with local by-laws; the inclusion of a sub-basement; the strengthening of the structural frame and floors, and the subdivision of four upper floors (Commonwealth of Australia 1946).

McDougall & Ireland Pty Ltd were awarded the building contract for the exchange (*Herald* 12 June 1953:10). A tender was published in 1950 for the construction of a steel-framed and concrete building to be carried to the height limit of seven storeys plus basement (*Age* 27 May 1950:31). An article published in the *Herald* reported that the sub-basement of the Batman Exchange was reinforced with steel and heavy concrete, descending 17 feet at its deepest end, with foundations some further 30 feet down, enabling the sub-basement to provide safety for staff in the event of an atomic bomb (*Herald* 7 July 1949:5).

By 1953, the structural framework had been erected, and two passenger lifts and a goods lift had been installed (*Age* 4 March 1953:13). In 1954 construction was still underway, as evidenced by advertisements seeking carpenters for the exchange; the main switchboard was installed in the same year (see Figure 1) (*Age* 14 September 1954:16; *Age* 16 June 1954:13). The Batman Telephone Exchange opened in 1957 (see Figure 2). Designed by the Commonwealth Department of Works, the National Trust describe the building's design as 'almost *retardataire* in its [sic] amalgamation of a stark cream brick façade, evocative of pre-war government architecture, with a slightly projecting curtain-walled-bay' (National Trust 2014:22).



Figure 1. The subject building at 376-82 Flinders Lane under construction, c1950-1957. (Source: NAA 1917-1968, Series: B5515, Item no: 9815665)



Figure 2. The subject building at completion c1957. (Source: NAA 1957-1984, Series: B6295, Item no: 9723653)

Few alterations have been made to the subject building apart from a significant internal electrical upgrade in 1966' (*Age* 15 June 1966:36). Minor works included the provision of a sectional boiler and head tank in 1963 and alterations and additions were made to the internal partitions in 1979 (*Age* 14 December 1963:67; *Age* 17 November 1979:116).

By the late 1960s, satellite and microwave technologies had integrated Melbourne's telephones into a global communications system (Healy 2008) and in 1987, Telecom (created in 1975 following the abolition of the Postmasters General Department) announced that it would open a Mobilenet cellular mobile telephone service, with the Lonsdale Telephone Exchange one of twelve base stations in Victoria to which Mobilenet users could subscribe (*Age* 25 May 1987:35).

It is believed that ownership of the subject building was transferred from the Commonwealth government to Telecom (later Telstra Corporation) in 1986.

The Telstra Corporation presently occupies the whole of the building.

Commonwealth Department of Works, designer

The Commonwealth Department of Works was established in 1901 to manage the creation of public works in the newly federated nation. Although the agency has operated under different titles in its history – it was known as the Department of Works from 1952 to 1973 – it is commonly referred to as the Commonwealth Department of Works (CDW) to distinguish it from state-based agencies. The Department was responsible for the design, construction, alteration and maintenance of Commonwealth buildings and other engineering works. Its offices were located in Melbourne until 1929, when they were transferred to Canberra. A period of intensive works were carried out by the CDW during and immediately after World War Two, as the Department managed the building of essential infrastructure as well as significant postwar planning (Smith 2006). By the early 1970s, the activities of the CDW were slowly declining; its functions were transferred to the Department of Housing and Construction in 1978, then the Department of Transport and Construction in 1982 and

from 1987, it was known as Australian Construction Services. The vestiges of the CDW were sold off to an engineering firm in 1997 (Willis 2012).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange at 376-382 Flinders Lane is an eight-storey commercial curtain wall and masonry building. It was constructed in 1956-57, but planning for the building had begun at least ten years earlier, by 1946. The building exhibits elements of the Post-War Modernist style, but also aspects of the earlier interwar Functionalist style. Located on the northern side of Flinders Lane, the building is abutted by Moylans Lane on the west and Samuel Lane on the east.

The principal façade to Flinders Lane exhibits an unusual asymmetrical combination of a solid modernist form of light-coloured face brick, with an offset projecting curtain wall which extends from the first to the fifth floors. The curtain wall abuts a projecting vertical fin wall at its western end but is inset from the corner of the building at its eastern end. The curtain wall is framed in aluminum, with vertically alternating clear glazed and opaque panels to provide a lightweight grid across the façade. The height of glazed and opaque panels at each level varies, and there are three rows of clear glazed panels to each opaque row at the second and third levels, whereas the first, fourth and fifth floors have two rows of clear panels. Two large ventilation shafts are inserted into the curtain wall at the eastern end, each occupying the equivalent of two vertical modules. All of the windows are fixed, suggesting that the building was constructed with air conditioning systems.

There are two additional levels within the face brick component above the projecting curtain wall module, and each level is punctuated by six equally spaced vertically proportioned window openings, each of which has a projecting perimeter concrete frame. The original double hung timber frame windows are extant at the seventh floor level, but have been replaced by fixed single pane aluminum frame windows at the sixth floor level. A vertical element with a flagpole extends one level higher than the main roof level on the easternmost corner of the building. There are narrow projecting eaves at the top of both the curtain wall and at the main roof level. The internal building structure is of reinforced concrete post and slab.

The southern section of the eastern (Samuel Lane) façade is face brick near the front corner and off-form concrete masonry at the rear. Within the face brick section there is a continuous vertical window providing daylight into the stairwell. The western (Moylans Lane) façade is also off-form concrete, punctuated by a regular pattern of steel frame windows.

At the street level the building is clad with large (possibly original), vertically proportioned tiles. There are no windows to the Flinders Lane façade at ground level, but the building entrance is located on the eastern side and is recessed with the wall curving outward to the principal façade. Three concrete steps lead to the front door, which features a large glazed transom above a modern door.

INTEGRITY

The former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange at 376-382 Flinders Lane is highly intact in terms of its original built form and configuration, with very few obvious external alterations or additions to the original fabric, other than replacement of the front door and windows on the sixth level. The original non-loadbearing aluminium curtain wall with its alternating clear glazed and opaque panels is extant,

as is the solid modernist form of light-coloured face brick with its window openings and projecting perimeter concrete frames. Overall, the building is of very high integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

After World War Two ended, building activities in the central city revived slowly. The 1950s saw the development of the modern multi-story office building in Melbourne, often built for insurance or finance companies, or for professional offices. Reinforced concrete frames provided the structural systems, allowing the façade to be clad in non-load bearing curtain walls. The Post-War Modernist style became popular, becoming the preferred option for commercial buildings being constructed in central Melbourne during the late 1950s and beyond. Characteristics of the Post-War Modernist style include a cubiform overall shape, plain smooth wall surfaces, contrasting texture and expressed structural frames.

Curtain wall designs were used in a number of corporate buildings built in the 1950s. Early examples were the Norwich Union Insurance offices at 53-57 Queen Street (Yuncken, Freeman Brothers, Griffiths & Simpson), which incorporated panels of opaque black glass, and the new Allan's Music Store building in Collins Street (Godfrey Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb), with metal panels in a bright gloss red. In early examples, curtain walls were typically fully glazed, while in later examples, a greater range of materials were used to achieve variety of expression. A group of buildings built predominantly in the 1950s combined expansive glazed panels with solid masonry sections to achieve a distinctive aesthetic. They represent a particular stage in the development of this new building type.

There are a number of buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A comparative example in the City of Melbourne which is located immediately adjacent to the Hoddle Grid is ICI House, 1-4 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1958). This place is included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H0786).

Locally-significant places

Precinct Heritage Overlay

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from the early postwar period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme. Those from the 1950s that are included in the Heritage Overlay are currently included as part of Heritage Precincts, but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places. These places are:



Former Gilbert Court, 100-104 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1954-55) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Hosie's Hotel, 1-5 Elizabeth Street & 288-290 Flinders Street (Mussen McKay & Potter, 1954-55), included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct as a Significant place.



Coates Building, 18-22 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1958-59) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Bank of Adelaide Building, 265-269 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, 1959-60) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Allans Building, 276-278 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, 1956-57) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Contributory place.

Other Examples

Despite the demolition of many 1950s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the initial period of curtain wall construction in Melbourne and demonstrate similar characteristics to the subject building. The following examples are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places as part of the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review:



Lauren's House, 414-416 Lonsdale Street (Harold Bloom, 1956) (Interim HO1254).



Former Atlas Assurance Building, 404-406 Collins Street (H Garnet Alsop & Partners, 1958-61) (Interim HO1008).



Former London Assurance House, 468-470 Bourke Street (B Evans & Partners, 1960) (Interim HO1006).



Former AMP Building, 402-408 Lonsdale Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1956-59).



Former Ajax House, 103-105 Queen Street (HD Berry, 1956).



HC Sleigh Building, 166-172 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1953-55).



Coles & Garrard Building, 376-378 Bourke Street (Meldrum & Noad, 1957).



Canton Insurance Building, 43-51 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1957).



Former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange, 376 Flinders Lane (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1957).

Analysis

In its use of a non-loadbearing curtain wall façade system, the former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange at 376-382 Flinders Lane is comparable to a number of other central Melbourne buildings included – or recommended for inclusion – in the HO. The subject building is particularly comparable with Laurens House, as both are examples of early 1950s commercial buildings that utilise a major curtain wall component in conjunction with a solid masonry form, rather than the curtain wall being the sole façade element.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

✓

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

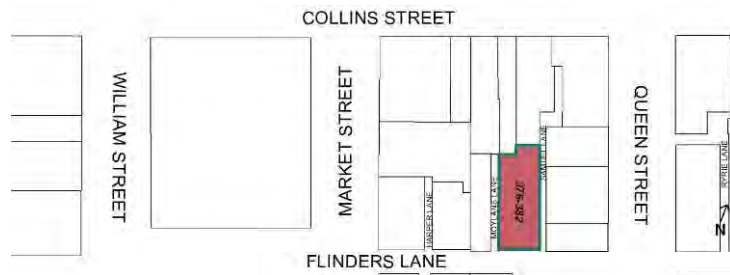
**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Automatic Telephone Exchange

PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange, 376-378 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, built by the Commonwealth Department of Works in 1957, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- Original building form and scale;
- Original asymmetrical composition of solid light-coloured face brick form and nonloadbearing curtain wall to its principal (Flinders Lane) façade;
- Vertically proportioned window openings with projecting perimeter frames; and,
- Original street level façade clad in tiles and recessed entry door opening with toplight.

Later alterations are not significant.

How it is significant?

The former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange at 376-378 Flinders Lane is of local historic, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange, opened in 1957 at 376-382 Flinders Lane, is historically significant for the material evidence it provides of the broadening of Commonwealth government powers after World War Two, a shift that resulted in increased construction of Commonwealth buildings in city centres by the Commonwealth Department of Works. As a large-scale

purpose-built building it demonstrates the growth and changes in telecommunication technology in the period following World War Two. (Criterion A)

The former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange, is significant as a highly intact example of postwar multi-storey development in central Melbourne, utilising the Post-War Modernist style that characterised this new wave of development. These buildings represented the new modernism in their modular, industrial Bauhaus-inspired aesthetic incorporating features such as consistent access to daylight and open floor plans to meet new standards for commercial office accommodation. The presence of stylistic features characteristic of the interwar Functionalist style demonstrates the building's lengthy planning and design phase as a result of delays to construction that were typical of early postwar construction. (Criterion D)

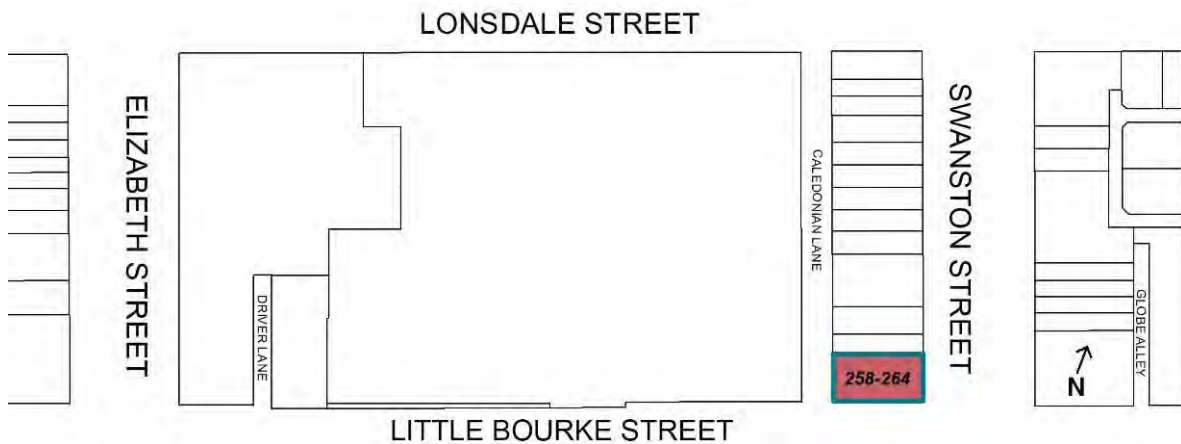
The building is also representative of the modern purpose-built telephone exchange buildings, designed by the Commonwealth Department of Works in the early postwar period to accommodate growth in telecommunications as well as accommodating an expanded workforce. The internal technical requirements of these telephone exchange buildings are evident in the variations between high floor to ceiling heights across different levels. (Criterion D)

The former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange is aesthetically significant as a substantial, refined and highly intact example of a lightweight aluminium curtain wall Post-War Modernist style multi-storey building. The principal façade to Flinders Lane exhibits an unusual asymmetrical combination of a solid modernist form of light-coloured face brick, with an offset projecting curtain wall which extends from the first to the fifth floors. The building also demonstrates characteristics of the interwar Functionalist style, including the use of light-coloured face brick punctuated by vertically proportioned window openings with projecting perimeter frames. Overall, it is a well-executed design by the Commonwealth Department of Works, who were responsible for many high quality public buildings during the interwar and early postwar periods. (Criterion E)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former State Savings Bank
STREET ADDRESS	258-264 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	109289



SURVEY DATE: October 2018		SURVEY BY: Context	
HERITAGE INVENTORY	No	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Meldrum and Partners	FORMER GRADE	C
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	BUILDER:	Not known
		DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1961

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Hotels and Lodgings
1920s	Hotels and Lodgings
1960s	Offices

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

The former State Savings Bank of Victoria building at 258-264 Little Bourke Street is a 12 storey commercial curtain wall corner building built in the Post-War Modernist style, with subtle 'featurist' elements. It was constructed in 1961 to a design by architects Meldrum & Partners and Robert Cousland.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17).

Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The site on which the current building stands was previously occupied by a hotel and shops (S&Mc 1915; 1960). The hotel was named the Castlemaine Club Hotel in 1895, however by 1914 it was known as the Swanston Family Hotel with Thomas Finlayson as its proprietor (MMBW Detail Plan 1015, 1895; S&Mc 1914).

The State Savings Bank of Victoria building at 258-264 Little Bourke Street was built to a design by architects Meldrum & Partners and Robert Cousland, bank architect (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). Offering 'long contracts', tenders were advertised in October 1960 for tradesmen to work on the site (Age 6 October 1960: 21).

The origins of the State Savings Bank of Victoria can be traced back to 1842 when it was founded in Melbourne as the Port Phillip Savings Bank under New South Wales' legislation. Branches of the Bank were subsequently established in other parts of the colony. Owned by the State of Victoria from 1852, from 1853 each bank branch was made a separate and independent institution with its own trustees and officers.

Between 1896 and 1912 the independent Savings Banks of Victoria merged to become a single institution, formalised by legislation in 1912. By 1929 deposits with the Bank accounted for almost two thirds of deposits across all banks in Victoria (Merrett 2008; Trove 2009).

The bank took a keen interest in social welfare and contributed to the construction of housing. In the 1920s the State Savings Bank created a housing estate in Port Melbourne, one of a number of initiatives to encourage home ownership in the early to mid-twentieth century. After World War Two the Bank began lending on overdraft to the co-operative housing societies. By June 1954 some 51 societies had received overdraft facilities from the State Savings Bank, amounting to £15.7 million. (Merrett 2008) The State Savings Bank was sold to the Commonwealth Bank in 1990 (Trove 2009).

As commemorated on an original plaque on the building, the State Savings Bank of Victoria building opened on 27 April 1961. Sands and McDougall directories show that by 1965 the building was occupied by the State Savings Bank, as well as other company offices, including printers, manufacturers and importers, indicating that much of the building had been purposely set aside to be let out to tenants (S&Mc 1965).

Following construction, only internal alterations were made to the building, with partitions added to multiple floors in 1969 and 1981 (MBAI 40804; 5266). On the first floor, offices were altered in 1982 and new doors were installed in 1990 (MBAI 71178). The State Savings Bank of Victoria remained occupants of the subject building until 1990 when the bank was taken over by the Commonwealth Bank (Merrett 2008; Trove 2009). In 2002, the building was subdivided into 12 units, and currently contains 29 businesses, four shops and three food outlets (CoMMaps).



Figure 1. State Bank building, corner Little Bourke and Swanston streets under construction, 28 October 1960. (Source: Commercial Photographic Co 1960, SLV)



Figure 2: State Bank Building c 1985 (Source: City of Melbourne Building Identification Sheet, 1985)

Meldrum & Partners, architects

Percy Hayman Meldrum studied at Ballarat College and was articled to A A Fritsch from 1907 to 1913. Moving to London in 1914, Meldrum practiced as an aircraft designer at the War Office and established an atelier in Wells Street, London, which became a gathering place for Australian architects engaged in war service. At the end of World War One Meldrum joined the staff of the Architectural Association, where he taught A G Stephenson and Donald Turner. In 1921, he returned to Australia to join A G Stephenson as Stephenson & Meldrum. Practising as principal designer, he strongly encouraged the inclusion of murals and sculpture in the firm's projects. His work during this time included Newspaper House, at 247-249 Collins Street (1932) and Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historic Museum (1930).

Stephenson & Meldrum were also involved in the extension of the former State Savings Bank of Victoria building constructed at the corner of Bourke and Elizabeth streets (demolished c1970). Built in 1912 to designs by architects Grainger & Little, Stephenson & Meldrum designed the 1925 two-storey additions and the 1934 extensions that took the building up to the Elizabeth Street corner (Walking Melbourne).

Meldrum practiced as Meldrum & Noad between 1937 and the 1950s, during which time he won the 1942 RVIA Street Architecture Medal for the National Bank of Australasia building in Collins Street (now known as 77-89 William Street) (1938) (Willis 2012: 450).

Meldrum was joined in practice by his son, Richard John Meldrum (1928-2004), who gained a bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of Melbourne in 1951. The architectural practice

Meldrum & Partners was formed in 1959 and became Meldrum Burrows when Sydney-based Bill Burrows later joined the firm. (Willis 2012:450).

Meldrum Snr retired from practice in 1965. Meldrum Burrows gained particular prominence in the 1970s and 1980s and were involved in advising on strategic planning for large projects, including the Australian Embassy at Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (1989) in collaboration with Daryl Jackson, and Philip Cox's Parliament House, Darwin (Willis 2012: 450).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The former State Savings Bank of Victoria building at 258-264 Little Bourke Street is a 12 storey commercial curtain wall corner building in the Post-War Modernist style, with subtle 'featurist' elements, constructed in 1961. It exhibits a prominent Bauhaus grid design aesthetic across the principal street façade (Little Bourke Street) with largely unadorned and solid end walls clad with polished stone panels on the secondary street frontages (Swanston Street and Caledonian Lane). The subject site is bound by Swanston Street to the east, Little Bourke Street to the south, Caledonian Lane to the west and a low-rise retail building to the north.

The façade to Little Bourke Street comprises an aluminium framed nonloadbearing curtain wall, with alternating vertically glazed and solid panels providing a lightweight grid across the façade. Every second glazed panel is fitted with an openable sash as the building predates the use of air conditioning. Adjacent to the entry is an original plaque commemorating the building's opening in 1961.

The frame is of natural aluminium finish and the solid panels are red in colour, aligned at the level of the floors. The other three facades are solid masonry, finished with stone-panel cladding punctured by the repetitive chequerboard sequence of square window openings. Underneath the cladding is probably off-form concrete, based on the image of the building under construction. The facades have small windows at each level, which are generally square except for the western elevation where the windows are elongated horizontally. The eastern façade to Swanston Street is clad with brown granite with square window openings. The northern façade of the building can be seen above the low-rise neighboring buildings and features four centrally placed openable square windows at each level and a stylised clockface at its eastern end. The building has no formal termination or parapet at the top level, as is typical of the style.

The original main concrete peripheral columns are expressed at ground level, although the retail and office foyer shopfront system has been replaced over time. The Swanston Street frontage features 'TV display' windows at first floor level, and has a suspended box awning over the ground floor entry lobby, which is an addition since 2010.

INTEGRITY

Overall the building is largely intact with very few changes visible to original or early fabric. The building retains its original nonloadbearing aluminium curtain wall with its alternating vertically glazed and solid panels. At street level the retail and office foyer shopfronts have been altered, and an awning added to the Swanston Street entrance. Overall, the building has very high integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The 1950s saw the development of the modern multi-story office building in Melbourne, often built for insurance or finance companies, or for professional offices. Reinforced concrete frames provided the structural systems, allowing the façade to be clad in a non-load bearing curtain wall. In early examples, curtain walls were typically fully glazed, while in later examples, a greater range of materials were used to achieve variety of expression.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the former State Savings Bank. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 19741-73 included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of

construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



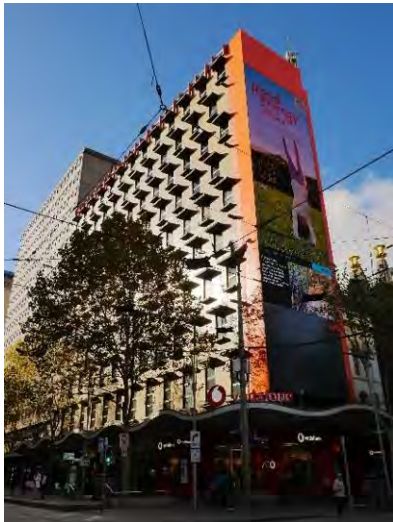
Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Koller, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



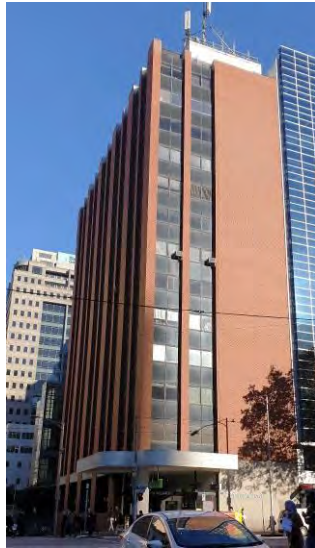
Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building, 359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

The former State Savings Bank of Victoria building at 258-264 Little Bourke Street is comparable to a number of other central Melbourne buildings either included in or proposed for inclusion in the HO. The buildings are of a similar scale, although some examples are mid-block, situated between other buildings, whereas 258-264 Little Bourke Street has frontages to three streets and demonstrates the use of masonry (probably off-form concrete) sheer walls to provide the three-dimensional frame for the curtain wall elevation. The Little Bourke Street façade demonstrates the prominent Bauhaus grid design aesthetic of the Post-War Modernist style, based on repetitive horizontal and vertical modules made possible by the use of a lightweight aluminium curtain wall system which maximises access to daylight. Like the examples noted above, the former State Savings Bank demonstrates the vertical grid pattern that is characteristic of the style with vertically alternating clear glass and opaque panels. The building retains a high level of integrity above the ground floor, comparing favourably with other examples of the style in central Melbourne.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

✓

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** D
(listed as 231-235 Swanston Street)

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** C
(listed as 231-235 Swanston Street)

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

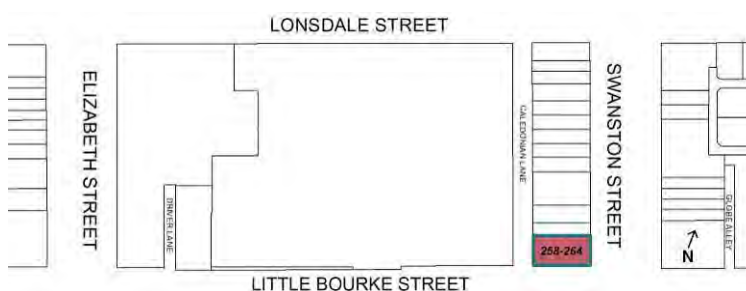
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former State Savings Bank



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The former State Savings Bank at 258-264 Little Bourke Street, completed in 1961 to a design by Meldrum & Partners and Robert Cousland, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- Original building form and scale;
- Original non-loadbearing curtain wall;
- Original masonry side and rear walls and windows; and
- Original commemorative plaque and clock (northern elevation).

Later alterations, particularly at street level, are not significant.

How it is significant?

The former State Savings Bank at 258-264 Little Bourke Street is of historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The former State Savings Bank, completed in 1961, is historically significant for the evidence it provides of Melbourne city's postwar development and rapid growth. The modernist architecture of the postwar period played a role in the formulation of company identities, as expressions of ambition and relevance, at a time when companies opted for construction and also naming rights of new city office buildings as a form of promotion. Built for the State Savings Bank of Victoria, the building at 258-264 Little Bourke Street is historically significant as a reflection of the growth and progress of locally established banks

during the 1950s-60s, that resulted in architecturally designed company-named buildings being erected. (Criterion A)

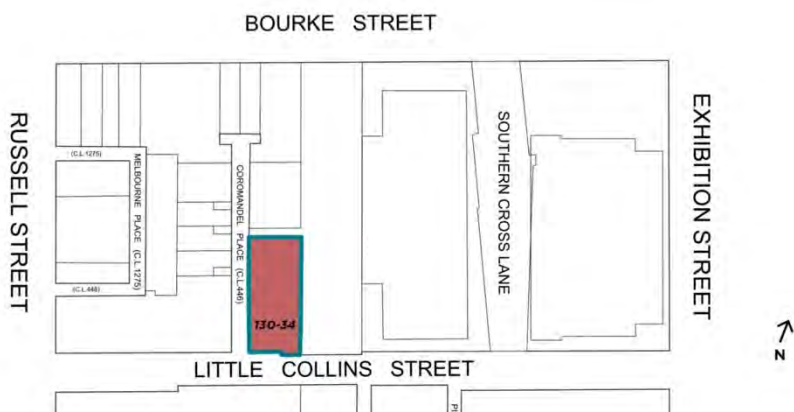
The former State Savings Bank is significant as a highly intact example of postwar commercial development in central Melbourne, utilising the Post-War Modernist style that characterised this new wave of development. These buildings represented the new modernism in their modular, industrial Bauhaus inspired aesthetic incorporating features such as consistent access to daylight and open floor plans to meet new standards for commercial office accommodation. The former State Savings Bank demonstrates the key characteristics of the style. (Criterion D)

Designed by architects Meldrum & Partners and Robert Cousland, the building is aesthetically significant as a substantial Post-War Modernist style commercial building. It exhibits the prominent Bauhaus grid design aesthetic of the style with its lightweight aluminium framed, fine-graded modular curtain wall across the principal street façade (Little Bourke Street), with alternating clear glazed and coloured opaque glass spandrel panels superimposing a refined grid over the building. (Criterion E)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former Methodist Church Centre [also known as Uniting Church Centre]
STREET ADDRESS	130-134 Little Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	106052



SURVEY DATE: October 2019	SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage		
HERITAGE INVENTORY	No	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER GRADE	Ungraded
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Bates Smart & McCutcheon with F C Armstrong	BUILDER:	Not known
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1966-1967

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style
	1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
4 Creating a functioning city	4.3 Providing health and welfare services

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Hotel, Retail
1920s	Office, Hairdresser, Retail
1960s	Retail/Workshop, Office, Community

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The Former Methodist Church Centre at 130-134 Little Collins Street was designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, in association with architect F C Armstrong, as the administrative centre for the Methodist Church. The building was constructed in 1966-1967.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Providing health and welfare services

Health, welfare and education services were historically established in Melbourne's city centre. The Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre at 588-600 Little Collins Street (1972-73) was one of many charities

established as part of the Catholic Church's official missionary work to provide pastoral care, services and support for seafarers.

The Pharmaceutical Guild, established in Victoria in 1928 to ensure the quality of medicines and to establish a uniform scale of wages for pharmaceutical assistants, constructed a building at 18-22 Francis Street in 1954 to a design by Cowper, Murphy and Appleford. Optometrists, Coles and Garrard, established an office building and consulting rooms at 376 Bourke Street in 1957 to a design by architects Meldrum and Noad.

The Queen Victoria Hospital, established in La Trobe Street in 1896 as the first women's hospital in Victoria, moved to 210 Lonsdale Street in 1946. Its primary aim was to be a hospital 'For Women, By Women'. By 1965 it became the new Monash University's teaching hospital for gynaecology, obstetrics and paediatrics and changed from treating solely female patients to being a 'family hospital'. Renamed the Queen Victoria Medical Centre in 1977, it relocated to the Monash Medical Centre at Clayton in 1989 (Russell 2008).

SITE HISTORY

The Former Methodist Church Centre at 130-134 Little Collins Street was designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon in association with architect F C Armstrong (BAP). The City of Melbourne received a building permit application for the Methodist Church Centre in May 1966 (with an estimated total cost of \$944,000) (BAI), and the building was constructed in 1966-1967.

An article published in *The Age* in October 1965 discussed the building, which was proposed to serve as the administrative centre for the Methodist Church of Victoria and to house all the activities for the group (Figure 1). Construction was to begin in March 1966, with completion expected by April 1967. The article reported that the:

...ground floor, with an attractive modern foyer well set back, will consist of a large all-purpose auditorium and servery ... On the first floor will be another hall to seat 200, with a servery, large lounge, library and quiet room and a small chapel for special purposes. (Age, 15 Oct 1965:16)

The other floors provided office spaces for the church, while a rooftop garden, refreshment room and caretaker's flat was proposed for the roof (Age, 15 Oct 1965:16).

The architectural drawings, dated October and November 1965 (Figure 2 - Figure 4), indicate that the building was designed with double-hung, aluminium-framed windows. Columns to the southern entrance were faced with black granite while the entrance steps comprised bluestone steps and marble risers. The ground floor comprised a large meeting hall with a dias at the north end (BAP).

Photos of the completed building, dated 1968, show the interior spaces and rooftop garden (Figure 5 - Figure 6). In 1977, the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Union denominations combined to form the Uniting Church. The building served as the Uniting Church Centre until mid-2019 when it was sold to a hotel developer (Financial Review; CoMMaps).

Bates Smart & McCutcheon, architects

Bates, Smart & McCutcheon was formed when Osborn McCutcheon joined the existing firm of Bates & Smart in 1926. Bates & Smart had itself been born out of previous iterations of a firm that could be traced back to Reed & Barnes, making it one of the oldest practices in the country (Goad 2012:72).

By the 1960s the firm had become one of Australia's largest architectural firms. It exists today as Bates Smart (Goad 2012:72).

During the 1930s, Bates, Smart & McCutcheon had earned a reputation for designing Georgian-style residences, but also went on to win RVIA awards for their work on the AMP Building in Collins Street (1926-31), Buckley & Nunn Building in Bourke Street (now David Jones, 1933), and the Second Church of Christ Scientist in Camberwell (1936-37).

By the 1950s, Bates, Smart & McCutcheon had become Australia's 'expert' in high-rise office buildings design (Goad 2012:73). Much of their work at this time was large structures with glass curtain walls. In Melbourne this was exemplified by ICI House, which broke the city's existing 132-foot (40m) height limit in 1955-8 (Goad 2012:73). Other work completed by the firm in the 1950s included the first of the Sleigh Buildings at 158-172 Queen Street Melbourne (1953-55 & 1964), Union House at 43-51 Queen Street Melbourne (1957) and the AMP Building at 402-408 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne (1956-58).

Bates, Smart & McCutcheon continued to expand into the 1960s and 70s, with its design approach shifting from glazed curtain walls to facades of artificial stone or prefabricated concrete panels. Works in Melbourne during this period included AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, Bourke Street (1965-69) in association with US firm, Skidmore Owings and Merrill; the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61); the South British Insurance Company Ltd Building at 155-161 Queen Street (1961-62) and the Methodist Church Centre at 130-134 Little Collins Street (1966-67) with F C Armstrong.

In the 1970s the firm designed the Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street, Melbourne (c1972-75); the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73) and the double tower and plaza complex of Collins Place, Collins Street (1970-80), undertaken in collaboration with international architecture practice, I M Pei. Other notable works by the firm include the large collaborative designs of Melbourne Central with Kisho Kurokawa (1983-92) and Federation Square with Lab Architecture Studio (1997-2002) (Goad 2012:74).

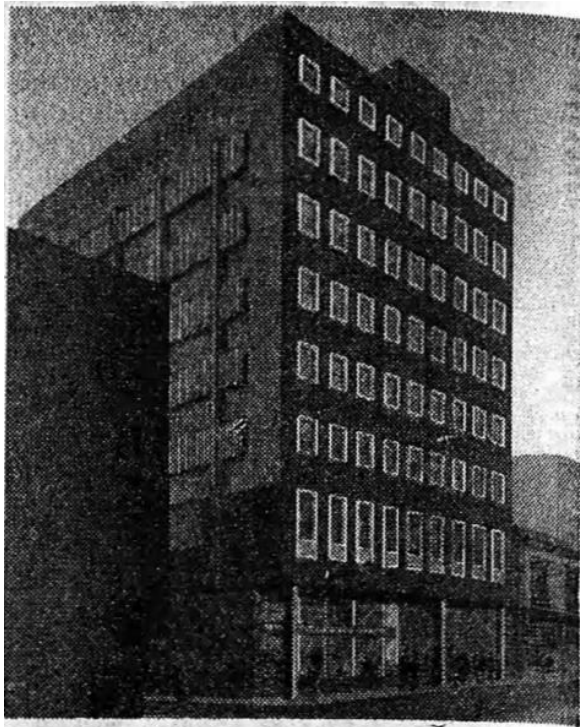


Figure 1. Sketch of the proposed new Methodist Church Centre, designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, in association with F C Armstrong. Sketch published in *The Age* in October 1965 (5 Oct 1965:16).

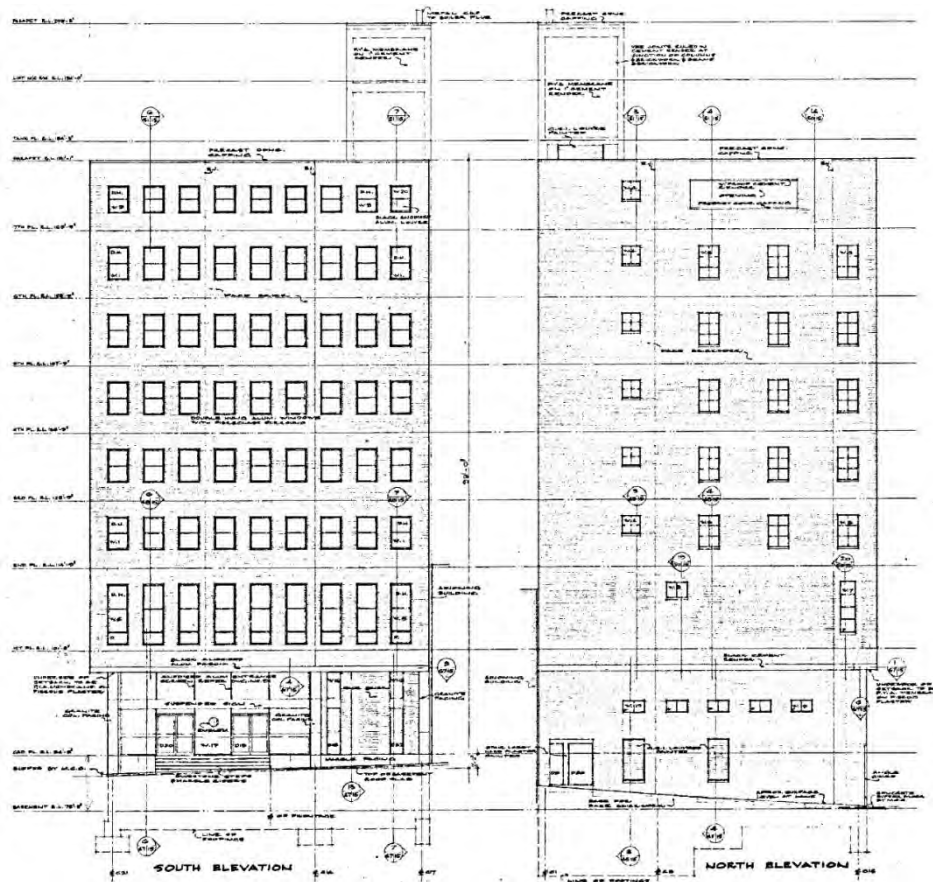


Figure 2. South (left) and north (right) elevations. Drawings by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, in association with F C Armstrong, dated November 1965 (BAP).

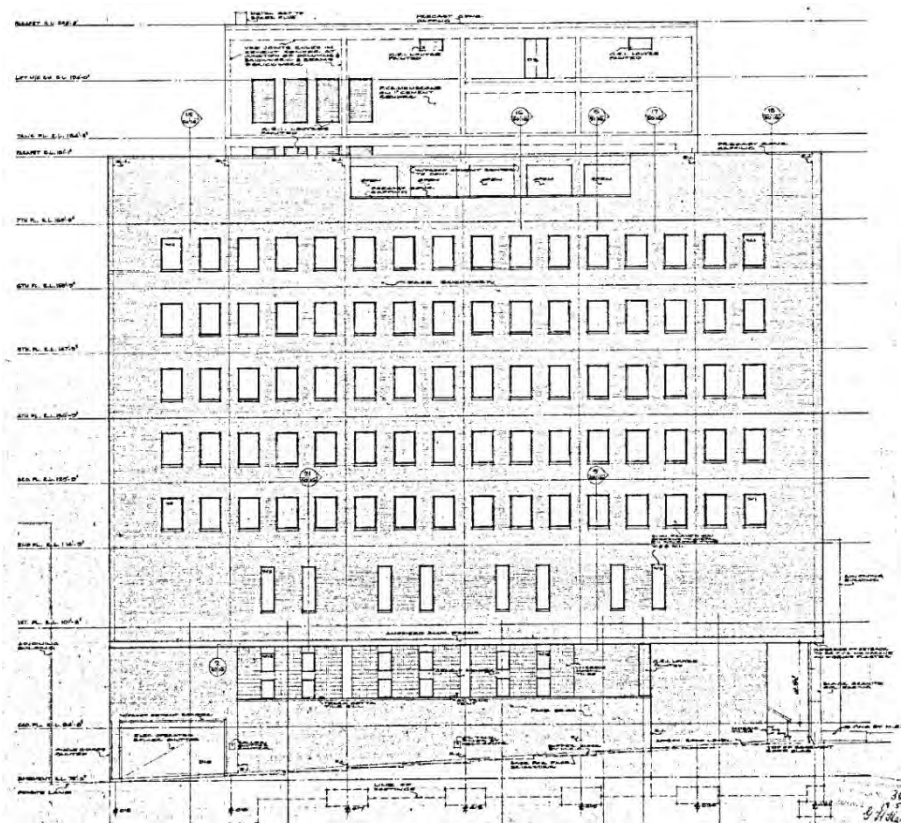


Figure 3. West elevation, to Coromandel Place. Drawings by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, in association with F C Armstrong, dated November 1965 (BAP).

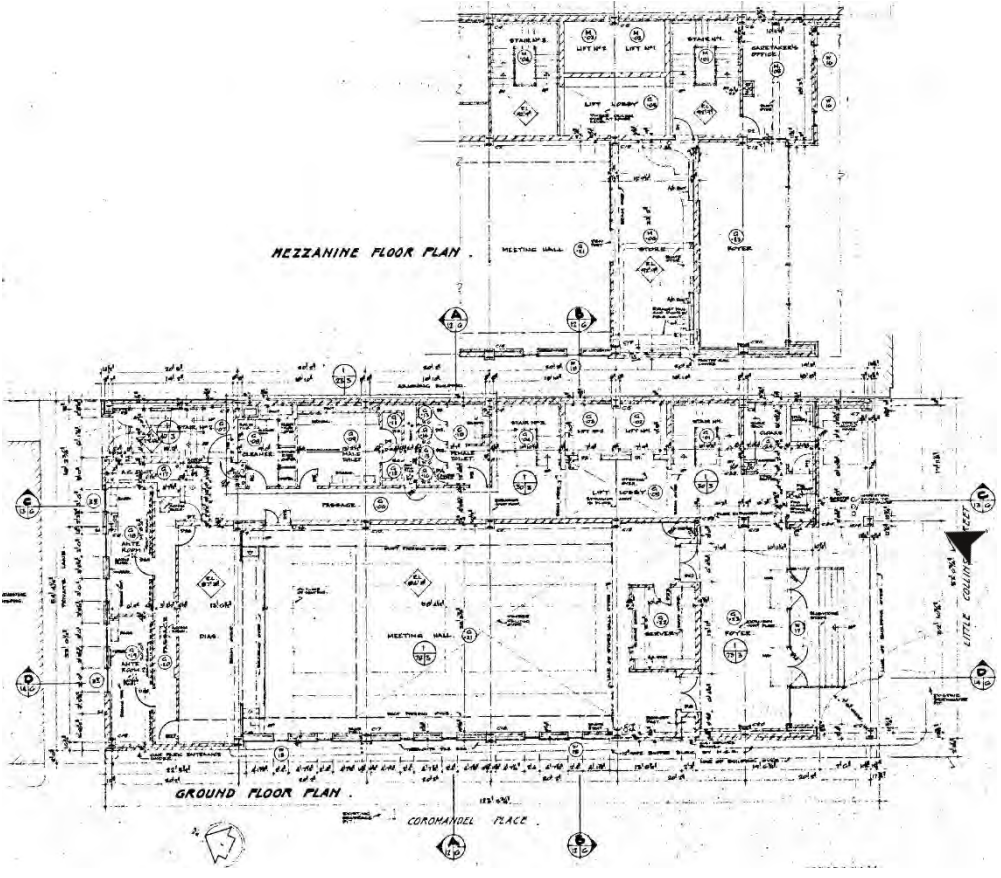


Figure 4. Plans of the ground (bottom) and mezzanine (top) floors. Drawings by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, in association with F C Armstrong, dated October 1965 (BAP).



Figure 5. The rooftop garden, looking south to Collins Street, in 1968 (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H2000.195/318).



Figure 6. The foyer in 1968 (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H2000.195/311).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former Methodist Church Centre at 130-134 Little Collins Street is a 7-storey commercial building located on the north side of Little Collins Street between Russell Street and Exhibition Street. Constructed in 1966-67 to a design by architects Bates, Smart and McCutcheon in association with F C Armstrong, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

Rectangular in plan with a narrow frontage facing Little Collins Street, the low-scale building is surrounded by taller buildings. The broader western façade faces a laneway, Coromandel Place, which provides access to a basement car park.

The building is of concrete encased steel column and beam construction with facades of exposed brown brickwork. Simple frameless glazed openings are set into the main Little Collins Street façade, forming rows of individual double-hung windows with thin fibreglass surrounds. The resulting grid-like

pattern across the façade includes an accentuated double-height first floor level with double-height window openings. Rows of multi-paned, metal-framed windows are set into the west and north (rear) facades, and a large section of the visible eastern façade is a plain rendered wall.

At street level the facades to Little Collins Street and Coromandel Place are slightly recessed, with an aluminium fascia to the overhang. In Little Collins Street, a set of stairs is set well back from the building line behind an aluminium-framed, glazed screen. A ramp, set parallel to the building face, occupies an open space to the east, and a glazed shopfront is located at the south-west corner of the building. Towards the rear in Coromandel Place, a mosaic-tiled section of the recessed base contains pairs of deep-set windows which provided natural light to the interior.

INTEGRITY

The Former Methodist Church Centre, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building above street level, remains highly intact to its original construction in 1966-67. Some modifications have been made at street level, including insertion of a shopfront, however the general form of the structure at street level, including the recessed stairs, have been retained. These works have had minimal impact on the overall original design of the building.

Overall, the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone alterations at street level, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey commercial building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Former Methodist Church Centre at 130-134 Little Collins Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of 1960s to mid 1970s multi-storey commercial building design. This includes a solid grid-like front façade of regularly spaced, frameless glazed openings set in a dark brick wall, an accentuated first floor level and subtle recessed podium and the use of mosaic tiles to the side façade. Despite some modifications made to the building at street level, the upper facades of the Former Methodist Church Centre remain highly intact to their original design and can be clearly observed from Little Collins Street and Coromandel Place.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the Former Methodist Church Centre. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)

- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1974-73) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kelle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kelle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street
(Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street
(Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (Perrot
Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building,
359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon,
c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird &
Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen
Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

As a fine and highly intact representative example of Post-War Modernist building, the Former Methodist Church Centre at 130-134 Little Collins Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne. Similar to the small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings presently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme – and a number of other examples identified above – the Former Methodist Church Centre clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975* Building Application Index (BAI), City of Melbourne.

Building Application Plans (BAP), City of Melbourne.

City of Melbourne Maps (CoMMaps), Site Details.

Financial Review (2 Jul 2019), 'Jeff Xu's Golden Age buys laneway site from Uniting Church', <<https://www.afr.com/>>, accessed November 2019.

Goad, Philip (2012), 'Bates Smart & McCutcheon' in Philip Goad & Julie Willis's (Eds.) (2012), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Port Melbourne.

State Library of Victoria (SLV), picture collection, images and photographers as cited.

The Age.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

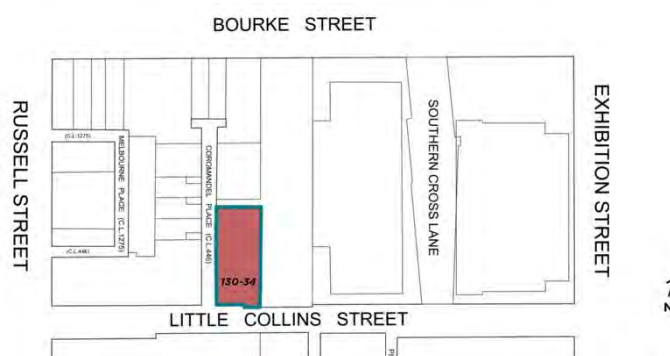
**Review of Heritage
Overlay Listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Methodist Church Centre

PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street, a multi-storey office building constructed in 1966-67.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made to the street level facades are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former Methodist Church Centre at 130-134 Little Collins Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed in 1966-67 to a design by Bates Smart & McCutcheon in association with F C Armstrong, the Former Methodist Church Centre has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. Constructed as the administrative centre for the Methodist Church, the building was used to coordinate the Church's activities throughout the State for over 50 years. (Criterion A).

The Former Methodist Church Centre is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist office building. The building strongly reflects the style which was popular in the 1960s to the mid 1970s, particularly in central Melbourne. Constructed as a 7-storey building, the Former Methodist

Church Centre clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a 1960s to mid 1970s structure, including a solid grid-like front façade of regularly spaced, frameless glazed openings set in a dark brick wall, an accentuated first floor level and subtle recessed podium, and the use of materials such as mosaic tiles to the side façade. These design features demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style (Criterion D).

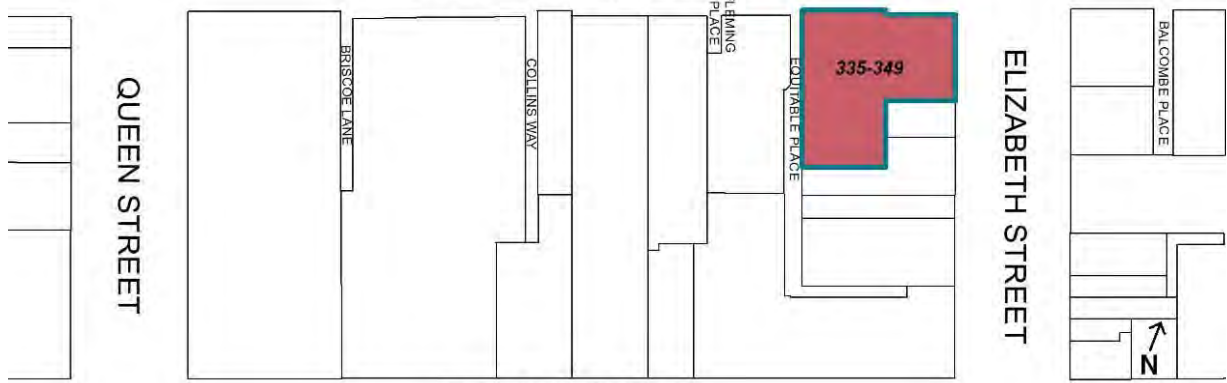
Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Equitable House
STREET ADDRESS	335-349 Little Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	105929



LITTLE COLLINS STREET



SURVEY DATE: October 2018 **SURVEY BY:** Context

HERITAGE INVENTORY	N/A	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER GRADE	C
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Stephenson & Meldrum (1925), Unknown (1968)	BUILDER:	Reinforced Concrete & Monier Pipe Construction (1925), Unknown (1968)
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1925, 1968

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
HISTORIC THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
3 Shaping the urban landscape	3.2 Expressing an architectural style
5 Building a Commercial City	5.4 Developing a retail centre
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style
	1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
	1.10 Brutalism and brickwork
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LANDUSE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LANDUSE	
1890s	Warehouses and yards
1920s	Hotels
1960s	Retail

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, constitutes two distinct built forms arranged in an L shape formation: one of 11 storeys fronting Little Collins Street, built in 1925; the other of 13 storeys fronting Elizabeth Street, built in 1968. The 1925 building was designed by architects Stephenson & Meldrum in the interwar Commercial Palazzo style. The 1968 building is an interesting combination of both the late twentieth century Brutalist and Post-War Modernist styles (architect unknown). The site was long associated with James McEwan, whose wholesale and retail ironmongery business, James McEwan & Company Ltd, occupied part of the subject site for some 113 years, from 1852 to 1965. James McEwan & Company was acquired by Bunnings in 1993.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

Interwar Period

Expressing an architectural style

The interwar period brought with it a surge in tall building construction in the central city, made possible by the use of structural steel and reinforced concrete framing. In response, a height limit was imposed by the City Council in 1916, dictated by the limitations on fire-fighting at that time. A maximum height of 40 metres (132 feet) was dictated for steel and concrete buildings, a limit that was not broken until the 1950s. Commercial buildings in the 1920s were mainly of the Commercial Palazzo style, as exemplified by Harry Norris's Nicholas Building in Swanston Street (1925). The style was an early attempt at creating a style suitable for the tall building. It was divided into a base, shaft and cornice, much like a Renaissance palazzo. The scale, however, was greatly enlarged, with the shaft stretching up to 10 storeys. By the 1930s, the soaring height of the new office towers was embraced and the vertical thrust emphasised in the Commercial Gothic style and the Jazz Moderne. Landmark examples include, respectively, Marcus Barlow's Manchester Unity Building (1929-32) and the Tompkins Bros' Myer Emporium in Bourke Street (1933) (Context 2012:19-20).

Developing a retail centre

By the early 1840s, Elizabeth and Swanston streets, from the Town Hall in the south-east to the General Post Office to the north-west, had become the focus of retail activity, influenced also by the location of the Western Market in the west of the city which operated as the city's premier wholesale fruit and vegetable market until 1930 (May 2016:176). The Eastern Market opened in 1847 as a fruit and vegetable market on the corner of Stephen Street (later Exhibition Street) and Bourke Street and drew retail further east.

Department stores offered customers a wide range of goods, organised into 'departments', under the one roof. In Melbourne, department store Buckley & Nunn, which opened in 1854, established Bourke Street as the preferred retail strip.

Development slowed during the economic depression of the 1890s, only recovering with the revival of immigration in the first decades of the twentieth century. Although affected by World War One in the period 1914-1918, by the end of the 1920s Melbourne's population had reached one million people. In the first decades of the twentieth century, most residents moved out of the city to the new suburbs, with the retail and office sectors rapidly taking up available properties (Marsden 2000:29-30).

After 1920, chain department stores grew rapidly, opening branches or new stores in central Melbourne. Department stores elevated 'fashion, drapery and furnishings to a level of luxury and range which differentiated it from the everyday or rural emporium' (Young and Spearritt 2008). With increasing car ownership and widespread distribution of shopping catalogues, department stores attracted shoppers from both the suburbs and rural areas, consolidating the central Melbourne area as the state's preferred retail destination.

Postwar Period

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture.

The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century

manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Brutalism and brickwork

Brutalism was another architectural style that emerged in commercial building design in Australia as early as 1959, when Harry Seidler used off-form concrete for an eight-storey office block in Ultimo, NSW. That same year, Melbourne architect Kevin Knight (from the office of Oakley & Parkes) prepared plans for the International Order of Oddfellows (IOOF) Building at 380 Russell Street, Melbourne that broke new ground with its banded façade of reinforced concrete spandrels.

Based on the work of modern architecture pioneer Le Corbusier, and largely inspired by his design for the *Unité d'Habitation* in Marseilles (1952), this architectural style became widely accepted internationally. Brutalism incorporated ideas of integrity in expression of materials (especially off-form

concrete), structure and function, and often gave rise to dramatic sculptural forms (VHD Hoyts Cinema Centre).

Brutalism became more widespread in central Melbourne in the 1970s. The Mid City Centre at 194-200 Bourke Street (Bogle & Banfield, 1969-70), is a notable example, with its façade of chamfered concrete volumes.

During the 1960s and 70s, face brickwork also made a return with the Houston Building at 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1964-65), the State Savings Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers,

Hughes Mewton & Lobb, 1967-68) and the 13-storey Nubrik House at 269-275 William Street by architects Buchan, Laird & Buchan (1972) (NTAV 2014:22).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most

significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The subject site comprises two allotments located at the corner of Elizabeth Street and Little Collins Street. The current multi-storey office building at 343-349 Little Collins Street constitutes two distinct built forms arranged in an L shape formation: one of 13 storeys fronting Elizabeth Street, built in 1968; and the other of 11 storeys fronting Little Collins Street, built in 1925 (CoMMaps).

The land comprising 335-349 Little Collins Street is part of Crown Allotment 9 of Block 13, first purchased by John Highett for £42 in 1837 (CoMMaps; DCLS c1839).

In 1852, James McEwan and John Houston supplied goods to storekeepers on the Victorian goldfields from a building at the subject site, which is located on the south-western corner of Elizabeth and Little Collins streets. In 1855 the partnership between Houston and McEwan was dissolved and James McEwan established a wholesale and retail ironmongery from the same building (*Age* 16 July 1965:8; Lethbridge 2011). In 1870, a new five-storey building was built on the site for McEwan. In 1924, Deans oil and colour store and James McEwan & Co operated from two buildings around the corner at 335-349 Little Collins Street (the balance of the subject site), which were both demolished in 1924 (*Argus* 17 January 1924:13).

McEwan House was the name given to the new building constructed in 1925 at 335-349 Little Collins Street (the part of the subject building fronting Little Collins Street and abutting Equitable Place to the west). Stephenson & Meldrum architects prepared plans for the reinforced concrete building in 1924. Carried to the then maximum height limit of 40 metres (132 feet), and containing 68,000 square feet of floor space, the building was taller than Collins House, located nearby, and a landmark in the area (*Argus* 17 January 1924:13). McEwan House was designed to integrate with the existing five-storey building 1870 building fronting Elizabeth Street, which has since been demolished (see Figure 1)

The 11-storey building had two main entrances off Equitable Place and three lifts (see Figure 2). The five-storey structure featured two lifts and had only one entrance, via Elizabeth Street. Three openings connected the buildings along their party wall. Special consideration was given to fireproofing McEwan House, which was achieved using the modern principle of proofing each floor separately and involving the Fire Underwriters' Association in the preparation of the plans (*Argus* 17 January 1924:13). The Reinforced Concrete & Monier Pipe Construction Co Pty Ltd constructed the building in 1925 with C S Steele as the consulting engineer. McEwan House was numbered 343-349 Little Collins Street and 119-125 Elizabeth Street in 1925 (Mahlstedt Map Section 1, no 14, 1925).



Figure 1. Showing the five-storey 1870 McEwan's building (demolished c1967) facing Elizabeth Street at the corner of Little Collins Street in 1953. (Source: Gordon 1953, SLV)

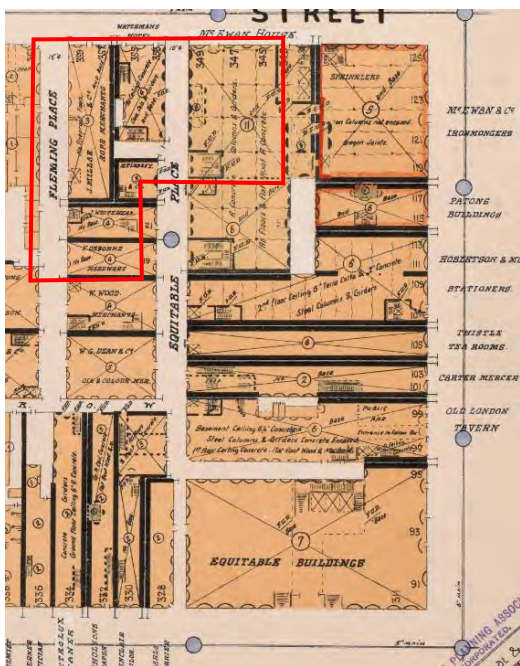


Figure 2. Detail from a 1925 Mahlstedt plan showing McEwan House outlined in red. Note the openings between the two built forms. (Source: Mahlstedt Map Section 1, no 14, 1925)

In 1926, the new building fronting Little Collins Street was tenanted by a diverse range of occupants including a jeweller, hairdresser, architect, manufacturing agent, builders, legal manager and broker (S&Mc 1926). The building had a tearoom on the second floor and the seventh floor was home to the Amateur Sport Club until 1960. The ground floor was used by McEwan as his main retail space (S&Mc 1926, 1960). In 1965, McEwan's moved to a new building between Bourke Street and Little

Collins Street, which had an available selling area double that of the subject site (Age 16 July 1965:8).

By 1968 the five-storey 1870 building was demolished and the 13 storey component of the subject building facing Elizabeth Street was constructed as an office block for 443 Little Collins St Pty Ltd and Stalbridge Chambers Pty Ltd, architect unknown (RB 1969). By 1969 both the Elizabeth Street and Little Collins Street frontages of the building were addressed 343-349 Little Collins Street (RB 1969; S&Mc 1970). The Elizabeth Street projection was constructed of reinforced concrete (see Figure 3 and Figure 4).

The old and new buildings were joined by a wide arcade, named Elizabeth Arcade, indicating that the 1925 McEwan's building had been purchased by the same owners (see Figure 3). The north, east, south and west elevations all featured points of access as well as a prominent splayed corner entrance at the junction of Little Collins and Elizabeth streets.

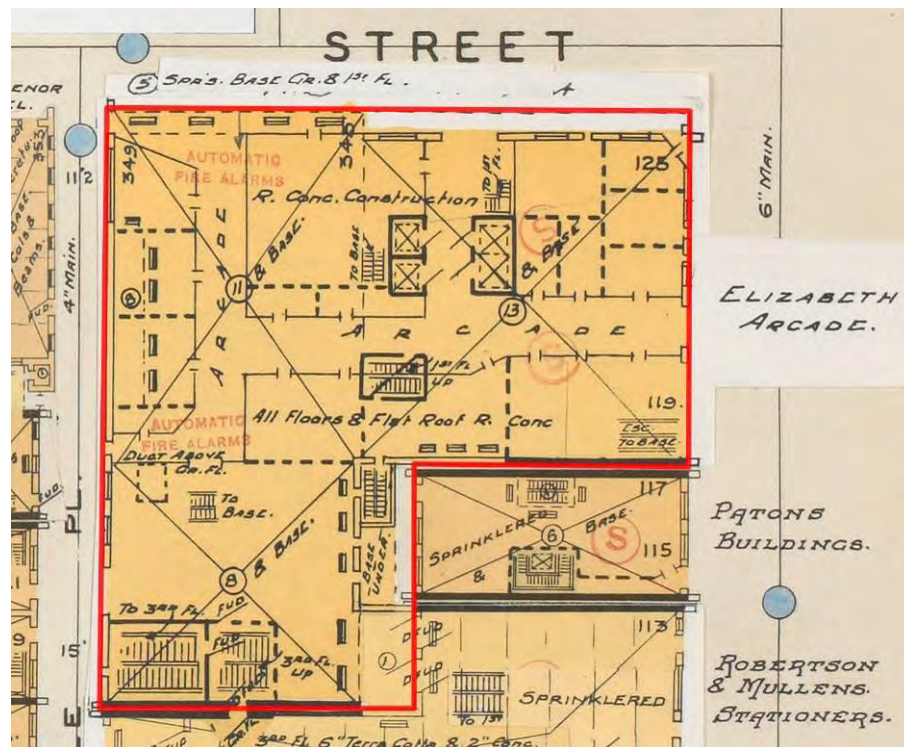


Figure 3. Detail from a 1948 Mahlsted plan (amended in the 1960s) showing Equitable House at 335-349 Little Collins Street, outlined in red, in the late 1960s. (Source: Mahlsted Map Section 1, no 14, 1948)



Figure 4. Photograph of Elizabeth Street west showing the 1968 building at 335-349 Little Collins Street between 1968 and 1972. (Source: Halla c1972, SLV: H36133/618)

Refurbishment and restoration works were carried out to Equitable House in 2006 at a cost of \$1,200,000 (Cordell 2018). The works included alterations to the façade of the building, external painting, alterations to the canopy and installation of signage (Cordell 2018).

Equitable House, probably named after the abutting laneway, Equitable Place, was internally subdivided in stages from 2005 to 2008. It currently contains one residential property, 121 offices, 19 retail shops and 7 food and drink outlets (CoMMaps).

James McEwen & Company Limited

The owner of McEwan House, James McEwan, was an ironmonger and wholesaler of hardware who had traded on the Ballarat Goldfields in the 1850s. An emigrant from Britain, he established James McEwen & Company Limited wholesale and retail ironmongery business in c1855. Initially traded on Elizabeth Street, the company later opened premises on Lonsdale Street as well as in Geelong. After McEwan's death in 1868, his England-based suppliers and partners William Kerr Thomson and Samuel Renwick carried on the business under the name of 'James McEwan & Company Limited'. In 1870 they commissioned the construction of the five-storey store on the corner of Elizabeth and Little Collins Streets, Melbourne (Lethbridge 2011).

The Australian National University holds the archives of McEwans Limited, the summary of which contains the following information:

James McEwan & Company Limited traded as a private company until 1887 [by which time, in addition to ironmongery, McEwan's was selling glassware, dinnerware and other ceramics] when it was incorporated as a public company and floated on the London Stock Exchange. Following the deaths of both Renwick, in 1888, and Thomson, in 1893, James McEwan & Company Limited suffered severe financial hardship. The London Bank of Australia acquired the Company in 1905...McEwan's Limited was formed in 1927 to acquire the shares of James McEwan & Company Pty Ltd and its subsidiaries...

In 1951 McEwan's Limited was floated as a public company and listed on the Melbourne Stock Exchange. By 1965 McEwan's had moved its main city store from the corner of Elizabeth and Little Collins Streets to Bourke Street, Melbourne...Around this time other McEwan's stores were established in the suburbs of Melbourne - Camberwell (1966), Clayton (1961), Croydon (1964), Dandenong (1964), Footscray (1966), Frankston (1970), Geelong (1966), Moonee Ponds (1963), Niddrie (1973) and Sunshine (1974) - as well as in Victorian regional shopping centres at Brandon Park (1970), Chadstone (1960), Doncaster Shopping Town (1969), Forest Hill (1964), Northland (1966), Southland (1968) and High Point West (1975).

In 1970 the first of McEwan's 'Magnet' discount hardware and timber stores was opened on a four-acre site in the outer Melbourne suburb of Ferntree Gully...Through McEwan's (Mildura) Pty Ltd the company operated two stores in Mildura and one at Red Cliffs in the north-west of Victoria. In Queensland the subsidiary, Williams McEwan's Pty Ltd, had stores at Burleigh Heads and Southport. Another subsidiary, Brittain's McEwan's Pty Ltd (acquired in 1969), operated three stores in Brisbane. McEwan's had now become one of the largest merchants of its kind, specialising in hardware and builders' supplies. It had 23 stores in Victoria, 5 in Queensland and 2 in the Australian Capital Territory...Following a successful takeover bid by Repco Limited, McEwan's Limited was delisted from the Stock Exchange on 28 July 1982 (Lethbridge 2011).

McEwan's was acquired by Bunnings in 1993.

Stephenson & Meldrum, architects of the Little Collins Street building

The firm Stephenson & Meldrum was established in 1921 by Arthur Stephenson (b1890, Melbourne) and Percy Meldrum. Stephenson enrolled at the Architectural Association School in London in 1918, at which he met instructor and architect Percy Meldrum. It is also where Stephenson met Donald 'Skipper' Turner. In 1936, Donald Turner, whom Stephenson also met at the Architectural Association School, joined the partnership and ran the Sydney office of Stephenson, Meldrum & Turner. The following year, Meldrum resigned as a director and the firm became Stephenson & Turner. By 1939, the firm had Melbourne and Sydney offices and totalled 80 employees (Goat 1999).

The firm became renowned for their revolutionary designs of health facilities. They designed most of the major and minor metropolitan and regional hospitals in Victorian and most Australian states, extending also to Asia and the Middle East. Stephenson & Turner's projects numbered many and

included numerous banks throughout Victoria, commercial commissions and industrial, educational, recreational, residential and religious projects, as well as projects for the World Fair and Australian embassy (Goad 1999).

Stephenson & Meldrum were the architects of Newspaper House, Collins Street, Melbourne (1933), the Mercy Hospital, East Melbourne (1934-5) and the Royal Melbourne Hospital, Parkville (1936-41), the latter in association with W A M Blakett. In addition, Stephenson & Turner are noted for designing the Royal Banking Chambers, Collins Street, Melbourne (1939-41), additions to the east of the Chemistry Building at the University of Melbourne (1963) and the General Motors Holden factory in Dandenong (1955-56) (Goad 1999).

The firm expanded and became one of the largest architectural practices in the southern hemisphere, with offices in Newcastle, Singapore, Adelaide and New Zealand, employing 3000-4000 people at its peak. It became known as 'the colossus of Australian architectural practices'. In 1995, architect John Castles merged with Stephenson & Turner to form Castles, Stephenson & Turner (Goad 1999).

Reinforced Concrete & Monier Pipe Constructions, engineers

The Monier system of construction was patented in 1867 by Joseph Monier, a French manufacturer of garden ware who made planter pots of coarse mortar reinforced with a grid of small-diameter iron bars. The technique and patents were gradually extended to cover, amongst other things, arch bridges. Monier appears to have sold his patents in various territories outright and died in poverty in 1906 (*John Monash*).

Following his retrenchment by the Melbourne Harbour Trust stemming from the 1890s depression, civil engineer John Monash (from 1918, Sir John Monash) established his own private practice with friend and fellow engineer J T Noble Anderson. Anderson had obtained patent rights from contracting engineers Carter Gummow & Co for the Monier system of reinforced concrete (Serle 1986). Architectural historian Miles Lewis writes that 'Monier...was true reinforced concrete, with a complete theory and system of calculation to ensure that the steel was suitably disposed to take tension and shear forces' (Lewis 1988:11).

As Victorian agents for the system, Monash and Anderson began constructing bridges and had plans for concrete pipe manufacturing until they found themselves in legal and financial strife following the failure of one of their bridges in Bendigo.

In 1905 Monash established the Reinforced Concrete & Monier Pipe Constructions Co Ltd after having transitioned to erecting buildings, monopolising concrete construction in Victoria for several years to follow (Lewis 1988:11). From 1905 to 1914, John Monash was the engineering director of the company.

SITE DESCRIPTION

335-343 Little Collins Street

The building at the corner of Elizabeth and Little Collins streets is a 13 storey commercial building constructed in 1968 with frontages to both Elizabeth Street and Little Collins Street. With its use of dark precast non-loadbearing concrete curtain wall cladding to both frontages, it is primarily an example of the Post-War Modernist style. It also exhibits characteristics of the Brutalist style in the robust three-dimensional modularity of the concrete panels.

The facades consist of multiple narrow precast concrete panels, each with a sloping hood and vertical fins at each end to provide a measure of solar protection, and a single fixed aluminium framed window with curved corners. The panels repeat across both facades, with no formal corner element and only a simple horizontal flush parapet, as is typical of the style. The effect of these devices is to create an interesting pattern of light and shade across the façade, which is a characteristic of the Brutalist style.

The retail and entry shopfront to Elizabeth Street has been replaced over time, and there is a heavy cantilevered box awning over the ground floor shopfronts and entry lobby, which is not sympathetic to the fine grained modularity of the façade above.

Overall the building is an interesting combination of characteristics of both the late twentieth century Brutalist and Post-War Modernist styles.

345-349 Little Collins Street

The building, with a primary frontage to Little Collins Street, is a substantial 10 storey interwar commercial corner building constructed in 1925 in the interwar Commercial Palazzo style. It exhibits some of the main characteristics of the style, including projecting pilasters dividing the façade into four vertical bays sitting above a strong rusticated base.

The principal façade to Little Collins Street is of painted render, probably over non-loadbearing brickwork walls. The façade is separated horizontally into three layers, being the rusticated base, interim repetitive office floors over seven levels separated by spandrels, and a prominent cornice, although the cornice now surmounts an open floor level that is probably the result of the alterations carried out in 2006. The elevation is somewhat unusual for this style in that it is asymmetrical, with a vertical element at the eastern end, defined by a pair of pilasters and terminating in a decorative pediment above the cornice level. It is possible that some decorative elements were removed when the building was refurbished in 2006.

The painted render side wall of the building fronting Equitable Place is simple and unadorned with regularly spaced window openings at all levels. The elevation steps down from the Little Collins Street frontage to a height of seven storeys.

All of the original windows to the main Little Collins Street and the northern section of the Equitable Place elevations have been replaced with single pane aluminium framed windows that are not openable. The original windows were probably steel framed and multi pane, and some of these survive in the southern section of the building along Equitable Place.

The ground floor has been significantly altered with new glazed shopfronts on both frontages. Above the ground floor is a narrow cantilevered box awning.

INTEGRITY

The 1968 building fronting Elizabeth Street is largely intact with its precast non-load bearing concrete curtain wall and aluminium framed windows to both elevations extant. At street level, shop fronts have been altered over time and there is a heavy cantilevered box awning. Overall the building is of high integrity.

The 1925 building fronting Little Collins Street is relatively intact with its original height and built form legible. The building retains characteristic elements of the interwar Commercial Palazzo style with a strong rusticated base, interim repetitive levels and a prominent cornice. Alterations include an open

floor level above the cornice line and a lack of decorative detailing and extensive rustication at the base which was typical for the style, suggesting some details may have been removed in the 2006 alterations. The fenestration pattern appears to be original along both elevations. However, all windows to Little Collins Street and the northern section of Equitable Place have been replaced with fixed aluminium framed windows. Some original windows survive further down Equitable Place. At ground level all shop fronts have been altered over time and a narrow awning added. Notwithstanding these alterations, overall the building is of moderate integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Equitable House site at 335-349 Little Collins Street comprises two adjoining buildings in different styles constructed fifty years apart. The 1925 interwar building is comparable to other Commercial Palazzo or Chicagoesque buildings in central Melbourne, while the 1968 building exhibits key characteristics of the Post-War Modernist style.

The 1925 building on Little Collins Street uses structural steel and reinforced concrete framing, which became popular building materials in interwar Melbourne, inspired by Chicagoan architecture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Departing from load-bearing brick walls, many 1920s examples employed these new building methods that allowed windows to become larger and more prominent on facades, whilst also allowing for increased building heights. Most of the buildings from this period were designed in the interwar Commercial Palazzo or Chicagoesque styles, both of which derived from the rebuilding of the core area of Chicago after the 1871 fire. Although they were characterised by an expressed structural system of concrete columns and floor plates, these examples typically included elements of classical detailing (albeit restrained) in the form of a rusticated base, expressed pilasters, projecting cornices and decorative mouldings.

The following examples are comparable with the 1925 building fronting Little Collins Street, being of a similar use, scale, style and/or construction date. The images and descriptions below are provided by CoM Maps unless stated otherwise, with images dating from c2000 or later.

Capitol Arcade, 115 Swanston Street (HO747, HO502 The Block Precinct)

An 11 storey concrete building with a ground floor arcade and a basement. Designed by Walter Burley Griffin and his wife Marion Mahony in association with Peck & Kempter in the Chicagoesque style. Built by John Monash's Reinforced Concrete & Monier Pipe Construction Company in 1924. Of special note is the auditorium/theatre with its Art Deco lighting and decor. Subdivided in stages from 1999 and concluding with the residential units in 2003.



Figure 5. Capitol Arcade, 115 Swanston Street, built in 1924.

Cavendish Houses, 27-37 Russell Street, 1927 (Significant in HO506 Flinders Lane Precinct)

A nine storey brick and concrete warehouse with a basement. Designed in the Greek Revival style by A & K Henderson. Built for the softgoods manufacturers Debenhams (Australia) Proprietary Limited in 1927. Refurbished to a design by David Earle & Associates and subdivided into residential units and ground floor retail with the addition of the top two floors in 1994.



Figure 6. 27-37 Russell Street, built in 1927.

London Stores, 341-357 Bourke Street, 1925 (HO545, HO509 Post Office Precinct)

The London Stores consists of three interconnected buildings. The 10 storey London Stores concrete building with basement (shown in picture below) is comparable to the subject building. Built in 1925 to the design of HW & FB Tompkins, the interwar building exhibits elements of the Classical Revival and Commercial Palazzo styles.



Figure 7. 341-357 Bourke Street, built in 1925.

Hardware House, 386-392 Little Bourke Street, 1926 (Significant in HO1205 Guildford & Hardware Laneways Precinct)

The six-storey corner building was built in 1926 for the new club premises for the Hardware Club, which was originally formed in the mid-1890s as a social club for members of the hardware trade. Within a year, it had 148 members, and within ten years, it boasted over 1000 members. It was designed by architect J V Ward and constructed by the Concrete Building Company.



Figure 8. 386-392 Little Bourke Street, built in 1926.

Cavendish House at 27-37 Russell Street, is particularly comparable to the 1925 section of Equitable House due to its scale and architectural style. Both sites demonstrate characteristics of the

Commercial Palazzo style, notwithstanding that the Statement of Significance for Cavendish House refers to it as being designed in the Greek Revival style. The building is of a similar scale and shares many characteristics with Equitable House, including a façade divided into equal bays by projecting pilasters terminating at a cornice, albeit with a finer degree of decoration. Equitable House is distinguished by the asymmetry of its vertical element located at its eastern end as well as the relationship it has to the adjoining 1968 building. Although Cavendish house has a higher level of integrity than Equitable House, the two buildings are comparable in terms of their scale and for architectural style. Despite changes to its façade, Equitable House retains elements that are characteristic of the Commercial Palazzo style

In regard to the 1968 building at the corner of Elizabeth and Little Collins streets, the following examples are comparable.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 19741-73 included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of

design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street
(Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim
HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition
Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442
Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965)
(Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect
unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



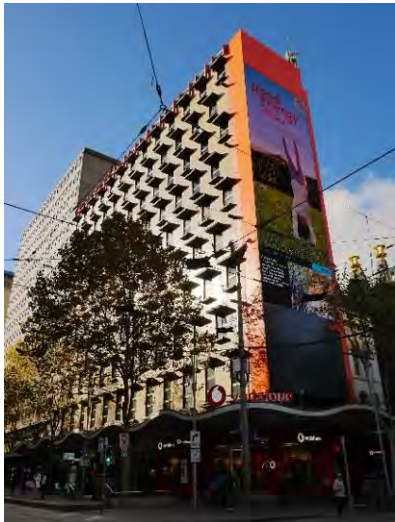
Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street
(McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street
(Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street
(Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street
(Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



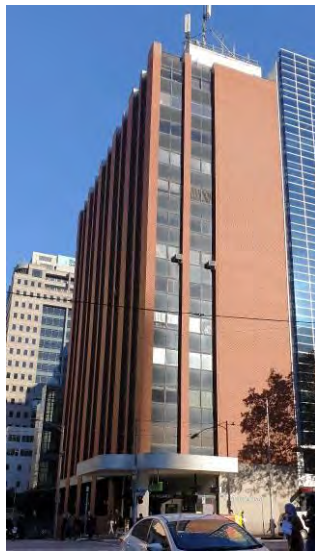
Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street
(Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building, 359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

The Royal Insurance Group Building at 430-442 Collins Street, constructed in 1965, is particularly comparable to the 1968 section of Equitable House due to its scale and architectural style. Both sites demonstrate characteristics of the the Post-War Modernist style with some aspects of the Brutalist style also in evidence. The Royal Insurance Group Building is somewhat higher at 18 storeys, but the facades of both buildings exhibit multiple narrow precast concrete panels with no formal corner element The precast panels to the Equitable House facades are of particular interest as they are three dimensional with a sloping hood and vertical fins at each end to provide a measure of solar protection and to create repetitive patterns of light and shade across the façade, a characteristic of the Brutalist style.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985**

D

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993**

C

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002**

Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011**

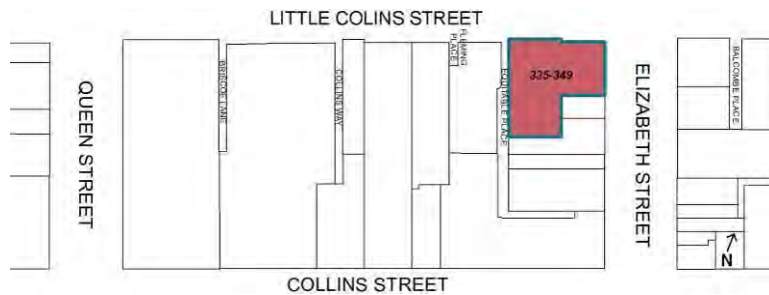
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Equitable House



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

Equitable House, at 335-349 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, comprising two structures, one built in 1925 and the other built in 1968, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- Original form and scale of both buildings;
- Original composition of façades comprising multiple narrow precast concrete panels with aluminium windows (1968 building);
- External configuration of facades demonstrating aspects of the interwar Commercial Palazzo style and wall surfaces of painted cement render (1925 building); and
- Original steel framed windows on the Equitable Place façade (1925 building).

Later alterations, particularly at street level, are not significant.

How it is significant?

Equitable House at 335-349 Little Collins Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Equitable House, comprising two structures, one built in 1925 and the other built in 1968, is historically significant for the evidence it provides of two waves of retail and office development in Melbourne in the 1920s and post-World War Two. The building reflects the growth and progress in the city in the 1920s and 1960s that resulted in architecturally designed, company-named buildings being erected. The 1925 component of the building at 335-349 Little Collins Street, McEwan House, is historically significant for

its long association with wholesale and retail ironmongery business James McEwan & Company Ltd (1852-1965). The business commenced in Melbourne at the corner of Elizabeth and Little Collins streets supplying goods to storekeepers on the Victorian goldfields, and it retained a presence there for some 113 years. The company prospered and, by the 1970s, McEwan's had become one of the largest merchants of its kind, specialising in hardware and builders' supplies, with 23 stores in Victoria, five in Queensland and two in the Australian Capital Territory. McEwan's was acquired by Bunnings in 1993. (Criterion A)

The building fronting Little Collins Street, constructed in 1925 to a design by architects Stephenson & Meldrum, is significant as a relatively intact example of interwar commercial development in central Melbourne, in the interwar Commercial Palazzo style. Along with the Chicagoesque style, the Commercial Palazzo style characterised this interwar wave of development within the Melbourne CBD. The 1925 building demonstrates key characteristics of the style. This includes a strong vertical emphasis resulting from projecting pilasters and mullions, the pilasters dividing the façade into four vertical bays sitting above a strong rusticated base, a substantial cornice, and large horizontally proportioned windows separated by articulated spandrels at each floor. It is unusual in that it is asymmetrical, with a vertical element at the eastern end that is defined by a pair of pilasters, terminating in a decorative pediment above the cornice level. (Criterion D)

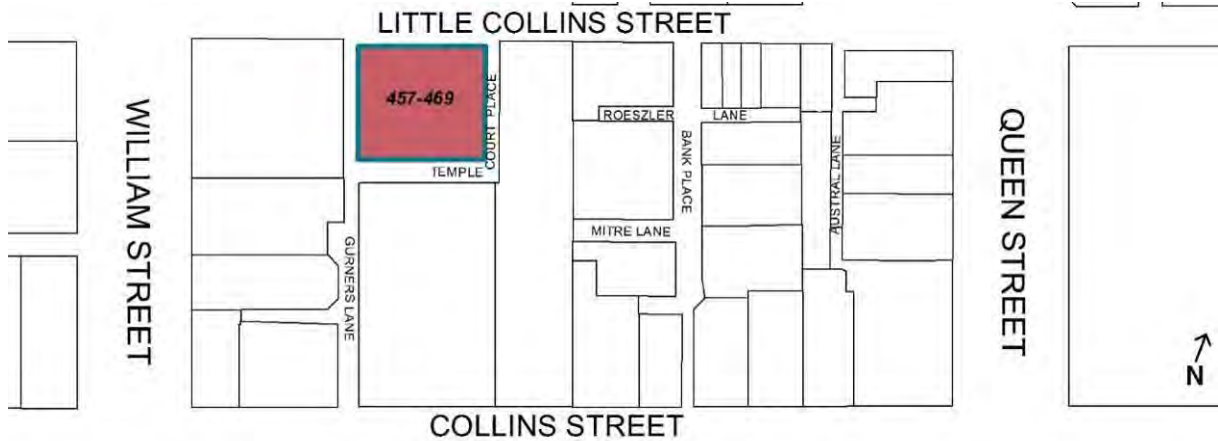
The building fronting Elizabeth Street, constructed in 1968, is significant as a largely intact example of postwar commercial development in central Melbourne, which utilised the Post-War Modernist style that characterised this new wave of development. Buildings designed in this style represented the new modernism in their modular, industrial aesthetic incorporating features such as external sun shades, consistent access to daylight, open floor plans, air conditioning and centralised lift and service cores to meet new standards for commercial office accommodation. (Criterion D)

The façade of Equitable House with multiple narrow precast concrete panels with no formal corner element, which are of particular interest as they are three dimensional with a sloping hood and vertical fins at each end for solar protection and which create repetitive patterns of light and shade across the façade, a characteristic of the Brutalist style. Although the designer of the 1968 building is not known, it is an important 1960s Post-War Modernist building demonstrating a sophisticated and well-detailed resolution to the challenges posed by postwar commercial design. (Criterion D)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Cowan House
STREET ADDRESS	457-469 Little Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	105938



SURVEY DATE: May 2019		SURVEY BY: Context	
HERITAGE INVENTORY	N/A	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER GRADE	Ungraded
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	E and G Kolle & Associates	BUILDER:	K G Hooker
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD :	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1969

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Offices
1920s	Offices
1960s	Offices

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

Cowan House, at 457-469 Little Collins Street, is an 18 storey postwar office building designed by E and G Kolle & Associates, architects and engineers. Opened in 1969 for Capital Counties (Australia) Pty Ltd, it was occupied by that company until c1973. Initially named the Capital and Counties building, from 1974 it *was known as Cowan House* after its ground floor occupants, Cowan J Assets Pty Ltd, investment consultants who occupied the building from 1970-73. It is used mainly as office space today.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17).

Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The subject land was first purchased by G Smith and G Robson in 1837 as part of Crown Allotments 2 and 3 of Block 14 respectively ('Plan of Melbourne' 1838; DCLSV 1839).

Before Cowan House was constructed, an assemblage of buildings occupied the subject land between Gurners Lane and Temple Court Place, with three buildings fronting Little Collins Street and several smaller structures built on the rear half of the allotment (Mahlstedt Map no 14, 1888; Mahlstedt Map Section 1 no 17, 1925). The buildings were addressed as numbers 455 to 469 Little Collins Street between 1900 and 1965 (S&Mc 1900, 1965).

Brougham Chambers, a three-storey office building, existed on the corner of Little Collins Street and Gurners Lane from c1900 to 1965 (S&Mc 1900, 1965). The Chambers were let to several professional tenants during this time, typically to individuals engaged in the legal profession, consistent with the use of many of the office buildings in the area.

Capital & Counties (Australia) Pty Ltd acquired the subject site in 1965 (CT:V8912 F035). In 1967 a building permit was filed by the company for the erection of a new building at 457-469 Little Collins Street to the value of \$1.8 million, and in 1968 a tender was advertised for the construction of a multi-level office building on the site (*Age* 10 February 1968:81). It opened on 9 June 1969 (*Age* 13 June 1969:12).

Capital & Counties (Australia) Pty Ltd was a Melbourne-based subsidiary of Counties Properties Company Ltd, an English real estate investment company and developer with a portfolio of prestigious properties across the United Kingdom, Europe and America (*Age* 27 April 1971:16). The subject building was the company's first venture into Melbourne city development (*Age* 20 July 1968:4). Within three and a half years of its establishment in Melbourne, the company had invested in the erection of six major office buildings – four in Melbourne and two in Sydney – with a total value of between \$80 and \$90 million (*Age* 27 April 1971:16). In Melbourne, this included Marland House (also designed by E & G Kolle) and Dalgety House, both in Bourke Street and both built concurrently with the subject building (*Age* 6 June 1968:7; *Age* 27 April 1971:16).

K G Hooker, builders, constructed the building to the design of architects E & G Kolle & Associates (*Age* 10 February 1968:81; *Age* 2 April 1969:24). The building was constructed of reinforced concrete columns, beams, floors and roof with a colonnade on the northern and eastern elevations (see Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3). The structure was built using 'waffle' formwork flooring slabs, a new technique at the time, noted for its weight-saving efficiency (*Age* 2 April 1969:24). Capital & Counties (Australia) Pty Ltd and the building's architects, E & G Kolle & Associates, were both occupants of the new building along with Harston Partridge & Co Pty Ltd, law stationers, and Weigall & Crowther solicitors, who had both occupied an earlier building on the subject site (*Age* 13 June 1969:12; *Age* 7 March 1970:90; S&Mc 1974).

Notable long-term tenants on the site included: Harston Partridge & Co Pty Ltd printers and law stationers at 455-457 Little Collins Street from c1925 and in the subject building until at least 1983; and Weigall & Crowther, solicitors, at 459-463 Little Collins Street from c1915 to 1965, who were also tenants in the subject building until c1987 (S&Mc 1915, 1925, 1965; *Age* 27 June 1970:60; *Age* 7 July 1983:20; *Age* 27 May 1987:80).

The subject building at 457-469 Little Collins Street was known as the Capital and Counties building until 1973, after which it appears in the Sands & McDougall directory as Cowan House (S&Mc 1974). The building took the name of its ground floor occupants, Cowan J Assets Pty Ltd investment consultants, who were listed as the tenants there in 1970 but had vacated the premises by 1974 (*Age* 20 July 1968:4; S&Mc 1970, 1974).

James Wright Cowan was an economist and investment counsellor, director of James Cowan Associates Pty Ltd and senior partner in several investment firms associated with the Cowan Group (*Sydney Morning Herald* 2 March 1967:8; *Canberra Times* 21 April 1991:29; *Age* 25 February 1970:13). The Cowan Group encompassed several brokering and investment corporations active in the 1960s and 1970s in Melbourne and Sydney (*Sydney Morning Herald* 5 March 1964:14; *Sydney Morning Herald* 6 March 1971:35; *Age* 3 September 1970:15; *Sydney Morning Herald* 10 January 1968:14). In 1971, Functional Holdings Ltd put in a bid for the takeover of the Cowan Group (Holdings) Ltd (*Sydney Morning Herald* 17 March 1971:21). Investors Diversified Benefits Pty Ltd, distributors for James Cowan Investment Services, operated on the eighth floor of the subject building in 1970 (*Age* 14 November 1970:100).

BP Australia Nominees Propriety Ltd acquired ownership of the building in 1978 (CT:V8912 F035).

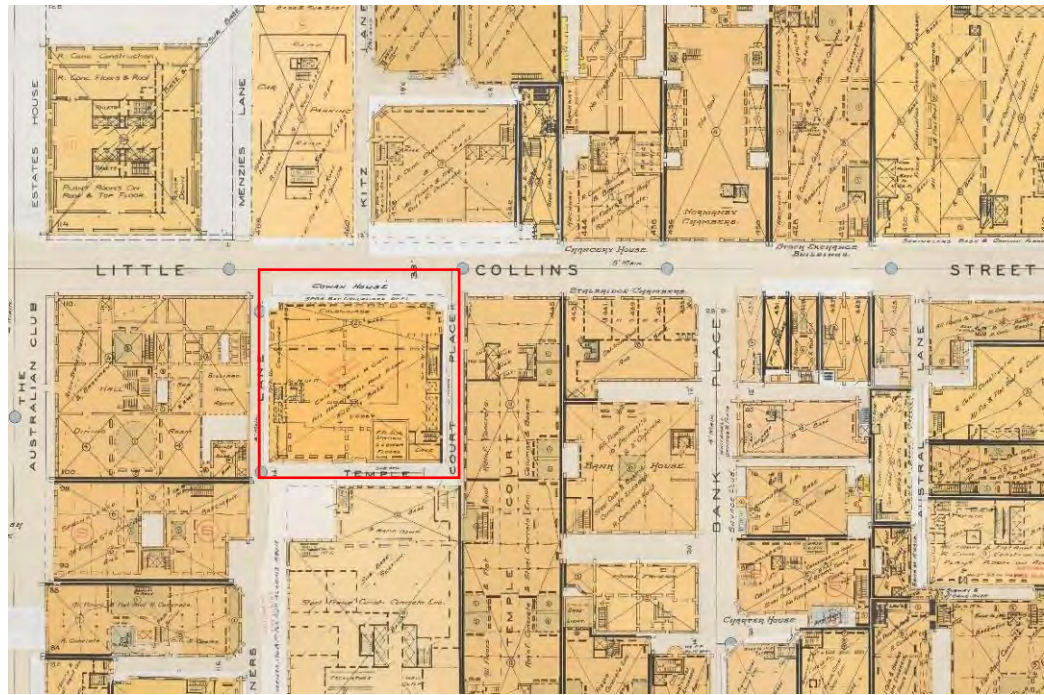


Figure 1. Extract from plan showing subject building outlined in red. (Source: Mahlstedt 1948, SLV)



Figure 2. Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street, Melbourne (Sievers 1970, SLV [copyright](#))



Figure 3. Detail of Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street, Melbourne (Sievers 1970, SLV [copyright](#))

In 1985 internal alterations and refurbishments were carried out on levels one to 14 of the subject building, which was subsequently advertised for sale as a 'modern recently refurbished building' in 1987 (MBAI; *Age* 24 February 1987:33). The ground floor had construction work and alterations carried out in 1991; it is likely that this work involved the infill of the plaza (MBAI).

The building presently houses 23 businesses, two shops, and food and drink outlets (CoMMaps).

E and G Kolle & Associates, architects and engineers and occupier 1969-c1975

E and G Kolle & Associates were the architects and engineers of the subject building, and occupied the premises until c1975. E and G Kolle & Associates comprised Erik and Grethe Kolle.

Erik Kolle was a Danish engineer practising in Melbourne in the postwar era (*Age* 23 January 1951:3; *Age* 11 February 1956:58). Erik Kolle & Associates Pty Ltd, a chartered engineering consultants' firm, was established c1956 with an office located in William Street, Melbourne (*Age* 11 February 1956:58). Kolle reputedly was responsible for introducing lightweight foam concrete to Australia, a patented technique that involved adding aluminium powder to cement mixture to create a lightweight concrete (*Sydney Morning Herald* 4 July 1951:2).

Danish born Grethe Kolle was a registered architect and a member of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (*Age* September 1958:49). She arrived in Melbourne from Denmark in 1952 where she worked in an architect's office while studying for an examination to be registered as an architect in Australia (*Sun-Herald* 28 November 1954:60). She studied at a technical college in Copenhagen before taking her degree at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Denmark (*Sun-Herald* 28 November 1954:60; *News* 11 November 1954:20). As part of her course, Grethe was one of four women in a cohort of 100 who completed a practical course in bricklaying and plastering (*Sun-Herald* 28 November 1954:60).

E and G Kolle & Associates, architects and engineers, was established c1963 and appears to have operated until c1975 (*Age* 18 April 1963:7; *Age* 21 September 1974:74). The firm designed the Unitarian Peace Memorial Church in Grey Street, East Melbourne, opened in 1966 (*Cross-Section* 1966). They were responsible for the design of Marland House at 562-574 Bourke Street (1975), which, at 32-storeys, was then one of the tallest buildings in Australia, and were the architects for a \$50 million development at the Royal Agricultural Society Showgrounds, Moore Park, Sydney, and the MLC Centre in Martin Place, Sydney (1975) (*Age* 27 April 1971:13; *Age* 18 August 1973:5; NSW State Archives and Records; SRIA 1994:15).

SITE DESCRIPTION

Cowan House at 457-469 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, is an 18-storey commercial building in the Post-War Modernist style constructed in 1969 and designed by architects E and G Kolle & Associates. Located on the southern side of Little Collins Street, it occupies an island site bound by Temple Court Place to its east and south and Gurners Lane to the west.

The principal façade to Little Collins Street comprises a 15 storey office tower with a substantial setback from a two-storey podium level built to the street frontage. The principal tower façade is symmetrical, comprising nonloadbearing precast concrete curtain wall panels divided into 10 vertical bays. Each panel is a U-shaped precast concrete frame with a large window opening infilled with two panes of fixed glass in an aluminium frame. Above and below each window are two courses of narrow red/brown glazed tiles laid in vertical stack bond. The top of the building has no formal termination as is typical of the style, except that a concrete frame extends above the roof line at every second column grid, forming a pergola, with a simple metal balustrade set between the concrete posts. The 17th floor of the building is recessed, creating a roof deck that originally serviced a penthouse level.

At the street level there is a two-storey horizontal podium built to the property boundary, supported by a colonnade of five aluminium clad columns. The podium returns into the Temple Court Place and Gurners Lane frontages, with recessed sections at the corners. A continuous horizontal band of glazing extends around the first-floor podium, and the wall above and below the band of glazing is clad in masonry (probably limestone) tiles, which may be a later alteration (refer to 1970 configuration in Figure 2 & Figure 3). Aluminium-clad vertical fins are fixed to the face of the podium in alignment with the columns, probably as part of the 1991 alterations. The street level shop fronts are set back to form an undercroft, and the shop fronts have been replaced.

The podium undercroft continues along Gurners Lane as a loggia behind a colonnade of seven square columns, stepping down to Temple Court Place at its southern end. The western wall of the tower behind the podium is clad in a variety of materials providing textural interest to the façade. In its middle section, the building is clad in rough face concrete blocks, whilst wall panels set between expressed structure at the southern and northern ends are clad in the red/brown ceramic tiles. Immediately above the colonnade the walls are clad in glazed muted green tiles laid in vertical stack bond, and the same tiles also clad the columns. The panels below the columns to street level are clad in bluestone.

The rear elevation to Temple Court Place is asymmetrical. Above the base levels, the tower element utilises the same precast concrete panels with red/brown ceramic tiles above and below the windows as used on the principal façade to Little Collins Street. The two eastern bays differ, being clad in the rough face concrete blocks rather than precast panels. At street level the building is also clad in the rough face concrete blocks whilst the first floor is clad in the glazed green tiles used along the Gurners Lane loggia. Five windows align with the windows of the tower above. At street level various openings provide service access into the building including an open grille door allowing car access to the basement. Above this door a large window is divided vertically into five panels.

The eastern elevation to Temple Court Place is clad in the rough face blocks concrete blocks. At the northern end the return section of the tower has an expressed structural concrete frame infilled with red/brown glazed ceramic tiles laid in vertical stretcher bond.

INTEGRITY

Cowan House is highly intact with very few changes visible to original or early fabric.. The building retains its original two-storey podium level, recessed office tower with modular precast concrete curtain wall cladding including original aluminium frame windows and red/brown ceramic tiles, and with original details and varying wall cladding finishes.

Alterations are minimal and largely limited to the podium on the Little Collins Street frontage. These include the aluminium cladding of the podium level columns and contemporary shopfronts at street level, the addition of aluminium clad vertical fins to the face of the podium in alignment with the columns, and the (probable) recladding of first floor podium level with limestone tiles. Overall the building has very high integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The 1950s saw the development of the modern multi-story office building in Melbourne, often built for insurance companies or finance companies, or for professional offices. From this time through to the 1970s, the Post-War Modernist style enjoyed widespread popularity, particularly for high-rise

commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne. Reinforced concrete frames provided the structural systems, allowing the façade to be clad in a non-load bearing curtain wall. In early examples, curtain walls were typically fully glazed, while in later examples, precast concrete was used to achieve variety of expression and flexibility of form, led by Bates Smart & McCutcheon's South British Building of 1960-62.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to Cowan House. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins



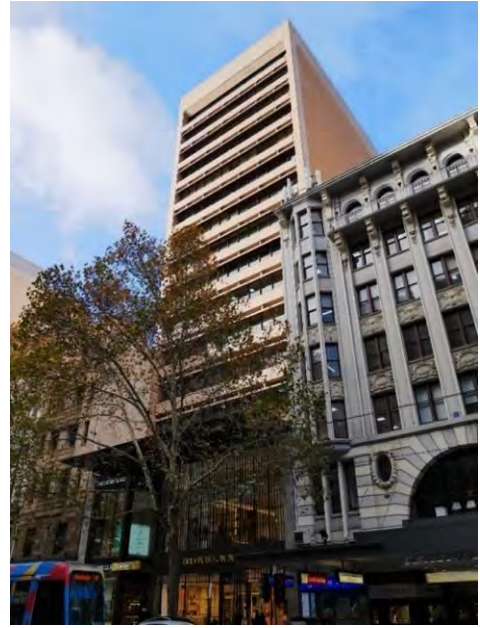
Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63

Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.

Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1974-73 included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not

currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



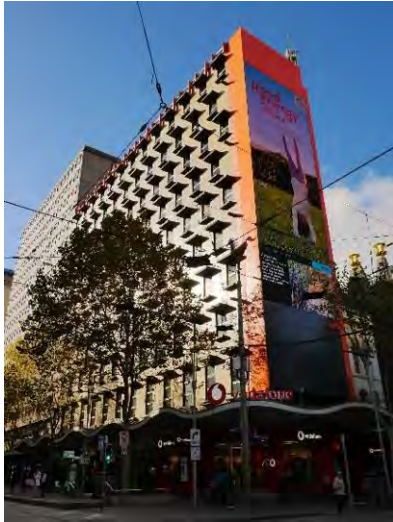
Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street
(Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building,
155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon,
1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke
Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson &
Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme
Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street
(Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street

AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555
Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association

(E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street
(Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)

with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street
(Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street
(B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street
(Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street
(unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street
(Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker,



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)

1968-70)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building, 359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon,

c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp

de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

In its early use of a non-loadbearing precast concrete panel façade system, Cowan House at 457-469 Little Collins Street is comparable to a number of other buildings in central Melbourne included – or proposed for inclusion – in the HO, although distinguished by its early use of reinforced concrete ‘waffle’ floor slabs. It is particularly comparable with the Wales Corner building at 227 Collins Street (Contributory in HO502 The Block Precinct) the former HC Sleigh building at 160 Queen Street (Recommended as individually significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review) and the Reserve Bank of Australia at 60 Collins Street (Contributory in HO504 Collins East Precinct). It shares with these examples’ characteristics consistent with the Post-War Modernist style, including concrete post and slab construction, a non-loadbearing precast concrete panel façade with a repetitive modular geometry and a street level undercroft and colonnade. Unusually, in this instance, this undercroft forms part of a podium that aligns with the street whilst the tower component of the building above is set back. The return of the undercroft along Gurners Lane also allows for sheltered pedestrian access through to Collins Street.

Unusually, the positioning of Cowan House on an island site has allowed for a range of detailing to all four facades and for the use of a variety of materials of differing colours and textures with each elevation being well considered and detailed.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

- | | |
|---|--|
| ✓ | <p>CRITERION A
Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p> |
| | <p>CRITERION B
Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p> |
| | <p>CRITERION C
Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p> |
| ✓ | <p>CRITERION D
Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p> |
| ✓ | <p>CRITERION E
Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p> |
| | <p>CRITERION F
Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p> |
| | <p>CRITERION G
Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p> |
| | <p>CRITERION H
Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p> |
-

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

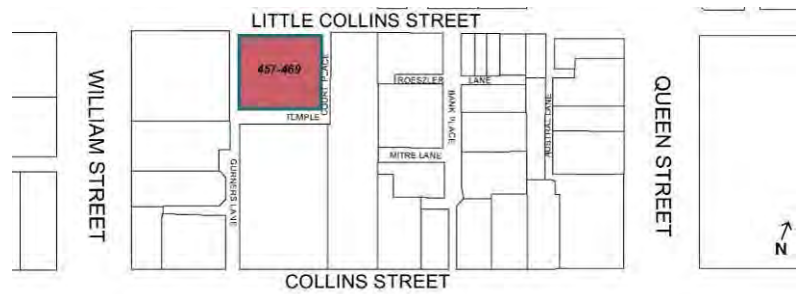
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Cowan House



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

Cowan House at 457-469 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, designed by architects E & G Kolle & Associates and constructed in 1969, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- Original form and scale;
- Original modular composition of the facades to the office tower comprising precast concrete panels with inset aluminium frame windows and glazed ceramic tiles;
- Original podium form and undercroft, colonnades and loggia; and
- Original materials including glazed ceramic tiles, glazing and rough face concrete blockwork.

Later alterations are not significant.

How it is significant?

Cowan House at 457-469 Little Collins Street is of historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Cowan House, designed by *E & G Kolle & Associates*, and opened in 1969, is historically significant for the evidence it provides of postwar development and rapid growth in Melbourne of corporate architecture of the 1950s-70s. Located in the financial and legal precinct in the western part of the city, it reflects the expansion of large national and international companies opting for construction and naming rights of new city office buildings as a form of promotion and fund investment. Constructed for the Melbourne-based subsidiary of English real estate and investment company Capital & Counties

(Australia) Pty Ltd, occupants from 1969-c1983, the building evidences the significant investment made in city building after World War Two by overseas companies. (Criterion A)

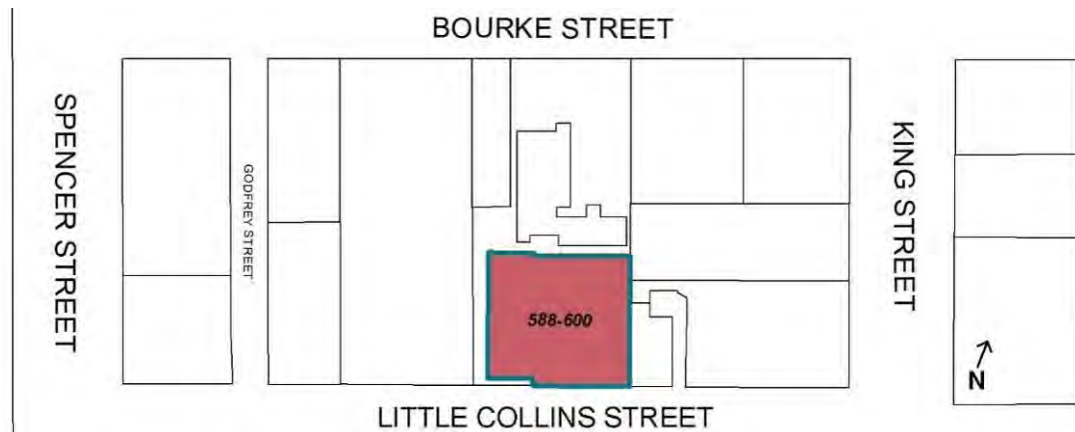
Cowan House is significant as a highly intact example of postwar commercial development in central Melbourne in the Post-War Modernist style that characterised this new wave of development. These buildings represented the new modernism in their modular, industrial Bauhaus inspired aesthetic and incorporated features such as consistent access to daylight and open floor plans to meet new standards for commercial office accommodation. The building exhibits key attributes of the Post-War Modernist style that characterised this wave of development, including concrete post and slab construction, a non-loadbearing precast concrete panel façade with a repetitive modular geometry and a street level undercroft and colonnade which wraps around two sides of the building. Cowan House is also representative of the early wave of high-rise commercial buildings constructed following the abolition of the 40 metre (132 foot) height limit for buildings in the city centre. The building is notable for its incorporation of a colonnade and loggia to the Gurners Lane frontage. (Criterion D)

Cowan House is aesthetically significant as a highly intact example of the later postwar development in curtain wall design during the 1960s, where a mix of materials was utilised to create a greater modularity and three-dimensional quality to the facades. Its aesthetic significance resides in the fine attention to detail on all four elevations and for the variety of materials used, of differing colours and textures including precast concrete panels, glazed ceramic wall tiles and rough-cast concrete blockwork, with each elevation being well considered and detailed. (Criterion E)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre
STREET ADDRESS	588-600 Little Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	105947



SURVEY DATE:	October 2018	SURVEY BY:	Context
HERITAGE INVENTORY	H7822-1575	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall (addition)	BUILDER:	Civil & Civic Pty Ltd (erection), John Holland Group
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1972

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here.
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
4 Creating a functioning city	4.3 Providing health and welfare services

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Religious, Schools
1920s	Warehouses
1960s	Warehouses, Club

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

The Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre at 588-600 Little Collins Street, Melbourne was built in 1972 and extended in 1981 to provide welfare services to those in the shipping trade. It is associated with the history of Melbourne as a trading port and of the prevailing concerns for the religious, moral and social welfare of people in the shipping trade. The site is adjacent to the St Augustine's Church and continues the provision of religious, moral and social services to seafarers begun by the Church in the mid-nineteenth century.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

Melbourne as a trading port

In the first years of settlement boats and ships were moored on the Yarra between Queen Street and William Street. This became known as Queen's Wharf. Bluestone warehouses were erected close by as well as a customs house (1841) and market square (1847) (*Melbourne's Golden Mile* 2001). In the 1840s Captain George Ward Cole built a private wharf between King and Spencer Streets (Barnard 2008:15). Little survives of these early wharves. Other ports were established further afield at Williamstown and Sandridge (Port Melbourne). Shipping news was relayed at Flagstaff Hill, as a rise on the western side of the township that commanded a fine view of the bay. Although sited some distance from the open sea, Melbourne was connected to major shipping routes, and hence to world markets, via the short access route provided by the Yarra.

By the 1880s, Melbourne had grown from being a small settlement serving pastoral interests to a major international port. Coode Canal, which was formed in 1886, altered the course of the Yarra to provide a shorter and more direct passage for shipping. This work involved the removal of the bend in the river known as Fishermen's Bend (Presland 2001:19). Dry docks were built on the reclaimed site of the drained West Melbourne Swamp ('Down by the Docks', Davison and McConville 1991:108). With the completion of Victoria Dock in 1892 Melbourne continued to develop as a busy international port.

Accommodation for sailors and seamen was provided as various lodging houses and hotels and also at the Sailors' and Seamen's Home, Flinders Street. Buildings close to Flinders Street and Flinders Lane also accommodated shipping agents.

The Yarra and the docks west of Swanston Street were in essence the 'lifeline' of the city, in providing port facilities and in defining the city's siting. Yet until recently the city of Melbourne turned its back both on the river south of Flinders Street, and also on the docks.

Providing health and welfare services in the postwar period

Health, welfare and education services were historically established in Melbourne's city centre. The Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre at 588-600 Little Collins Street (1972-73) was one of many charities established as part of the Catholic Church's official missionary work to provide pastoral care, services and support for seafarers.

The Pharmaceutical Guild, established in Victoria in 1928 to ensure the quality of medicines and to establish a uniform scale of wages for pharmaceutical assistants, constructed a building at 18-22 Francis Street in 1954 to a design by Cowper, Murphy and Appleford. Optometrists, Coles and Garrard, established an office building and consulting rooms at 376 Bourke Street in 1957 to a design by architects Meldrum and Noad.

The Queen Victoria Hospital, established in La Trobe Street in 1896 as the first women's hospital in Victoria, moved to 210 Lonsdale Street in 1946. Its primary aim was to be a hospital 'For Women, By Women'. By 1965 it became the new Monash University's teaching hospital for gynaecology, obstetrics and paediatrics and changed from treating solely female patients to being a 'family hospital'. Renamed the Queen Victoria Medical Centre in 1977, it relocated to the Monash Medical Centre at Clayton in 1989 (Russell 2008).

Stella Maris

The Stella Maris is a global organisation established by the Catholic Church as part of its global outreach to seafarers. A seaman's institute was established in Melbourne around 1931, initially as part of the St Vincent de Paul Society (founded in Melbourne in 1854 at St Francis' Church in Lonsdale Street) and then as a separate organisation in 1960. Archbishop Mannix (Archbishop of Melbourne 1917-63) was instrumental in the founding of the institute in 1931 (SMSC 2018). In 1934, women from the Central Telephone Exchange formed a group to help care for seafarers and became known as the Stella Maris Ladies Auxiliary. In 1946, Les Royal carried on the care of visiting seafarers in Melbourne (SMSC 2018).

Stella Maris is closely linked to the Apostleship of the Sea which was formed in England out of the Apostolate of Prayer. The Apostolate of Prayer first posted devotional magazines and books to 12 ships, and with the Society of St Vincent de Paul commenced visiting seafarers in three British ports in 1893. Catholic seafarer's centres were established in other countries progressively and these activities gained formal recognition by Pope Pius XI in 1922. He encouraged the Apostleship of the Sea to extend its mission to the oceans and shores of all the hemispheres (ASA 2018; SMSC 2018).

The Apostleship of the Sea was formally established in Melbourne 1960 with the appointment of Fr Kevin Quinlan as the first full-time Port Chaplain. He oversaw the integration of the work of the International Apostleship of the Sea in the Melbourne Port and formed the Stella Maris as a separate organisation in Melbourne (SMSC 2018). As requested by the Commission of Public Health, Fr Quinlan clarified the function and the purpose of the Stella Maris club as follows:

1. *The Club is a worldwide Roman Catholic organisation, functioning in every major port and it is responsible to the Archdiocese of Melbourne.*
2. *It is a private facility, where admission is restricted to Club members.*
3. *Club members themselves will provide the necessary catering, serving and cleaning.*
4. *The general public will not be permitted to use the club facilities (PROV VPRS 7882/P1 unit 2017).*

Today, the Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre in Melbourne, which continues to use the subject building, is one of 353 centres worldwide established as part of the Catholic Church's official missionary work to provide pastoral care, services and support for seafaring people (SMSC 2018).

Stella Maris seeks to meet the spiritual, social and material needs seafarers –regardless of nationality, ethnicity, faith, gender or social standing. The Centre offers a range of practical services including a ship visitor who assists ships' crew with various tasks. It also provides chaplaincy services, bus transport to and from the docks, and a place in which 'seafarers are provided with an opportunity to communicate with family and loved ones, relax away from their work and living environment, and equip themselves with basic necessities' (SMSC 2018).

SITE HISTORY

The land at 588-600 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, is part of Crown Land Block 16A, the block bound by Bourke, Little Collins, Spencer and King streets, which was originally reserved for public

buildings in Robert Hoddle's 1837 town grid plan (Hoddle 1837). A portion of Block 16A, comprising the subject land, was granted to the Roman Catholic Church. The site is to the south of and adjoins the 1867 St Augustine's Church. This church is recognised as being historically significant for its long association through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with many national groups and through its mission to provide welfare support to seafarers and others engaged in port activities, a service now provided separately through the Stella Maris Centre located to the immediate south (VHD report for H0002). Today, an anchor and plaque in the garden of St Augustine's Church reflects the link to Melbourne's early port life (Hermes record for 'St Augustine's Church'; Swain 2008b).

By c1882 it appears the land at 588-600 Little Collins Street had been separated from St Augustine's Church and had been developed with private warehousing facilities. Up until the early 1930s, T Warr & Co operated free stores at the premises (S&Mc 1882; Mahlsted Map section 1, no 23, 1910 & 1925; S&Mc 1930). By the early 1930s and up until the early 1960s, one- and two-storey warehouses were used by shipping and importing companies (Cooke 1882; S&Mc 1930-60). These premises were vacated by the mid-1960s, possibly due to the decline of port activities in the city's southwest, which once comprised merchants, free stores and shipping businesses (S&Mc 1950, 1955, 1960 & 1965).

Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre

In the late 1960s, the site at 588-600 Little Collins Street was purchased by Archbishop Knox as a gift to Fr Kevin Quinlan, who was appointed the first full-time Port Chaplain in 1960. Fr Quinlan integrated the work of the International Apostleship of the Sea in Melbourne Port and formed the Stella Maris entity in Melbourne (SMSC 2018). The Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre (then known as Stella Maris Centre for Seafarers) was established in the former warehouse buildings that existed on the site (S&Mc 1970; Age 4 December 1969:17).

Plans for a new building for the Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre were in hand by the end of the 1960s. In addition to 40 single-size rooms, five family rooms were planned to provide accommodation for families of seafarers, who were often unable to visit their homes in the country or interstate due to the quick turnaround of ships. To raise money for the construction and running of the building, a fete was held at the centre in December 1969 (Age 4 December 1969:17).

In June 1972, a building application was lodged with the City of Melbourne to build a new two-storey 'non-residential' club building to replace the old warehouses on site. The cost of erection of the reinforced concrete building was \$175,000 (MBAI). The building contractors were Civil & Civic Pty Ltd at 437 St Kilda Road, Melbourne, working on behalf of the Roman Catholic Trusts' Corporation for the Diocese of Melbourne (PROV VPRS 7882/P1 unit 2017). Whether there was an architect involved in the initial building plan is not able to be confirmed.

It appears that the Stella Maris Centre building was initially constructed as a non-residential club and comprised a lounge, a small chapel with chaplain's room, a bar, a kitchen and dining space, a games room and other smaller storage rooms. Club facilities were provided on the first floor, with the ground floor area on either side of the entrance lobby serving predominantly as car parks (PROV VPRS 7882/P1 unit 2017). The newly finished club building was depicted in the Mahlstedt Fire Survey Plan published of 1948 (amended post-1972). According to the plan, the ground floor car park was finished with bituminous paving, and the upper level comprised a concrete steel deck. It appears that the west elevation was treated as a curtain wall (see Figure 1). In December 1974, a conditional

licence for selling bottles of liquor was granted to the first-floor premises of the Stella Maris Centre building (Age 11 December 1974:18).

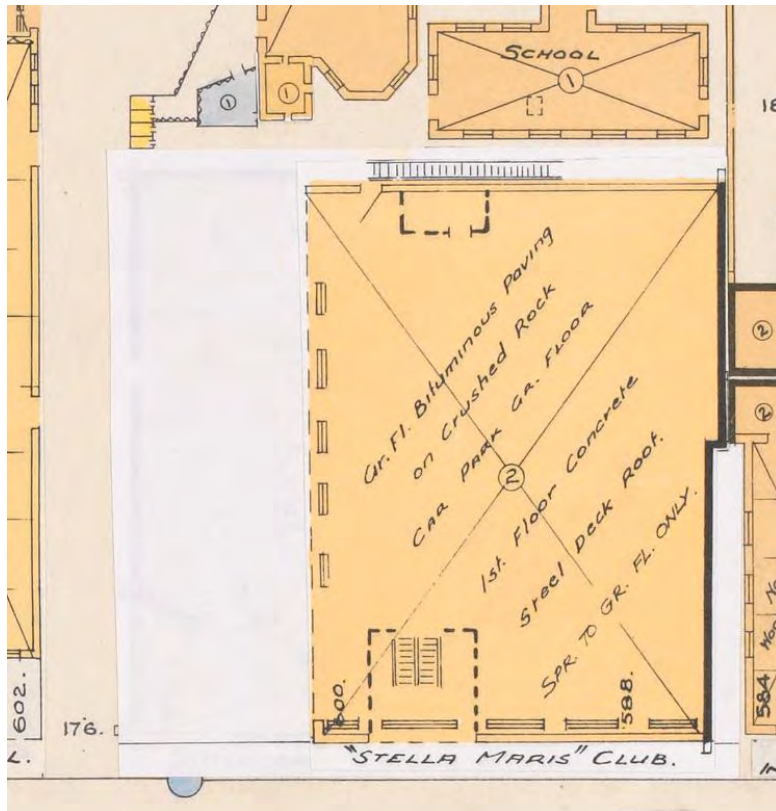


Figure 1. Detail of the Mahlstedt Fire Survey Plan showing the new club premises c1972. (Source: Mahlstedt Map section 1, no 23, 1948)

It is likely that the construction of the accommodation at the premises was carried out nine years after the erection of the building, as in May 1981 an application for alterations and additions [for conversion] to a residential club was lodged with the City of Melbourne (MBAI). Architectural and town planning firm, A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall, provided the building plans, and the construction was carried out by the John Holland Group (PROV VPRS 7882/P1 unit 2017).

According to the plans prepared in March 1981, five en-suite bedrooms of various sizes and an outdoor terrace with views towards Little Collins Street were added to the northwest corner of the existing building. The west elevation of the extension was to be of face concrete-blockwork. The ground floor was put aside for undercover car parking, with the upper level supported by a cantilevered slab. A separate staircase access to the new residential section was provided on the north elevation (see Figure 2).

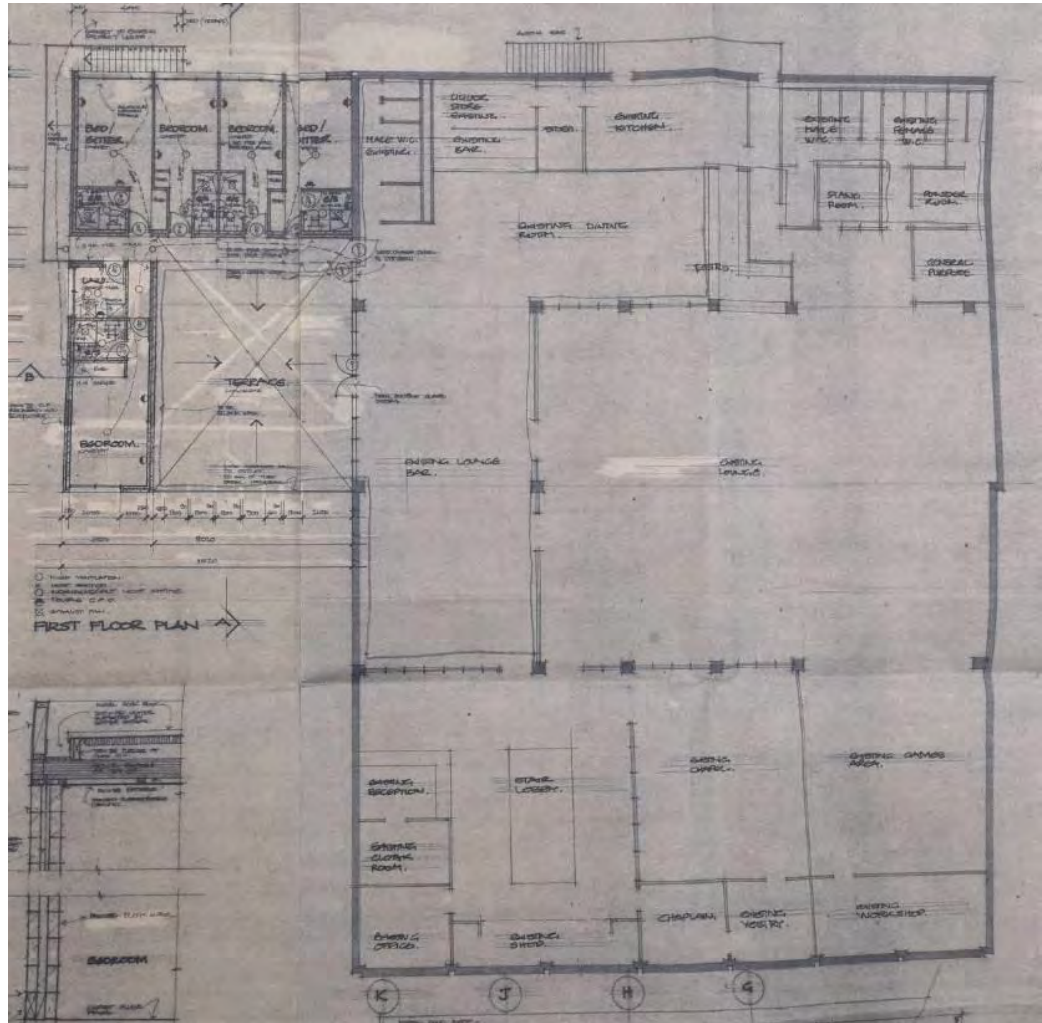


Figure 2. Detail of the building plan prepared for the 1981 alterations to the Stella Maris Club. (Source: PROV VPRS 7882/P1 unit 2017)

By December 1981, three further applications for various alterations and additions to the club building were submitted. The total of the building work carried out in 1981 was \$325,000 (MBAI).

In addition, the upper storey was extended with a rectangular section of concrete masonry, slightly recessed from the original façade. The exact date of the construction of this section is not known. The addition resulted in the open-air terrace section being enclosed by walls on all sides (Nearmap 2017).

Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre continues to provide welfare services to seafarers, operated by a combination of staff, volunteers, ship visitors and assisting priests.

A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall, architects and town planners

A biography of the firm A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall, prepared by Built Heritage Pty Ltd, is as follows:

The prominent postwar firm of A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall grew from the inter-war practice of Albert Keith Lines (1897-1981), whose career began before 1916 as an articled pupil of Claude Merritt. After wartime service, Lines returned to Melbourne to work for

Morewood & Rogers, a prolific house building firm, for whom he designed and supervised many commercial, retail and residential projects. In 1923, Lines opened his own office and, five years later, took on a teenaged Jessica MacFarlane (1911-95) as an articled pupil. The prestige of the small firm increased during the 1930s with a stream of large-scale residential projects in the prosperous middle-class suburbs of Balwyn, Camberwell and Kew. Several houses (some designed and supervised by MacFarlane) were published in the Australian Home Beautiful. The practice was briefly suspended during the Second World War, but re-opened in 1945 with MacFarlane as a full partner. Three years later, they were joined by Bruce Marshall, ex-RAN, who was himself elevated to partnership in 1952. Although MacFarlane left the office in 1954 (when she married and moved to South Australia), her surname was retained in the firm's title (Built Heritage 2010:135).

Much of the subsequent output of A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall was guided by Bruce Marshall, whose expertise was in larger-scale commercial and industrial work. This new direction was evident in such projects as the factories for Ruston & Hornsby at Dandenong Road, Clayton (1954), and Yakka Overalls Pty Ltd at Ballarat Street, Brunswick (1955). From the late 1950s, the firm also became one of Victoria's leading specialists in the design of municipal offices. This trend had actually begun just before the War, when Lines & Marshall (as it was then known) designed the new Eltham Shire Offices (1941). After restrictions on building activity were relaxed in the 1950s, the firm was commissioned to design a new modern headquarters for the Shire of Benalla (1958-59). For more than three decades thence, the provision of council offices and related municipal buildings formed the mainstay for the office of A K Lines, MacFarlane & Marshall, with notable examples being built at Oakleigh (1962), Myrtleford (1967), Ringwood (1970) and elsewhere (Built Heritage 2010:135).

Albert Lines retired in 1967, but his firm continued, and remains in operation to this day (Built Heritage 2010:135).

Catholic Church and Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre

The site of the Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre is closely associated with the Catholic Church in Melbourne and has offered a dedicated service to seafarers arriving in Melbourne port since at least 1960. Prior to that a Catholic mission to seafarers, and a seafarers' centre at 546 Flinders Lane, operated through the St Vincent de Paul Society. This centre was close to the river and port.

The Stella Maris Centre was built through donations and fund-raising efforts of volunteers and has been and continues to provide services to seafarers through a team of paid staff and volunteers.

The community of Stella Maris is those who provide services to seafarers and the seafarers themselves who are assisted here. The Stella Maris community is distinguished by the shared service offered within a Catholic mission framework.

The Stella Maris community has a direct association with the subject site, having contributed to its construction and running for more than 45 years. The association is continuing.

588-600 Little Collins Street is one of more than 45 centres across Australia that offered dedicated services to seafarers. The Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre is the focus of efforts to support seafarers by the Catholic Church.

The Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre and the site at 588-600 Little Collins Street has a long-standing association with a community of Catholic people dedicated to supporting the needs of seafarers and more directly with its members. As a pivotal place for the community's collective socialisation and welfare services, the Stella Maris Centre is important for the community's sense of identity, a sense of ownership and pride in the Centre as a place and the services offered.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre at 588-600 Little Collins Street, Melbourne is located on the northern side of the street between King Street and Spencer Street. It was built on land, adjacent to the rear of St Augustine's Church, that was gifted to the Stella Maris Association by Archbishop Knox in the late 1960s. The current building was completed in 1973. The building is utilitarian in detail, with slight brutalist overtones, but otherwise without any strong expression of a particular architectural style. The two-storey building is of post and beam concrete construction with a flat steel deck roof.

Facing Little Collins Street, starting at its western end the first third of the building is set back from the street line creating a small courtyard space. With open car spaces underneath a large concrete lintel supported by two columns supports the painted concrete block walls above. At the first-floor level five aluminium framed windows sit below a simple boxed eave with overhang. This section of the building was a later addition post 1981.

The remaining two-thirds of the building runs along the front property line of the site. Utilising concrete post and beam construction the street facing southern elevation is divided into seven evenly spaced modules. From the eastern end, at the ground level, the first three modules are infilled with decorative concrete panels concealing car parking behind. The fourth module is left open providing car access to the parking under the building. The fourth and fifth modules are combined and frame a recessed glazed timber framed entry to the building. A simple mild steel framed security screen runs along the property line. These elements appear original or early. The last two modules are infilled with the same decorative concrete panels as used in the first three modules.

At the first-floor level seven evenly spaced concrete panels are set slightly proud of the post and beam construction allowing the vertical lines of the construction to be read. Above each panel is an aluminium framed clerestory window. Divided into four, the end panes are fitted with awning hung sashes. Running across the top of the windows a deep concrete beam acts as a simple unadorned parapet to the building.

A drive runs along the western boundary accessing open car spaces under the building. The building's western elevation facing the side driveway is utilitarian in detail. A first-floor level sits above the carpark below and has a raised walkway running along its length.

INTEGRITY

Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre at 588-600 Little Collins Street is a building constructed in two halves, with the eastern section built in 1973 and the western, recessed portion completed post 1981. Both demonstrate a high level of integrity with their built and roof forms, original fenestrations and windows intact. The 1970s portion demonstrates a high level of integrity at street level with the original

perforated concrete screens and entrance doors and security screen extant. The post 1981 addition consolidates and extends the use by the centre.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Established with support from the Roman Catholic Church, the Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre can be compared to other buildings in the City of Melbourne that are:

- associated with Melbourne's history as a trading port; and
- associated with the provision of welfare; or
- associated with a use for a particular social, cultural or spiritual group.

Associated with Melbourne's history as a trading port and the provision of welfare

The following buildings are comparable to the Stella Maris Centre as buildings associated with Melbourne's history as a trading port and with the provision of welfare. The images and descriptions are provided by CoM Maps unless stated otherwise, with images dating from c2000 or later.

Missions to Seafarers, 717 Flinders Street, 1937 (VHR H1496; HO650)

Of British origin, the first Anglican Seamen's Mission was established in Bristol in 1837. The first Australian branch was started in 1856 by Rev. Kerr Johnston, and operated from a hulk in Hobson's Bay, later moving to buildings in Williamstown, Port Melbourne and then Siddeley Street. A new Anglican Mission to Seamen was designed in 1916 by architect Walter Richmond Butler, to replace the Siddeley Street premises which had been resumed by the Harbour Trust for wharf extensions. It was designed in the Spanish Mission architectural style. The building has a long association with the Missions to Seamen (now Mission to Seafarers) and the provision of welfare services and space for recreation to assist those working in the shipping trade.



Figure 3. 717 Flinders Street, built in 1937.

YWCA building, 489 Elizabeth Street, 1939 & 1975 (Significant in HO1125 Elizabeth Street Precinct)

The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), an organisation with a mission to nurture the physical and spiritual well-being of young women, but which existed outside of mainstream established religious institutions. A building was constructed in 1939 but has been rebuilt in 1975.



Figure 4. 489 Elizabeth Street, built in 1974.

Associations with use for social purposes

The following buildings are comparable to the Stella Maris Centre as buildings associated with a particular social, cultural or spiritual group.

Lyceum Club, 2-18 Ridgeway Place, 1959 (Interim HO1285 – Recommended as individually significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review)

2-18 Ridgeway Place is built in 1959 to a design by architect Ellison Harvie for the Lyceum Club. The Lyceum Club is significant as the largest and most important club for professional women in Victoria, having been formally established in Melbourne in 1912 to provide a place of retreat, meeting and discussion for professional and retired women. It is significant for its pioneering role in furthering the status of women within the professional sphere dominated by men at the time. The Lyceum Club is of local social significance for its strong and enduring association with the organisation and its membership.



Figure 5. 2-18 Ridgeway Place, built in 1959. (Source: Context 2017)

As an organisation focused on the religious, moral and social welfare of those in the shipping trade and with a shared history in relation to Melbourne as a trading port, the Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre is comparable historically to the Missions to Seafarers at 717 Flinders Street (located outside the Hoddle Grid). Established by the Anglican Church in Melbourne in 1856 (moving to the Flinders Street

site in 1916-17), the Missions to Seafarers is another example of only two such organisations currently in operation near the site of former Port of Melbourne.

For its strong and enduring association and use for social purposes, the subject building has some similarities to the Lyceum Club. As postwar private clubs, both examples convey a deep sense of ownership/stewardship and/or connectedness to the place or object of the corresponding community, being a place of importance to this community's sense identity, and as a place that continues to provide welfare services for that community.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

✓

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre at 588-600 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, a postwar club building built in 1972 and extended in 1981, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- Early building form;
- The 1981 additions that consolidated and extended the use by Stella Maris; and
- The building's use as Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre.

How it is significant?

The Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre at 588-600 Little Collins Street is of historical and social significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre is historically significant for the tangible evidence it provides of part of the history of Melbourne as a trading port, and of the prevailing concerns for the religious, moral and social welfare of people in the shipping trade. The place has a long association with the adjoining St Augustine's Church through its role from the late 1960s in continuing the Catholic Church's official missionary work to provide pastoral care, services and support for seafaring people, begun by the Church in the mid-nineteenth century. It is also important for its links to St Augustine's Church (631-653 Bourke Street) built in 1867, one of Melbourne's oldest Catholic churches, and the associated St Vincent de Paul Society, whose members were active in caring for seafarers from the late 1880s. (Criterion A)

The Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre is of social significance for its strong association with a Catholic community of lay staff and volunteers, and religious staff, that offer a dedicated mission to seafarers through their work at the Centre and at Melbourne port. The Stella Maris Seafarers' Centre was created through the efforts of this community, and the association is long-standing. The social significance of the Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre is reflected through a strong sense of connection and shared community identity along with a sense of ownership and pride in the Centre as a place and the services offered. (Criterion G)

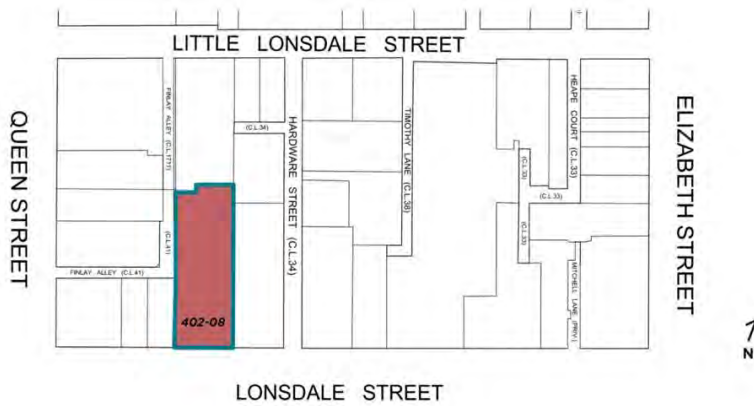
Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME Former AMP Building [also known as University City Apartments (current name)]

STREET ADDRESS 402-408 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne

PROPERTY ID 105737



SURVEY DATE: October 2019

SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage

HERITAGE INVENTORY No

EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY No

PLACE TYPE Individual Heritage Place

PROPOSED CATEGORY Significant

FORMER GRADE Ungraded

DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST: Bates Smart & McCutcheon

BUILDER: Hansen & Yuncken

DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: Postwar Period (1945-1975)

DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION: 1956-1958

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Buiness and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Trade, Merchant
1920s	Office, Workshop, Merchant
1960s	Office, Retail

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The 12-storey office building at 402-408 Lonsdale Street was designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, under chief designer Hubert Branahan, with architects Jeffrey Howlett and Donald Bailey. The building was constructed as a speculative office building development for owners Australian Mutual Provident (AMP) Society Insurance Co, between 1956 and 1958.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The 12-storey office building at 402-408 Lonsdale Street was designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, under chief designer Hubert Branahan, with architects Jeffrey Howlett and Donald Bailey (Goad 2004:174). The building was constructed as a speculative development for owners Australian Mutual Provident (AMP) Society Insurance Co, between 1956 and 1958 (*Age*, 25 May 1956:10; *Cross-Section*, Jul 1956:3).

Bates Smart & McCutcheon called for tenders for the demolition of the earlier buildings on the site in April 1956 (*Argus*, 7 Apr 1956:21). The following month, in May 1956, the City of Melbourne received a building permit application for the new project (with an estimated total of £698,000) (BAI). The *Age* reported on the proposed building in May 1956, noting that the AMP Society's 12-storey building would be constructed of reinforced concrete on poured concrete piles, with a height of 40m (132 feet) and provision for parking on the lower and ground floors, while 'special imported double-glazed and sealed window panes' were to be used on the Lonsdale Street façade to reduce noise. The building was to contain 88,000 sq ft of office space, most of which would be available for rent (not occupied by

AMP whose headquarters remained at 425 Collins Street) (*Age*, 25 May 1956:10; *Cross-Section*, Jul 1956:3).

The building was completed in 1958 by builders Hansen & Yuncken (Taylor & Stewart 2001:70; *Cross-Section*, Mar 1958). Goad (2004:174) notes that the building comprises a distinctive façade, maximizing floorspace while exploring ideas of surface modulation of the 'street wall'. Goad comments further on the project as follows:

While not a large or overly prestigious commission, what marked this thirteen-storey building was that it was one of the very few office blocks built in Melbourne during its office-building boom between 1955 and 1958 that was built strictly for investment purposes. The other anomaly was its façade. Unlike virtually all the other office-building commissions in the [Bates Smart & McCutcheon] office, its façade was not a glazed curtain wall. Cross-Section [Mar 1958] described the 'filing cabinet with open drawers' as having its design rationale derived from a minimum-finish maximum floor-space design, and from the fact that the 'open drawers' were in fact bay-windowed offices taking advantage of the building regulations that allowed limited projections over the street. This was indeed true but it also indicated a return in many respects to prewar notions of surface modulation in terms of city building design, and the notion of a 'street wall'.

In 1960 the building was addressed as 406 Lonsdale Street, with various occupants to each of the floors (S&Mc). The building was subdivided into commercial units in 1995 and converted into residential units in 1998 (NTAV 2014:29).

Bates Smart & McCutcheon

Bates, Smart & McCutcheon was formed when Osborn McCutcheon joined the existing firm of Bates & Smart in 1926. Bates & Smart had itself been born out of previous iterations of a firm that could be traced back to Reed & Barnes, making it one of the oldest practices in the country (Goad 2012:72). By the 1960s the firm had become one of Australia's largest architectural firms. It exists today as Bates Smart (Goad 2012:72).

During the 1930s, Bates, Smart & McCutcheon had earned a reputation for designing Georgian-style residences, but also went on to win RVIA awards for their work on the AMP Building in Collins Street (1926-31), Buckley & Nunn Building in Bourke Street (now David Jones, 1933), and the Second Church of Christ Scientist in Camberwell (1936-37).

By the 1950s, Bates, Smart & McCutcheon had become Australia's 'expert' in high-rise office buildings design (Goad 2012:73). Much of their work at this time was large structures with glass curtain walls. In Melbourne this was exemplified by ICI House, which broke the city's existing 132-foot (40m) height limit in 1955-8 (Goad 2012:73). Other work completed by the firm in the 1950s included the first of the Sleigh Buildings at 158-172 Queen Street, Melbourne (1953-55 & 1964), Union House at 43-51 Queen Street, Melbourne (1957) and the AMP Building at 402-408 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne (1956-58).

Bates, Smart & McCutcheon continued to expand into the 1960s and 70s, with its design approach shifting from glazed curtain walls to facades of artificial stone or prefabricated concrete panels. Works in Melbourne during this period included AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, Bourke Street (1965-69) in association with US firm, Skidmore Owings and Merrill; the Guardian Building at 454-456

Collins Street (1960-61); the South British Insurance Company Ltd Building at 155-161 Queen Street (1961-62) and the Methodist Church Centre at 130-134 Little Collins Street (1966-67) with F C Armstrong.

In the 1970s the firm designed the Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street, Melbourne (c1972-75); the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73) and the double tower and plaza complex of Collins Place, Collins Street (1970-80), undertaken in collaboration with international architecture practice, I M Pei. Other notable works by the firm include the large collaborative designs of Melbourne Central with Kisho Kurokawa (1983-92) and Federation Square with Lab Architecture Studio (1997-2002) (Goad 2012:74).



Figure 1. An image of the newly completed building, published in March 1958 (*Cross-Section*, No. 65, March 1958).



Figure 2. The newly completed building in 1958 (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H99.50/26).



Figure 3. A detail of the facade in 1958 (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H99.50/27).



Figure 4. Ground level of the building in 1958 and retail tenants (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H99.50/24).



Figure 5. The entrance foyer in 1958 (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H99.50/23).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former AMP Building at 402-408 Lonsdale Street is a 12-storey commercial building located on the north side of Lonsdale Street between Queen and Elizabeth streets. Constructed in 1956-58 to a design by architects Bates Smart & McCutcheon, the building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

Rectangular in overall form, the building has a large central light well, with linking section on the western boundary. The building is of reinforced concrete frame construction with brick infill to the side walls.

The main façade incorporates projecting window bays which are located on alternate floor levels, resulting in a complex, modulating surface which contrasts with the simplicity of the popular curtain wall of the period. Projecting window bays are staggered in a regular vertical pattern with broad central projecting bays alternating with pairs of narrow projecting bays at each alternate level. Behind the projecting bays, rendered spandrels and mullions divide the front façade into a vertical tripartite grid, broken only by the broad central projecting bays. The window framing has been altered, however some of the awning windows remain openable.

At the ground level, shopfronts have been inserted flush with the original structure, largely obscuring the pier construction which was originally visible in front of recessed shopfronts. A recessed main entrance to the building remains at the west side.

INTEGRITY

The Former AMP Building at 402-408 Lonsdale Street, including the original form and much of the detailing, remains highly intact to its original construction in 1956-58. Works to the building, including the replacement of all window framing and glazing and the remodelling of previously recessed shopfronts to sit flush with the front façade, has altered the original design.

Overall however, the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone some alteration, this does not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey commercial building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Former AMP Building at 402-408 Lonsdale Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of 1950s multi-storey office building design. The building's front façade, with rendered spandrels and rows of glazing with rendered mullions, which divide the entire façade into a grid-like pattern, can be clearly observed from Lonsdale Street. The front façade is not of typical curtain wall construction, and instead incorporates a regular pattern of projecting window bays which add to the grid-like appearance of the wall. Despite the redesign of the street-level façade and the altered glazing, the façade remains highly intact to its original design.

There are a number of buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the Former AMP Building. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A comparative example in the City of Melbourne which is located immediately adjacent to the Hoddle Grid is ICI House, 1-4 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1958). This place is included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H0786).

Locally-significant places

Precinct Heritage Overlay

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from the early postwar period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme. Those from the 1950s that are included in the Heritage Overlay are currently included as part of Heritage Precincts, but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places. These places are:



Former Gilbert Court, 100-104 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1954-55) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Hosie's Hotel, 1-5 Elizabeth Street & 288-290 Flinders Street (Mussen McKay & Potter, 1954-55), included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct as a Significant place.



Coates Building, 18-22 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1958-59) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Bank of Adelaide Building, 265-269 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, 1959-60) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Allans Building, 276-278 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, 1956-57) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Significant place.

Other Examples

Despite the demolition of many 1950s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the initial period of curtain wall construction in Melbourne and demonstrate similar characteristics to the subject building. The following examples are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places as part of the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review:



Lauren's House, 414-416 Lonsdale Street (Harold Bloom, 1956) (Interim HO1254).



Former Atlas Assurance Building, 404-406 Collins Street (H Garnet Alsop & Partners, 1958-61) (Interim HO1008).



Former London Assurance House, 468-470 Bourke Street (B Evans & Partners, 1960) (Interim HO1006).



Former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange, 376 Flinders Lane (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1957).



Former Ajax House, 103-105 Queen Street (HD Berry, 1956).



HC Sleigh Building, 166-172 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1953-55).



Coles & Garrard Building, 376-378 Bourke Street (Meldrum & Noad, 1957).



Canton Insurance Building, 43-51 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1957).

Analysis

As a fine and highly intact representative example of its type, the Former AMP Building at 402-408 Lonsdale Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey office buildings in the City of Melbourne. Similar to the small number of 1950s buildings presently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme – and a small number of other examples identified throughout the Hoddle Grid and listed above – the Former AMP Building clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

**Review of Heritage
Overlay Listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former AMP Building

PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Former AMP Building at 402-408 Lonsdale Street, a multi-storey office building constructed in 1956-58.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made to the street level façade and window framing and glazing are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former AMP Building at 402-408 Lonsdale Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed in 1956-58 to a design by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, the Former AMP Building has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and the prestige afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

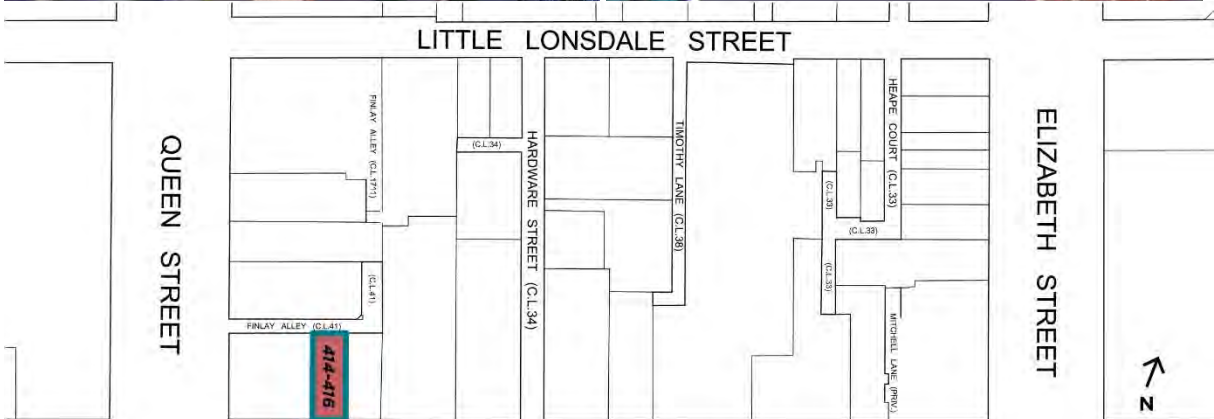
The Former AMP Building is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building. The building strongly reflects the style which was popular in the 1950s, particularly in central Melbourne. Constructed to the prevailing 40m (132 foot) height limit of the time, the Former AMP Building clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a 1950s structure with a grid-like street

facade. The front façade of alternating rows of glazing and rendered spandrels, and vertical mullions which divide the facade into a grid-like pattern, and the use of materials metal window frames, demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style. The incorporation of a regular pattern of projecting window bays which add to the grid-like appearance of the façade is unusual and distinctive (Criterion D).

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Laurens House
STREET ADDRESS	414-416 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne
105735	105735



SURVEY DATE:	October 2017	LONSDALE SURVEY BY:	Context
HERITAGE INVENTORY	N/A	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Harold Bloom	EXISTING GRADE	C
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1965)	BUILDER:	Not known
		DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1956

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Retail
1920s	Retail
1960s	Commercial office

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

Laurens House at 414-416 Lonsdale Street, designed by architect Harold Bloom in 1956 is an eight-storey office building featuring an asymmetrical curtain wall facade comprised of a combination of lightweight glazing and ceramic tiles.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48)

SITE HISTORY

The land at 414-416 Lonsdale Street is part of Crown Allotment 1, Block 29, purchased by Matthew Cantlon in 1837 (DCLS). By the early 1950s, the subject site was occupied by a pair of two-storey shops and dwellings (*Age* 18 June 1953:13).

In June 1953, the pair of brick shops and dwellings at 414-416 Lonsdale Street, which was part of M J Metcalfe's estate, was sold for £7,500 (*Age* 18 June 1953:13). The shops and dwellings were demolished by 1955, and the vacant land was rated at a Net Annual Value (NAV) of £320 in the 1956-57 financial year (RB 1956).

In January 1956, Harold Bloom, architect, called tenders for the erection of a four-storey reinforced concrete office building for George Laurens Pty Ltd, a debt collecting company. The gross floor area of the building was 8,800 square feet (*Age* 25 January 1956:19).

In March 1956, the owner of the building, George Laurens, applied for a permit through the Melbourne City Council to erect an office building on the site (Figure 1). Laurens also expressed his intention to ultimately extend the building to seven storeys in height (VPRS 11201/P/1 UNIT 376).

The quantity surveyor for the building was Crisp & Wolferatan, with the construction contract awarded to F T Jeffrey Pty Ltd at an estimated cost of £47,000 (*Age* 15 August 1956:12). Concrete form work had commenced by August 1956 (*Age* 15 August 1956:12). According to the rate record from the 1957-58 financial year, 414-416 Lonsdale Street was only completed as a four-level office building. The first NAV of the newly finished building was £3,000 (RB 1957).

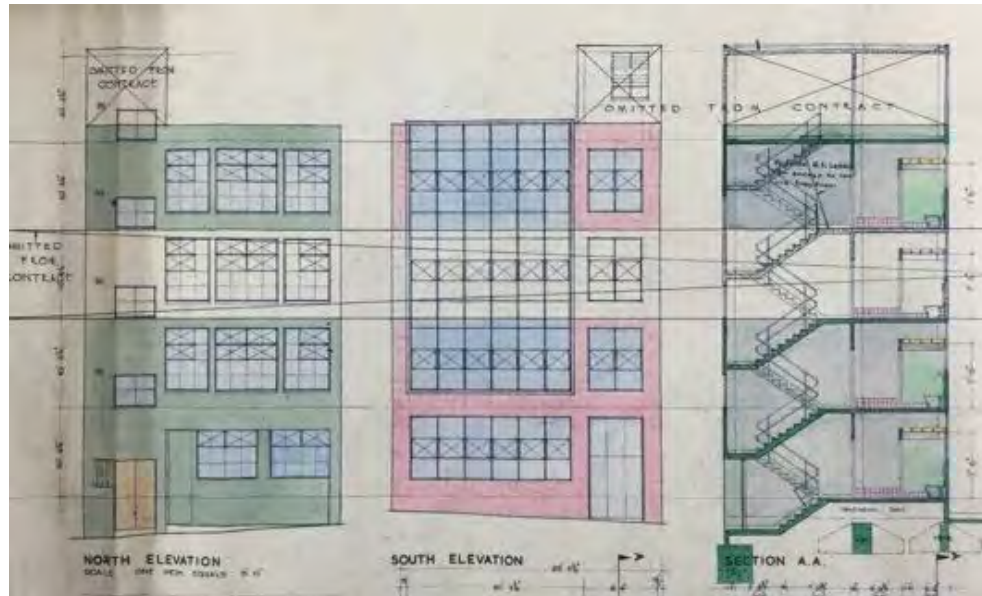


Figure 1. Elevation drawings prepared by Harold Bloom in 1956 (Source: VPRS11201/P/1 UNIT376).

Named after the owner, the building became known as 'Laurens House' (Mahlstedt Map, section 2, no 4a, 1962). The building contained four levels of open-plan office spaces. A loading zone was provided at the rear of the ground floor, which was accessed from the rear service lane, Finlay Lane. A kiosk was installed in the lobby, behind the main entrance. The provision of the 'light court', or a lightwell, is also notable. A small section near the eastern boundary on each floor was recessed towards the west so that the natural light could flow into all levels (Figure 2) (VPRS 11201/P/1 UNIT 376).

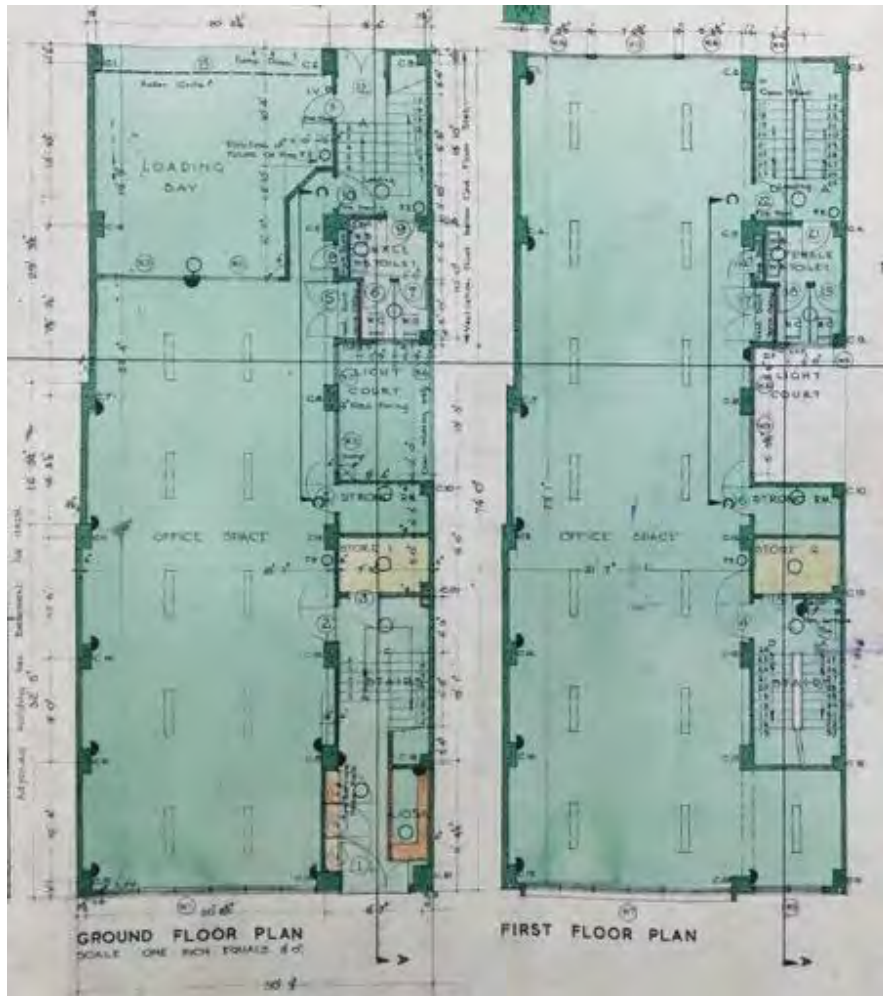


Figure 2. The ground and first floor plans showing the internal arrangements of the office levels. Note the provision of the 'light court' on the eastern boundary. (Source: VPRS 11201/P/1 UNIT 376)

In March 1960, Bloom invited tenders for a four-storey addition to Laurens House. The quantity surveyor was again Crisp & Wolferatan (*Age* 26 March 1960:48). The construction work, which extended the building to eight storeys high, was carried out at a cost of £50,000 and completed by the next financial year. The NAV in 1961 tripled to £9,000 pounds compared to the previous year (RB 1961-2).

In 1962, a Mahlstedt Fire Survey Plan noted the subject building as an eight-storey building with hollow blocks and concrete. At the same time, the storage rooms behind the southern staircase had been turned into a lift (Mahlstedt Map, section 2, no 4a, 1962). The light court was also extended to the entire height of the building (Figure 2, Figure 3).

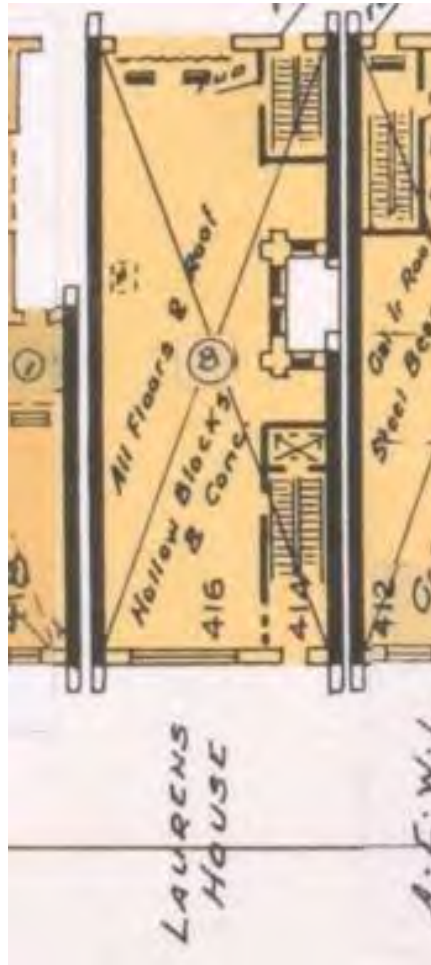


Figure 3. The building footprint in 1962, following the addition of four levels. (Source: Mahlstedt Map, section 1, map no 4a, 1962)

Since its opening in 1956, Laurens House has housed local financing and commercial firms. George Laurens Pty Ltd occupied the front half of the building, while the rear was tenanted by A D Goodman and M Kelly, both solicitors. The lobby kiosk was leased to M Wagman, tobacconist (S&Mc 1960; RB 1960).

Since 1961, the offices of Laurens House have been shared by George Laurence Pty Ltd, A D Goodman, M Kelly, Cameron, Goodman & Co, and a branch of the National Bank of Australia Ltd.

Around 1970, the building was sold to Peak Properties Pty Ltd. Following the change of ownership, the building was vacated by its tenants, except for the National Bank of Australasia (Age 6 April 1961:5; S&Mc 1965, 1970). By the mid-1970s, the building was renamed UTC House. The tenants around this time were Glassop & Son Pty Ltd, bankers; L G Quinn & CO Pty Ltd, accountants; Davies & Collison, patent attorneys; N P Dunn, solicitors; D Ting & Byrne, solicitors; Civil Security Agency, UTC Pty Ltd, travel agency, Myer Southern Stores (buying office); and the National Bank of Australasia Ltd (S&Mc 1974).

The offices were subdivided in 1978. The ground-level shopfront and entrance to number 416 is an addition from 1990. The construction cost at that time was \$20,000 (MBAI).

The building currently contains eight businesses and one shop (CoMMaps).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The building was first constructed as a four-storey building and five years later was extended by an additional four stories, to the same design. The building is distinctively modernist in style. It is distinguished by its cuboid form and asymmetrical curtain walled façade.

The main façade appears as a light weight, transparent glazed section, in contrast to the more solid tiled section to one side, concealing the stairwell to the upper floors.

The glazed section is comprised of repeated horizontal bands combining three rows of windows over a ribbed metal spandrel. Each band corresponds to a floor level within the building. Glazing is arranged in squared aluminium frames, with the middle row operable. Metal spandrel panels match the square dimensions of the windows, resulting in regular squared effect overall. A band of ribbed metal runs along the top edge of the building.

The solid section is clad with square ceramic tiles and inset with windows with the same dimensions as the adjacent glazed section. The ceramic tiles run down to street level where a separate entry is provided for access to the upper floors.

INTEGRITY

The upper façade of the building retains a high level of integrity. The shop front has been altered and minor changes have occurred to the stairwell entry. The current recessed glazed shop front does not appear on the original drawings or maps (Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3), suggesting it was installed sometime after 1962. The additional four storeys were completed using the same design

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The 1950s saw the development of the modern multi-story office building in Melbourne, often built for insurance companies or finance companies. Concrete and steel structural frames provided building support allowing the façade to be clad in a non-load bearing curtain wall. In early examples, curtain walls were typically fully glazed, while in later examples, a greater range of materials were used to achieve variety of expression. A group of buildings built in the mid-1950s to early 1960s combined expansive glazed panels with solid masonry sections to achieve a distinctive aesthetic. They represent a particular stage in the development of this new building type.

State-significant places

A comparative example in the City of Melbourne which is located immediately adjacent to the Hoddle Grid is ICI House, 1-4 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1958). This place is included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H0786).

Locally-significant places

Precinct Heritage Overlay

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from the early postwar period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme. Those constructed in the 1950s that are included in the Heritage Overlay are currently included as part of Heritage Precincts, but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places. These places are:



Former Gilbert Court, 100-104 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1954-55) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Hosie's Hotel, 1-5 Elizabeth Street & 288-290 Flinders Street (Mussen McKay & Potter, 1954-55), included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct as a Significant place.



Coates Building, 18-22 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1958-59) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Bank of Adelaide Building, 265-269 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, 1959-60) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Allans Building, 276-278 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb with Charles N Hollinshed, 1956-57) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Significant place.

Other Examples

Despite the demolition of many 1950s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the initial period of curtain wall construction in Melbourne and demonstrate similar characteristics to the subject building. The following examples are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places as part of the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review:



Former Coles and Garrard Building, 376-378 Bourke Street (Meldrum & Noad, 1957).



Former Atlas Assurance Building, 404-406 Collins Street (H Garnet Alsop & Partners, 1958-61) (Interim HO1008).



Former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange, 376 Flinders Lane (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1957).



Former AMP Building, 402-408 Lonsdale Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1956-59).



Former Ajax House, 103-105 Queen Street (HD Berry, 1956).



HC Sleigh Building, 166-172 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1953-55).



London Assurance House, 468-470 Bourke Street (Bernard Evans, 1960).



Canton Insurance Building, 43-51 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1957).

Analysis

Laurens House at 414-416 Lonsdale Street compares well to the above examples of mid-height curtain walled office buildings from the mid-50s. Laurens House retains a high level of integrity, when compared with the other examples.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

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Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985**

D

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993**

C

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002**

Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011**

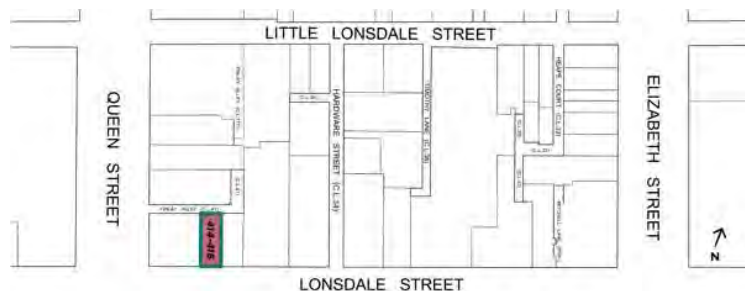
Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Laurens House



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

Laurens House, a modernist office building at 414-416 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, completed in 1956.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing; and
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations, particularly at street level, are not significant.

How it is significant?

Laurens House at 414-416 Lonsdale Street is of local historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Laurens House built in 1956, is of historic significance for its demonstration of the surge in office development at the time, which reflected not only the adoption of modern architecture, but also widespread economic and political change. From 1949, significant increases occurred in commercial enterprise in Australia in the areas of mining, finance, commerce, and industry, a process facilitated by speculative investment after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947. This contributed to an increase in the development of city offices. (Criterion A)

Laurens House is a representative example of an early curtain-walled office building of the early postwar era (1950s-60s). The building is one of a group of commercial buildings built for insurance and finance companies in the city centre during this period. The modernist aesthetic expressed the ambition and corporate image of these companies. (Criterion D)

The eight-storey office building known as Laurens House is distinctively modernist with visual interest derived from the arrangement of building elements across the asymmetrical façade. The lightweight glazed curtain wall contrasts with the more solid masonry elements to one side of the building. This use of solid and void in façade composition distinguishes the early multi-storey curtain wall offices from later examples where glazing was used across the whole façade. Laurens House retains a high level of integrity, comparing favourably with the other examples that have often been refaced or altered significantly at ground level. (Criterion E)

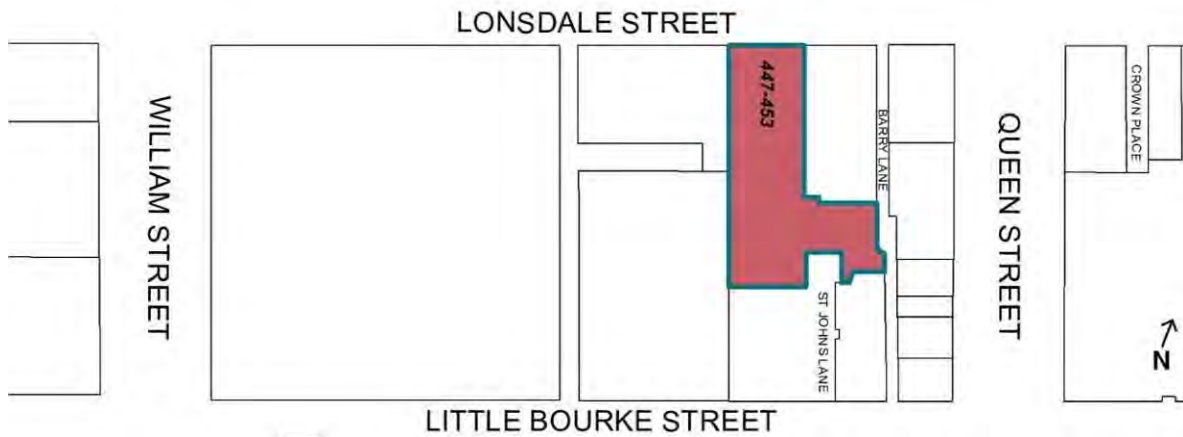
Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME Lonsdale Exchange Building

STREET ADDRESS 447-453 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne

PROPERTY ID 105710



SURVEY DATE: March 2019

SURVEY BY: Context

HERITAGE INVENTORY N/A

EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY No

PLACE TYPE Individual Heritage Place

PROPOSED CATEGORY Significant

FORMER GRADE Ungraded

DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST: Commonwealth Department of Works

BUILDER: P D C Construction Pty Limited

DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: Postwar Period (1945-1975)

DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION: 1969

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall 1.10 Brutalism and brickwork
2 Governing, administering and policing the city	2.1 Commonwealth government

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Residential, Warehouses
1920s	Telegraphic and telephonic
1960s	Telegraphic and telephonic

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

The Lonsdale Exchange Building at 447-453 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne was built in 1969 by PDC Construction to a design by the Commonwealth Department of Works. The 15-storey building built in the Post-War Modernist and Brutalist styles replaced an earlier telephone exchange on the site, the Central Telephone Exchange built in 1911 which, by the postwar period could no longer deliver the required services. Ownership of the building was transferred in 1986 to Telecom, which continues to occupy the building today as the Telstra Corporation.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding,

screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Brutalism and brickwork

Brutalism was another architectural style that emerged in commercial building design in Australia as early as 1959, when Harry Seidler used off-form concrete for an eight-storey office block in Ultimo, NSW. That same year, Melbourne architect Kevin Knight (from the office of Oakley & Parkes) prepared plans for the International Order of Oddfellows (IOOF) Building at 380 Russell Street, Melbourne that broke new ground with its banded façade of reinforced concrete spandrels.

Based on the work of modern architecture pioneer Le Corbusier, and largely inspired by his design for the *Unité d'Habitation* in Marseilles (1952), this architectural style became widely accepted internationally. Brutalism incorporated ideas of integrity in expression of materials (especially off-form concrete), structure and function, and often gave rise to dramatic sculptural forms (VHD Hoyts Cinema Centre).

Brutalism became more widespread in central Melbourne in the 1970s. The Mid City Centre at 194-200 Bourke Street (Bogle & Banfield, 1969-70), is a notable example, with its façade of chamfered concrete volumes.

During the 1960s and 70s, face brickwork also made a return with the Houston Building at 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1964-65), the State Savings Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton & Lobb, 1967-68) and the 13-storey Nubrick House at 269-275 William Street by architects Buchan, Laird & Buchan (1972) (NTAV 2014:22).

Commonwealth government

In 1948, the Commonwealth Government compulsorily acquired land on either side of Little Lonsdale Street, between Spring and Exhibition streets. The Commonwealth Centre (now demolished) was subsequently constructed on this block of land (with a street address of 11-39 La Trobe Street) over the period 1958 to the early 1960s. Its construction transformed 'the image of the Federal government in central Melbourne into that of a modern corporation' (Lewis et al 1993:223-24, 255).

As Commonwealth powers increased after World War II, Commonwealth buildings in city centres rose in number. Of particular influence was the transfer in 1942 of income tax revenue from the states to the Commonwealth and the resultant construction of buildings for the Taxation Office, including a building in Bourke Street, which opened in 1958. Marsden writes that the Commonwealth government presence, including the establishment after the war of the new Department of Housing and Construction, reinforced Melbourne's continuing pre-eminence as Australia's financial centre, at least until the 1960s.

A telephone exchange and postal hall building was constructed by the Commonwealth government at 114-120 Russell Street in the period 1948-54. In 1956 the building served as a relay station for the broadcasting of newly arrived television. In 1959, the Commonwealth Arbitration Courts opened at 450 Little Bourke Street, and in 1965 the Reserve Bank of Australia opened at 56-64 Collins Street. Telephone exchanges were also constructed by the Commonwealth Department of Works at 376-382 Flinders Lane (opened in 1957) and at 447-453 Lonsdale Street (1969).

SITE HISTORY

The subject site at 447-453 Lonsdale Street is an irregular sized allotment that forms part of Crown Allotment 12, and some of Crown Allotments 10 and 11, Block 19 ('Plan of Melbourne' 1838). The bulk of the built form, that which has a north-south alignment and frontage to Lonsdale Street, is sited

on Crown Allotment 12, first purchased by Henry Elmes for £185 in 1837 ('Plan of Melbourne' 1838; DCLS 1839). A small rectangular module of the building projects in an east-west alignment off the main built form, partially covering Crown Allotments 10 and 11, with a street frontage to Barry Lane. The whole of Block 19 had no buildings extant in 1852 (Laing 1852, SLV).

By 1888, there was a cluster of three two-storey residential buildings fronting Lonsdale Street on Crown Allotment 12, including a boarding house until 1910 (S&Mc 1895, 1910). Behind these residential buildings, extending back to Little Bourke Street, was an assemblage of one and two-storey utilitarian and industrial buildings. The remainder of the unbuilt land was used as iron rail yards (Mahlstedt Map no 19, 1888).

By 1910 the Victorian cluster of buildings had been demolished (S&Mc 1910). In 1911 the Commonwealth Telephone Exchange, also known as the Central Telephone Exchange, was constructed on the subject land, which was numbered 447-457 Lonsdale Street at that time (see Figure 1, Figure 2) (Butler and Associates 2011:416; S&Mc 1910, 1911).

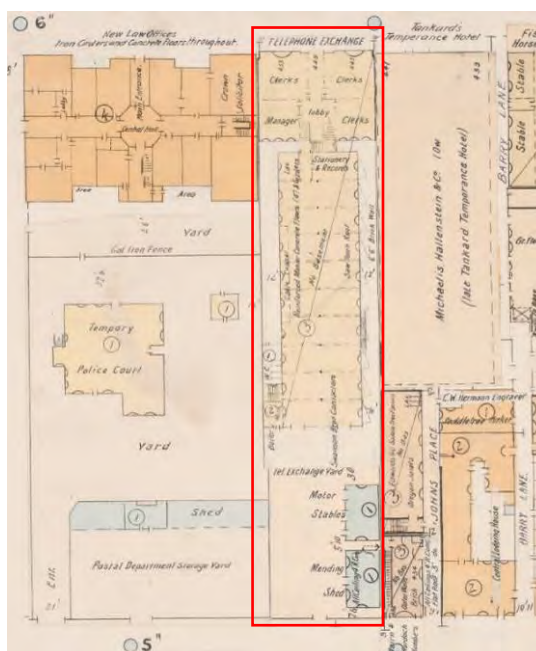


Figure 1. An extract from a plan showing the 1911 Central Telephone Exchange building outlined in red. (Source: Mahlstedt G1910 section 1 no 16)

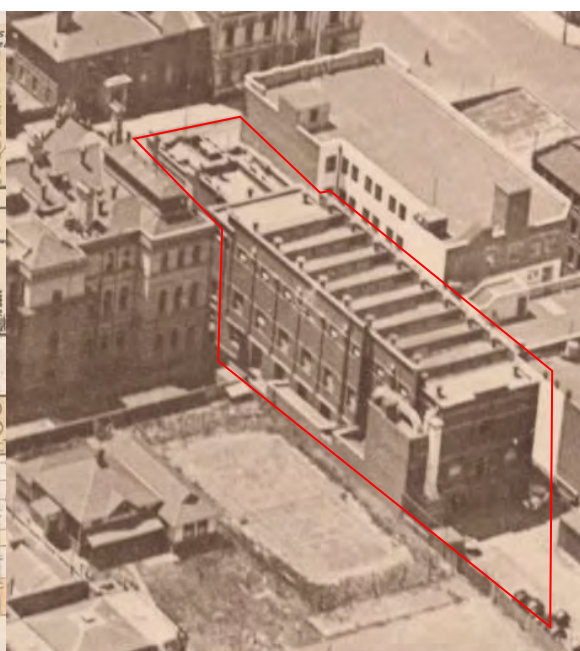


Figure 2. An extract from an aerial photograph showing the Central Telephone Exchange built in 1911, outlined in red. (Source: Airspy 1929, SLV)

The Central Telephone Exchange was a three-storey high masonry building with reinforced Monier concrete floors and a saw-tooth roof in the rear module built by Swanson Bros Contractors). It superseded the Wills Street Telephone Exchange, built in 1884, which had previously serviced the City of Melbourne (Butler and Associates 2011:416). The opening of the new telephone exchange helped to meet the growing demands for subscriptions and to alleviate dependence on the older, and by then outgrown, telephone exchange at Wills Street.

A temporary police court was also erected on the subject site in c1911 and a postal department storage yard was built to the street edge on Little Bourke Street, reflecting the strong civic function of this area of the city which encompassed government, administration and communication services (see Figure 1).

The Central Exchange manual switchboard was installed in the Lonsdale Street Central Telephone Exchange building in 1911 and serviced the whole of the City of Melbourne. Wills Street Exchange lines were transferred incrementally to Lonsdale Street and, by 1912, the new Exchange hosted 4,728-line subscriptions, with a further 3,412 lines remaining to be transferred (*Argus* 1 August 1912:10). In the mid-late 1930s, the switchboard's capacity was fully absorbed, and the City West Automatic Exchange was subsequently established in 1937 (Commonwealth of Australia 1945-46:4). The City West Exchange was built on the allotment behind the Lonsdale Street exchange, fronting Little Bourke Street (the building is still extant and presently operates as the Telstra City West building). Most of the telephone services in the city that lay west of Elizabeth Street were transferred to City West Exchange once it was constructed, while the portion of the city east of Elizabeth Street continued to be serviced by the Lonsdale Street Exchange.

In 1946, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works reported that the manual switchboard at Lonsdale Street had become badly worn and was no longer capable of rendering good service (Commonwealth of Australia 1945-46:4).

Completed in 1969, the Lonsdale Exchange, replaced the former Central Telephone Exchange that had occupied the subject site since 1910 (see Figure 3 and Figure 4). In March 1965 the Commonwealth Department of Works published a notice inviting contractors to register as tenderers for the Lonsdale Telephone Exchange (*Age* 3 March 1965:48). Comprising fourteen upper floors, a ground floor, basement and sub-basement, the Lonsdale Telephone Exchange was to be constructed in steel and concrete with face brickwork externally. It was to cover an area of 2400 square metres and required extensive underpinning of adjoining buildings as part of the process (see Figure 5) (*Sydney Morning Herald* 10 March 1965:36).

PDC Construction carried out the works for a contract to the value of \$6,000,000 (*Age* 16 March 1967:17) The Lonsdale Telephone Exchange was built abutting the City West Telephone Exchange, constructed 1937, which faces Little Bourke Street; the buildings were connected internally by two points (see Figure 3).

Few changes were made to the building after its construction (see Figure 6). Tenders were issued for the installation of a concrete hardstand in 1971, presumably the carpark that fronts Little Bourke Street, and a new services riser in 1990 (*Age* 20 March 1971:62; *Age* 22 December 1990:44). The City of Melbourne building permit card does not record any modifications to the building (MBAI).

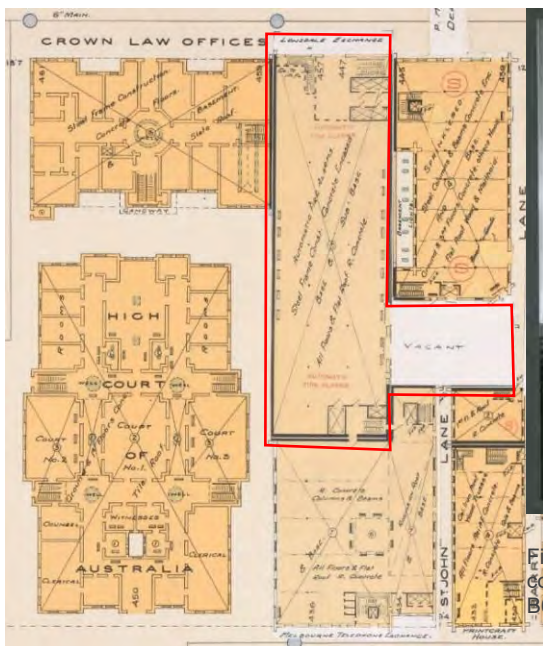


Figure 3. Extract from a survey showing the subject site, outlined in red, and the adjoining City West Telephone Exchange fronting after Little Bourke Street. Note that this survey was amended after 1948. (Source: Mahlstedt 1948 section 1 no 16)



Figure 4. The Lonsdale Telephone Exchange in 1969 after construction was completed. (Source: NAA 1969: series B6295, item: 2157A)



Figure 5. Excavation for the Lonsdale Telephone Exchange showing the back wall of the 1937 City West Telephone Exchange building. (Source: NAA 1966: series B6295, item: 1609B)



Figure 6. The subject building in 1985. (Source: Butler 1984: property key 105711)

By the late 1960s, satellite and microwave technologies had integrated Melbourne's telephones into a global communications system (Healy 2008) and in 1987, Telecom (created in 1975 following the abolition of the Postmasters General Department) announced that it would open a Mobilenet cellular

mobile telephone service, with the Lonsdale Telephone Exchange one of twelve base stations in Victoria to which Mobilenet users could subscribe (*Age* 25 May 1987:35).

It is believed that ownership of the subject building was transferred from the Commonwealth government to Telecom (later Telstra Corporation) in 1986.

The Telstra Corporation presently occupies the whole of the building.

Commonwealth Department of Works, designer

The Commonwealth Department of Works was established in 1901 to look after the creation of public works in the newly federated nation. Although the agency has operated under different titles in its history – it was known as the Department of Works from 1952-73 – it is commonly referred to as the Commonwealth Department of Works (CDW) to distinguish it from state-based agencies. The Department was responsible for the design, construction, alteration and maintenance of Commonwealth buildings and other engineering works. Its offices were located in Melbourne until 1929, when they were transferred to Canberra. A period of intensive works were carried out by the CDW during and immediately after World War Two, as the Department managed the building of essential infrastructure as well as significant postwar planning (Smith 2006). By the early 1970s, the activities of the CDW were slowly declining; its functions were transferred to the Department of Housing & Construction in 1978; then the Department of Transport and Construction in 1982 and from 1987, it was known as Australian Construction Services. The vestiges of the CDW were sold off to an engineering firm in 1997 (Willis 2012).

PDC Construction, builder

P D C Construction built several large-scale buildings for the Commonwealth government in the 1960s. In 1963, for instance, they completed the Commonwealth government printing offices, Canberra, and the Commonwealth Centre, Sydney (since demolished) which, with 19 above-ground floors, was Sydney's largest building at the time, and the second tallest to the AMP Building, Sydney, built 1959 and comprising 26 above-ground floors (Emporis 2019). PDC constructed the National Library, Canberra, concurrent with the construction of the subject building (*Age* 16 March 1967:17).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Lonsdale Exchange Building at 447-453 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, is a 15-storey face brick building constructed in 1969 in the Post-War Modernist style, which also demonstrates some aspects of the early Brutalist style. Located on the southern side of Lonsdale Street between Queen and William streets, it also has a secondary point of access from Barry Lane.

In plan form the building is an elongated rectangle, with the narrow northern frontage being the main façade to Lonsdale Street, although all four elevations are substantially identical in terms of material and articulation. The internal structure is reinforced concrete, and the facades are horizontal panels of nonloadbearing brown brick cladding laid in stretcher bond that probably reflects the internal structural grid. Each panel is defined by an expressed metal perimeter frame, and on some elevations (especially the northern façade to Lonsdale Street), the panels incorporate a full width horizontal window opening that comprises four individual sashes. The windows appear to be the original aluminium frames, and some modules are infilled with aluminium louvres, also probably original.

At street level, the facade is clad in black granite panels. The building has a wide modern, glazed central entrance with automated doors beneath a large metal ventilation grille. On the eastern side of the main entrance, a large, ornate brass British Coat of Arms is embedded in a recessed granite panel. A Royal Cypher of Queen Elizabeth II is mounted on the western side of the entrance in raised brass lettering. Beneath the cypher is 'Lonsdale Exchange Building 447-457 Lonsdale Street', which is the older address, in the same raised brass lettering.

Part of the building fronts Barry Lane on the eastern elevation which comprises two service entrances and a carpark. Two older buildings, on either side of the service entry, directly abut its eastern wall.

Overall, the building is a simple but refined building characterised by its strong disciplined modularity and the absence of any decorative elements other than the coat of arms and other elements that identify the building for its key role in the Commonwealth communications system. The building does not appear to have undergone any major alterations since its construction in 1969.

INTEGRITY

The Lonsdale Exchange Building is highly intact with very few changes visible to the original or early fabric of the building. The building retains its original built form and scale. The nonloadbearing face brick panels defined by an expressed metal frame and horizontal window openings – some fitted with aluminium sashes or louvres – are also likely to be original. Unusual within the Hoddle Grid, the ground level is also highly intact with the original or early Coat of Arms, Royal Cypher, raised lettering, granite wall cladding and recessed entry with aluminium ventilation louvre extant. The entrance doors are not original. Overall, the building has very high integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Post-War Modernist style made its appearance in Australia in the mid-1950s, and was the style of choice for new high-rise development in the capital cities. The Lonsdale Telephone Exchange demonstrates the key aspects of the style in its formal modularity unrelieved by any decorative details. However, it also exhibits some characteristics of the Brutalist style in its solid massing with large areas of unbroken surface material. Buildings of this style were often constructed of reinforced concrete frames with off-form concrete or face brick wall fabric. The stripped back aesthetic of Brutalist architecture was particularly well utilised for institutional or industrial buildings where large expanses of glazing were not critical for their interior functionality.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the Lonsdale Telephone Exchange. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)

- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 19741-73 included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



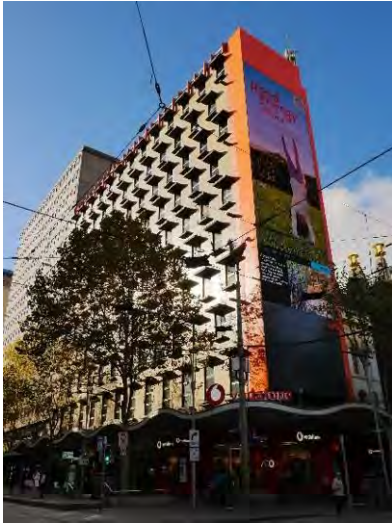
Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building, 359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Exchange Buildings

The following examples are comparable with the Lonsdale Telephone Exchange, being of a similar use, although their style, construction date and scale varies. The images and descriptions below are provided by CoM Maps unless stated otherwise, with images dating from c2000 or later.

Batman Exchange, 376-382 Flinders Lane, 1956-57 (Recommended as individually significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review)

Designed by the Commonwealth Department of Works, the Batman Exchange has an unusual asymmetrical façade treatment with a combination of masonry (brick) with a glass curtain wall section.



Figure 7. 376-382 Flinders Lane, built in 1956.

Former Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building, 114-120 Russell Street, Melbourne, 1948-1954, 1999-2001 (Recommended as individually significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review)

The former Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building (now Hero Apartments) at 114-120 Russell Street is an example of a substantial government building designed in the interwar Functionalist style and completed in 1954. It has the strong horizontal emphasis of expressed façade elements and windows, and other characteristics typical of the style, but also demonstrates a number of eclectic and innovative features that are more derivative than typical of the style.



Figure 8. 114-120 Russell Street, built in 1948-1954. (Source: Context 2018)

Telstra City West Exchange Building, 436 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne, 1937 (HO1054)

A seven storey brick purpose built telephone exchange building. Designed by the Commonwealth Government Architect John Smith Murdoch in a Georgian Revival style and built in 1937. It joins another telephone exchange at 447 Lonsdale Street that was built in 1965.



Figure 9. Telstra City West Exchange Building, 436 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne, built in 1937.

Analysis

The Lonsdale Exchange Building at 447-453 Lonsdale Street is an example of a substantial telephone exchange building designed in the postwar period with elements of the Post-War Modernist style while also demonstrating some aspects of the early Brutalist style. It exhibits a number of features that are indicative of its purpose-built functionality – such as the limited number of windows and large unbroken surfaces – making it difficult to compare with other examples. As a specific and unusual building typology, postwar telephone exchange buildings are not represented in the City of Melbourne Heritage Overlay, as such there are no obvious examples for architectural comparison. Other examples of postwar telephone exchanges in the City of Melbourne, also designed by the Commonwealth Department of Works, include the former Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building at 114-120 Russell Street and the former Batman Exchange at 376-382 Flinders Lane (both recommended as individually significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review) and the Telstra City West Exchange Building at 436 Little Bourke Street (HO1054). Although altered, the addition to 114-120 Russell Street is sympathetic to the original building and does not detract from appreciation of the original building. 376-382 Flinders Lane and 447-553 Lonsdale Street are both highly intact.

As a type, the three examples are representative of postwar public works and are good examples of the technical and utilitarian application of design for Commonwealth communication services. These are all refined examples of postwar Melbourne buildings that demonstrate some key aspects of the Post-War Modernist style, while incorporating features that express their utilitarian interior functions and a major design aesthetic. The Telstra City West Exchange Building at 436 Little Bourke Street (HO1054) is comparable as a purpose built, government designed exchange but is distinguished by its architectural style and period of construction. It is the only telephone exchange included in the City of Melbourne Heritage Overlay.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

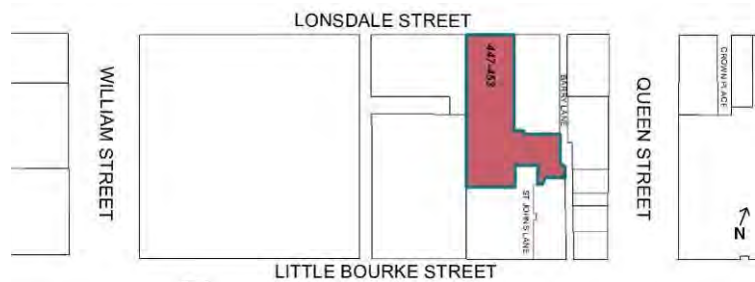
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Lonsdale
Exchange Building



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Lonsdale Exchange Building at 447-453 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, built in 1969 by PDC Construction to a design by the Commonwealth Department of Works is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- Original building form and scale;
- Unpainted face brick cladding and expressed metal perimeter frames, original pattern of fenestration and window openings;
- Recessed ground level entry, black granite tiled cladding, British Coat of Arms, Royal Cypher and '*Lonsdale Exchange Building 447-457 Lonsdale Street*' lettering at street level; and,
- Original aluminium frame windows and louvres.

Later alterations, particularly at street level, are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Lonsdale Exchange Building at 447-453 Lonsdale Street is of historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The Lonsdale Exchange Building is historically significant for its ongoing civic function and association with the longer civic use of the site. From 1911 to the present day, the site has been used for the provision of telephone services to the city, and is located within an area which encompassed government, administration and communication services. Construction of the Lonsdale Telephone

Exchange demonstrates the breadth of Commonwealth powers in the decades that followed World War Two, a shift that occurred in the postwar period and resulted in increased construction of buildings in city centres by the Commonwealth Department of Works. As a large-scale purpose-built building completed in 1969, replacing the earlier 1911 exchange building and supplementing other earlier postwar telephone exchanges in the city, it also demonstrates the growth and changes in telecommunications by the mid to late 1960s. (Criterion A)

The Lonsdale Telephone Exchange is significant as a highly intact and refined example of postwar Commonwealth government development in the City of Melbourne. The Lonsdale Exchange Building utilises the Post-War Modernist style that characterised this wave of development, but with aspects of the Brutalist style that are commensurate with its very specific function. It is representative of the modern purpose-built telephone exchange buildings designed by the Commonwealth Department of Works in the 1960s and 1970s to store large technical equipment and switchboards as well as accommodating an expanded workforce. (Criterion D)

The Lonsdale Exchange Building is aesthetically significant as a well-executed design by the Commonwealth Department of Works. It is a substantial, disciplined, refined and highly intact example of a Post-War Modernist style multi-storey building incorporating features of the Brutalist style, such as large areas of solid masonry walling and a lack of large areas of glazing. These characteristics are overlaid with the repetitive modularity of the Post-War Modernist style. In the subject building, this external expression of its utilitarian interior functions contributes to its rigid, minimalist design aesthetic. (Criterion E)

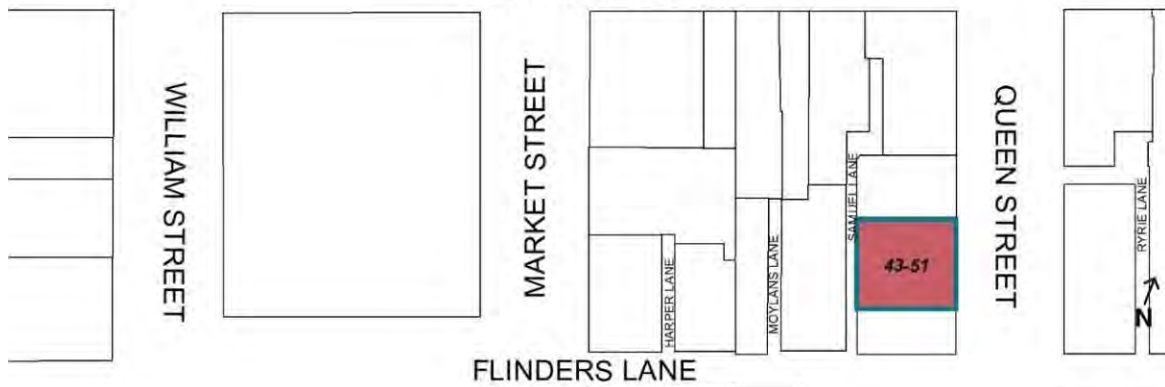
Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former Union House [also known as Union Insurance of Canton Building and Canton Insurance Building]
STREET ADDRESS	43-51 Queen Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	108062



COLLINS STREET



SURVEY DATE: March 2019

SURVEY BY: Context

HERITAGE INVENTORY	N/A	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Bates Smart & McCutcheon	FORMER GRADE	C
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1965)	BUILDER:	E A Watts
		DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1957

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Not able to be determined
1920s	Office
1960s	Office

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: refer to map

SUMMARY

The former Union House at 43-51 Queen Street is an 11- storey postwar curtain wall commercial office building built in 1957 in the Post-War Modernist style. It was designed by architects Bates Smart & McCutcheon and constructed by builder E A Watts for the international company Union Insurance Society of Canton who occupied the building from 1957-70. The building has been used for commercial offices from that time.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

Prior to the construction of the subject building at 43-51 Queen Street, the subject site, part of Crown Allotment 10, Block 3, was occupied by a four-storey building named the York Chambers (Mahlstedt Map Section 1, no 18, 1925). York Chambers, a brick building comprising a basement, ground and three upper floors, was auctioned in February 1952. An auction advertisement for the site described its 'valuable position on the west side of Queen Street, south of Collins Street. Situated as it is in the heart of the financial centre of Melbourne, should be of special interest to insurance companies' (*Age* 20 February 1952:10).

Construction of the subject building had started by February 1957 (*Age* 7 February 1957:3).

Constructed for the Union Insurance Society of Canton, the building was designed by architects Bates Smart & McCutcheon, and was due to be completed for a budget of £600,000 (*Age* 7 February 1957:3).

The first commercial cargo insurance entity established in China to pay claims in China was the Canton Insurance Society in 1805, formed in Macau by two independent trading houses, Dent & Co

and Jardine Matheson & Co. In 1835 Dent left the partnership to set up the Union Insurance Society of Canton (initially called the China Insurance Company), which moved to Hong Kong in 1842 when the island was ceded to Britain. The society was reorganised into an insurance company along modern lines in 1874 (Swiss Re 2017:6). In its new legal form, the Union expanded rapidly, opening branch offices in London in 1874 and Melbourne in 1883 (UISC 1952:16).

The Union acquired China Traders Insurance Co in 1906, the China Fire Insurance Co in 1916, and the Yangtze Insurance Association in 1925. By 1920 the Union was said to be the largest marine insurance company in the world (UISC 1952:10; Smith & Middleton 1920:194). By 1952, a branch had been established in every major Australian city (UISC 1952:16).

The Union Insurance Society of Canton was acquired by the Guardian Assurance Company in 1967, which was itself acquired by Axa in 1999 (Guardian 2019). Constructed to the height limit of 40.2 metres (132 feet), the building made full use of the 82-foot frontage to Queen Street, however, was purposely constructed to be only 60-foot deep, which allowed for a parking area to the rear (Age 7 February 1957:3; National Trust 2014). The insurance firm intended to take up only three floors of the site, leaving the rest of the building to be leased as offices. A Tom Bass abstract sculpture was placed above the main entrance, which represented the clipper ship symbol of the insurance company. A mosaic mural was installed at ground floor level by Sydney artist Eric Smith. A clock was also to be fixed to the front of the building (see Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3). (Age 7 February 1957:3).



Figure 1. The Union Insurance Society of Canton Ltd building at 43-51 Queen Street in 1970 showing the clock at its southern end (Source: Sievers, 1970 SLV [copyright](#))

The subject building was constructed with precast concrete wall panels and imported coloured glass spandrels. The glass spandrels gave a sense of horizontality to the building (National Trust 2014). As the site was silty, the building required 25-foot piles driven into the ground (Age 7 February 1957:3). The Union Insurance Society of Canton building opened on 15 March 1958 (Age 24 March 1958:11).

In 1958, the architecture magazine *Cross Section* described the building thus:

An unusual sight, a sign of the times, was the simultaneous completion of these neighbouring office blocks in Queen-Street, Melbourne. On the right is the Norwich Union Insurance Society's building, designed by Messrs Yuncken, Freeman Bros, Griffiths & Simpson; on the left the Canton Insurance Co building, by Messrs Bates, Smart & McCutcheon. Both are neat comfortable & dignified. Canton House offers passers-by the pleasure of a mosaic mural at ground floor level. Sydney artist Eric Smith was commissioned to design it; the final outcome so retires into the restrained character of the building front that the designer might well have been Mr McCutcheon himself. A sculpture over the doorway is by Tom Bass. (Canton Insurance, E A Watts, builders; £633,000, 82-ft frontage) (Cross Section 1958:1).

The building has been primarily used as offices by various companies, with the Union Insurance Society of Canton, the company that constructed the site, occupying part of the building from 1958 until 1970 (S&Mc 1970). Another long-term tenant, an accounting firm named Marquard & Sons, were tenants from 1960 until at least 1983 (S&Mc 1960; *Age* 23 February 1983:27). Another insurance firm, Economic Insurance Co Ltd, was present at the site from 1960 until at least 1974 (S&Mc 1960, 1974). Other occupants have included management consultants, real estate agents and value assessors at different periods (S&Mc 1960, 1965, 1970, 1974).



Figure 2. An illustration of the subject building in 1957 prior to its completion. The mosaic mural at street level can be seen, as can the sculpture above the main entrance (both outlined in red). (Source: *Age* 7 February 1957:3)



Figure 3. The Union Insurance Society of Canton Ltd building at 43-51 Queen Street (middle), and the Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society at 53-55 Queen Street (RHS), both under construction in December 1957. (Source: Fowler 1957, SLV [copyright](#))

The most significant change to the building since its construction has been the removal of the mural, sculpture and clock from the ground floor façade. This seems most likely to have occurred in 1977 when alterations were carried out to the ground floor (MBAI 47822). The building has otherwise been subjected to internal partition changes (MBAI).

The site now contains 19 businesses, two shops and two food and drink outlets (CoMMaps).

Bates Smart & McCutcheon, architects

Bates, Smart & McCutcheon (BSM) was formed when Osborn McCutcheon joined the existing firm of Bates & Smart in 1926. Bates & Smart had itself been born out of previous iterations of a firm that could be traced back to Reed & Barnes, thus making it one of the oldest practices in the country (Goad 2012:72). By the 1960s the firm had become one of the largest practices in the country (Goad 2012:72).

During the 1930s, BSM had earned a reputation for designing Georgian-style residences, but also went on to win RVIA awards for their work on the AMP Building in Collins Street, Buckley & Nunn Building in Bourke Street (now David Jones), and a church in Camberwell (Goad 2012:73).

By the 1950s, BSM had become Australia's 'expert' in high-rise office buildings (Goad 2012:73). Much of their work at this time were large structures with glass curtain walls, and in Melbourne this

was exemplified by ICI House which broke the city's height limits (Goad 2012:73). This work was considered to have 'changed the skyline [of Melbourne] forever' (Goad 2012:73).

At the time, the firm also developed a reputation for their work on university and other educational facilities. They were responsible for much of the laying out of Monash University, as well as the construction of some of the original buildings, and also had a hand in designing RMIT (Goad 2012:73). Commissions for schools include Yarra Valley Grammar School, Wesley College's Syndal campus, and the Peninsula Grammar School (Goad 2012:73). Their best-known piece of educational work is most likely Wilson Hall at the University of Melbourne (1956), which was built on the site of an earlier Reed & Barnes Gothic structure (Goad 2012:73). Wilson Hall features a sculpture by Tom Bass, as does 158-164 Queen Street Melbourne (also designed by BSM and built in 1964), and the subject site (the sculpture of which is missing), showing a relationship between BSM and the sculptor.

BSM has continued to be an influential firm in the time since the construction of the subject site. Notable work by the firm includes the Crown Casino and promenade, and the Royal Children's Hospital (Goad 2012:74). BSM has also been involved in large collaborative designs in Melbourne with international architects, such as Melbourne Central with Kisho Kurokawa, Collins Place with I M Pei, and Federation Square with Lab Architecture Studio (Goad 2012:74).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The former Union House at 43-51 Queen Street is an 11-storey commercial curtain wall building in the Post-War Modernist style, designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon and constructed in 1957. The subject site is positioned on the western side of Queen Street with Collins Street to its north and Flinders Lane to its south. The building has a secondary frontage to Samuel Lane at its rear.

The building exhibits key characteristics of the postwar International style, particularly the lightweight fine graded modular curtain wall façade. The facade to Queen Street comprises an aluminium framed nonloadbearing curtain wall, with alternating clear glazed and coloured opaque glass spandrel panels providing a lightweight grid across the façade. Every glazed panel is fitted with a large fixed window adjacent to an openable casement sash as the building predates the use of air-conditioning. The frame is natural aluminium finish and the solid panels are opaque red glass divided by glazing bars reinforcing a horizontality to the composition.

The façade has been substantially altered at the ground and first floor level with the replacement of original shop fronts and lower portion of the curtain wall. The original Tom Bass sculpture, Eric Smith mosaic mural and clock have also been removed.

The building has no formal termination or parapet at the top level, as is typical of the style.

The rear elevation facing Samuel Lane comprises full width spandrel panels that appear to be of reinforced concrete, separated by rows of aluminium framed windows similar to the pattern of the Queen Street facade. The building maintains its original set back off Samuel Lane above street level, however at ground level the original carpark has been built over.

INTEGRITY

The former Union House is largely intact with some changes visible to original or early fabric. Above first floor level the principle façade facing Queens Street retains its original non-loadbearing aluminium curtain wall with its alternating clear glazed and opaque coloured glass spandrel panels.

The rear façade facing Samuel Lane also retains its precast concrete spandrels and natural aluminium glazing system. Alterations to the Queens Street façade include the first-floor section of the curtain wall being replaced with a projecting modular panel. At street level the retail and office foyer shopfronts have been altered and the original Tom Bass sculpture, Eric Smith mosaic mural and clock have been removed. The original open car parking area fronting Samuel Lane has been built over with the set back above street level maintained. Notwithstanding these alterations overall the building has high integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The 1950s saw the development of the modern multi-story office building in Melbourne, often built for insurance companies or finance companies, or for professional offices. Reinforced concrete frames provided the structural systems, allowing the façade to be clad in a non-load bearing curtain wall. In early examples, curtain walls were typically fully glazed, while in later examples, a greater range of materials were used to achieve variety of expression.

There are a number of buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne which were designed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the former Union House. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A comparative example in the City of Melbourne which is located immediately adjacent to the Hoddle Grid is ICI House, 1-4 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1958). This place is included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H0786).

Locally-significant places

Precinct Heritage Overlay

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from the early postwar period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme. Those constructed in the 1950s that are included in the Heritage Overlay are currently included as part of Heritage Precincts, but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places. These places are:



Former Gilbert Court, 100-104 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1954-55) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Hosie's Hotel, 1-5 Elizabeth Street & 288-290 Flinders Street (Mussen McKay & Potter, 1954-55), included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct as a Significant place.



Coates Building, 18-22 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1958-59) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Bank of Adelaide Building, 265-269 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, 1959-60) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Allans Building, 276-278 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb with Charles N Hollinshed, 1956-57) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Significant place.

Other Examples

Despite the demolition of many 1950s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the initial period of curtain wall construction in Melbourne and demonstrate similar characteristics to the subject building. The following examples are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places as part of the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review:



Lauren's House, 414-416 Lonsdale Street (Harold Bloom, 1956) (Interim HO1254).



Former Atlas Assurance Building, 404-406 Collins Street (H Garnet Alsop & Partners, 1958-61) (Interim HO1008).



Former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange, 376 Flinders Lane (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1957).



Former AMP Building, 402-408 Lonsdale Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1956-59).



Former Ajax House, 103-105 Queen Street (HD Berry, 1956).



HC Sleigh Building, 166-172 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1953-55).



London Assurance House, 468-470 Bourke Street (Bernard Evans, 1960).



Coles & Garrard Building, 376-378 Bourke Street (Meldrum & Noad, 1957).

Analysis

The former Union House compares strongly with other examples of the style in central Melbourne.

With its highly intact upper floor levels of lightweight aluminium framed, fine-graded modular curtain wall façade, with alternating clear glazed and coloured opaque glass spandrel panels, it is comparable to Gilbert House at 100-104 Collins Street, one of the earliest curtain wall offices built in central Melbourne built in 1955 (Significant in HO504 Collins East Precinct) and the Coates Building at 18-20 Collins Street (significant in HO504 Collins East Precinct).

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** D

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** C

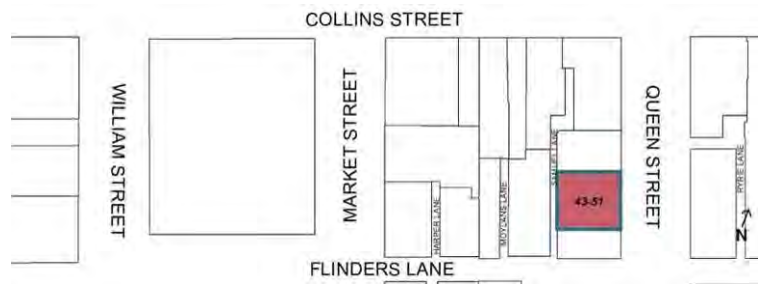
**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Union House

PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The former Union House building at 43-51 Queen Street, Melbourne, completed to a design by Bates Smart & McCutcheon in 1958, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- Original building form and scale;
- Original nonloadbearing curtain wall including natural aluminium frame windows and opaque glass spandrel panels to its principle (Queen Street) façade; and
- Original expressed reinforced concrete spandrels and natural aluminium frame windows to its rear (Samuel Lane).

Later alterations, particularly at street level, are not significant.

How it is significant?

The former Union House building at 376-378 Bourke Street is of local historic and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The former Union House building, designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon and built by E A Watts in 1958, is historically significant as a part of the postwar development and rapid growth of corporate architecture in Melbourne of the 1950s-60s. The building was constructed for the international company Union Insurance Society of Canton, who owned and occupied the building from 1958 to 1970. Located in the financial and commercial precinct of Queen Street, the building is significant historically as a

reflection of the growth of insurance and assurance companies in Victoria during the 1950s-60s, that cemented

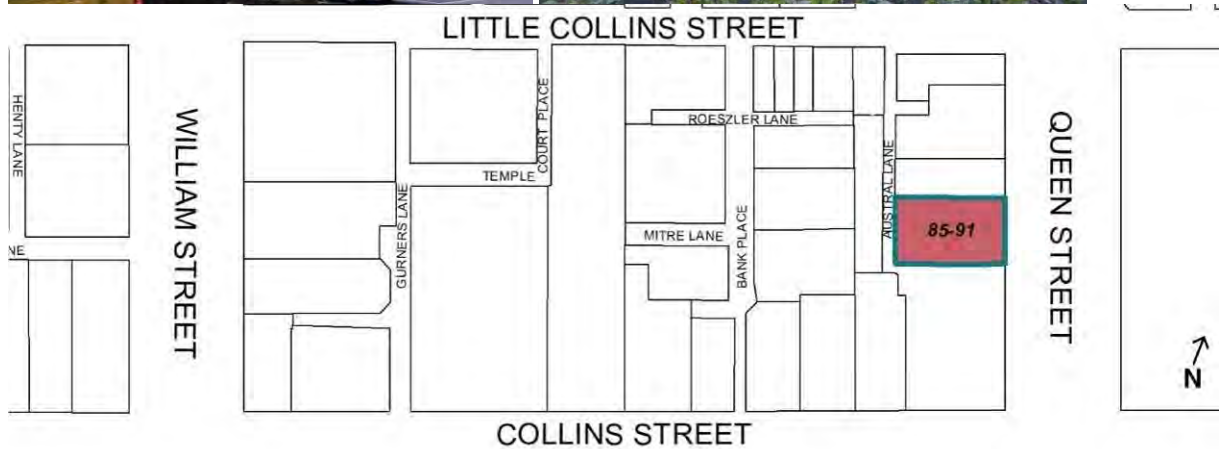
Melbourne's pre-eminent role in the state for financial institutions. The building was designed by architects Bates Smart & McCutcheon, the architectural practice responsible for the design of many notable buildings in Melbourne. By the 1950s, at the time the subject site was built, the firm had become one of the largest practices in the country and had become Australia's 'experts' in high-rise office buildings, exemplified in Melbourne by ICI House (1958). (Criterion A)

The former Union House building is significant as a largely intact example of an architect-designed commercial development in central Melbourne, utilising the Post-War Modernist style that characterised the new wave of development in the postwar period. These buildings represented the new modernism in their modular, industrial Bauhaus inspired aesthetic incorporating features such as consistent access to daylight and open floor plans to meet new standards for commercial office accommodation. The building retains defining characteristics of its style, including the lightweight aluminium framed, fine-graded modular curtain wall façade, with alternating clear glazed and coloured opaque glass spandrel panels providing a lightweight grid across the façade, as well as the rear elevation facing Samuel Lane with full width spandrel panels that appear to be of reinforced concrete, separated by rows of aluminium framed windows similar to the pattern of the Queen Street façade. (Criterion D)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch
STREET ADDRESS	85-91 Queen Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	108064



SURVEY DATE: March 2019	SURVEY BY: Context		
HERITAGE INVENTORY	N/A	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Meldrum & Partners	FORMER GRADE	Ungraded
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	BUILDER:	Not known
		DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1973

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Offices
1920s	Offices
1960s	Offices, Banks

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

The former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch building at 85-91 Queen Street is a ten-storey postwar office building with a basement, completed in 1973 to designs by architects Meldrum & Partners in a later derivative of the Postwar Modernist style. The building was owned and occupied by the bank until c1998. It continues to be used as offices today.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, econ

omic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding,

screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The subject land at 85-91 Queen Street is part of Crown Allotments 8 and 9, Block 14, purchased by James Connell in 1837 ('Town of Melbourne' 1838). In 1880 the land comprised two allotments with a laneway at the southern property boundary, and was occupied by two three-storey office buildings addressed as 35 and 37 Queen Street (Mahlstedt Map, no14, 1888). By 1895 the southern building was addressed as 85 or 87 Queen Street and the northern as 89-91 Queen Street (MMBW Detail Plan no 1011, 1895).

From the turn of the twentieth century, a series of trustee, insurance and other professional services companies occupied the office buildings. The Equity Trustees, Executors and Agency Company Limited occupied purpose-built premises at 85 Queen Street from c1901 to 1956, with the building known as the Equity Trustees building during this time (*Argus* 26 March 1956:12; *Royal Institute of Architects Journal* November 1905:169; S&Mc 1900-1955). From 1955, the building at 85-87 Queen Street was known as Insurance House (Figure 1) (S&Mc 1955). By 1960 the National Bank of

Australasia had moved into the building, trading from the premises along with consulting engineers, estate agents and auctioneers (S&Mc 1960).

By 1910 and until 1924, the Perpetual Trustees Company operated from 89-91 Queen Street (Mahlstedt Map Section 1, no 17, 1910; S&Mc 1924). The Australian Metropolitan Life Assurance Company Limited took up residency in the following year, and remained there until at least 1965. The building was known as the Metropolitan Building from 1925 until the 1970s (Figure 1) (S&Mc 1924, 19).



Figure 1. Detail from a c1950-60 photograph of the western side of Queen Street, showing Insurance House (left) and the Metropolitan Building (right). These buildings predated the subject building on the site of 85-91 Queen Street. (Source: Pratt c1950-60, SLV [copyright](#))

In 1971 a permit application was lodged with Melbourne City Council to construct an '11-storey office building' on the site of the existing bank and office building at 85-91 Queen Street (MBAI 42401). Plans were drawn up by architects Meldrum & Partners for NBA Properties, a subsidiary company of the National Bank of Australasia to whom the land was transferred in 1972 (CT:V8945 F296).

The National Bank of Australasia began commercial operations in Queen Street, Melbourne, in 1858. They became the National Bank of Australasia Limited on 1893, registered under the *Victorian Companies Act 1890*. The National Bank of Australasia merged with the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney in 1982 to form the National Australia Bank (NAB) (Merrett 2008). Along with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Westpac Banking Corporation and the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group, the NAB has become one of the Australia's four major banks. NBA Properties Limited was established in 1965 as a subsidiary company of the National Bank of Australasia. Its main purpose was to acquire and redevelop sites throughout Australia to house the bank's branches (*Age* 18 January 1966:9; *Age* 16 November 1972:16). The bank owned and occupied 85-91 Queen Street from 1972-73 to c1998.

By December 1973 the subject building had been completed, as a 10-storey building with basement level. Located opposite the stock exchange at the corner of Collins and Queen streets, the subject building was named the Stock Exchange Branch of the National Bank of Australasia (Figure 2) (*Age* 22 December 1973:16).



Figure 2. A c1972 photograph showing 85-91 Queen Street (right) under construction. (Source: Halla c1972, SLV copyright)

In 1982 the National Bank of Australasia merged with the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney to become the National Australia Bank (NAB). The National Australia Bank remained as the building's major tenant until at least 1998 (*Age* 16 September 1998:30; Merrett 2008). Other tenants during this period included commercial real estate agents Allard and Shelton (c1980-c1992), the Southern Australian Perpetual Forests Limited, and various solicitors (*Age* 3 December 1980:26; 14 November 1992:92; 26 March 1998:37).

Changes to the building since its construction have been largely confined to the interior spaces, with the regular alteration of the internal configuration of all floors since 1974 (MBAI). In 1992 the ground level foyer was refurbished at a cost of \$636,250, and in 2002 alterations included extending the first floor and refurbishing the ground floor façade (see Figure 3) (MBAI 70931; CoMMaps).

Today, the ground floor of the subject building comprises retail, while the upper levels house commercial offices and consulting rooms for professional services companies, education and training providers and health professionals (CoMMaps).



Figure 3. A 1998 photograph shows the building prior to its refurbishment in 2002, which saw the first floor extended to the building line and glazed. In the above image, the first floor is clearly recessed beneath the upper levels and the double height street level under-croft and colonnade is clearly intact. (Source: *Age* 16 September 1998:30)

Meldrum & Partners, architects

The architectural practice Meldrum & Partners was formed in 1959 by Percy Hayman Meldrum (1887-1968); it became Meldrum Burrows when Sydney-based Bill Burrows joined the firm. In 1951, Meldrum was joined in practice by his son, Richard John Meldrum (1928-2004), who had a bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of Melbourne. Meldrum Snr retired from practice in 1965. Meldrum Burrows gained particular prominence in the 1970s and 1980s and were involved in advising on and strategic planning for, large projects, including the Australian Embassy at Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (1989) in collaboration with Daryl Jackson, and with Philip Cox in designing Parliament House, Darwin (Willis 2012).

Percy Hayman Meldrum studied at Ballarat College and was articled to A A Fritsch from 1907 to 1913. Moving to London in 1914, Meldrum practiced as an aircraft designer at the War Office and established an atelier in Wells Street, London, which became a gathering place for Australian architects engaged in war service. At the end of World War One Meldrum joined the staff of the Architectural Association, where he taught A G Stephenson and Donald Turner. In 1921, he returned to Australia to join A G Stephenson as Stephenson & Meldrum. Practising as principal designer, he strongly encouraged the inclusion of murals and sculpture in the firm's projects. His work during this time included Newspaper House, Collins Street (1932) and Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historic Museum (1930). Meldrum went on to practice as Meldrum & Noad between 1937 and the 1950s, during which time he won the 1942 RVIA Street Architecture Medal for the National Bank of Australasia building in Collins Street (1938) (Willis 2012).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch building at 85-91 Queen Street is a ten-storey commercial building in the late Post-War Modernist style, constructed in 1973 and designed by architects Meldrum & Partners. Located on the west side of Queen Street between Collins Street and Little Collins Street, the building has a secondary frontage to Austral Lane.

The building demonstrates key characteristics of the Post-War Modernist style, particularly through its use of free form or organic nonloadbearing precast concrete panels as its principal façade element, instead of the flat aluminium framed glass curtain-wall systems that characterised other examples of the style, or the use of precast concrete elements but with a rectangular emphasis that characterised others. The subject building used the potential of precast concrete to create moulded and curved façade modules incorporating window openings while maintaining the rigid modular Bauhaus inspired aesthetic.

The principal facade to Queen Street comprises a nonloadbearing precast concrete panel curtain wall divided vertically into 13 narrow bays of panels with windows set between narrower end panels. The vertical edges to each panel are convex curves, which results in a vertical shadow line where each pair of panels meet, whereas their horizontal joints are simple square butt joints. Cast into each panel is a vertically proportioned window opening with curved corners, with aluminium frame windows divided into two sashes by a horizontal glazing bar set deep into the panels. The building has no formal termination or parapet at the top level, as is typical of the style.

The building originally featured a high double storey undercroft space at street level, typical of commercial buildings in the late Post-War Modernist style, with the entry lobby and first floor mezzanine set back behind a colonnade of widely spaced concrete columns supporting the building above. The building underwent refurbishments in 1992 and 2002 which included the infilling of this undercroft space with new shopfronts for retail tenancies and extending the first floor mezzanine level to the main frontage of the building with a glazed curtain wall. The curving of the lower edge of the original precast panels remains extant, but the dramatic sculptural impact of the original undercroft and colonnade has been reduced. A slim profile aluminium cantilevered awning has also been attached across the width of the façade at the first-floor level.

The western elevation facing Austral Lane comprises 13 equal bays divided vertically by structural precast concrete mullions. Spandrel panels clad in face brick inlay panels sit below fixed windows with projecting precast concrete sills. At the ground level the facade is clad in the same material as the spandrel panels. Windows along the southern elevation (facing the rear of 394 Collins Street) comprise the same applied spandrel panels and precast concrete sills.

INTEGRITY

The former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch building is highly intact in terms of its original scale, built form and configuration. Above the street level, the building retains its original modular pattern of fenestration, and the materiality of the precast panels with their curved corners, window openings and recessed aluminium window frames. There have been some changes to aspects of its original design at ground and first floor level. The original high double-storey undercroft space at street level has been infilled with new shopfronts and the first-floor mezzanine level extended to its main frontage. A cantilevered awning has been added at the first-floor level. In spite of

these changes, the building retains its original built form and scale, much of its original materials and key stylistic details. The building is of high integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The 1950s saw the development of the modern multi-story office building in Melbourne, often built for insurance companies or finance companies, or for professional offices. From this time through to the 1970s and even beyond, the Post-War Modernist styles enjoyed widespread popularity, particularly for medium-rise and high-rise commercial buildings. Reinforced concrete frames provided the structural systems, allowing the façade to be clad in a non-load bearing curtain wall. In early examples, curtain walls were typically fully glazed with an aluminium frame, while in later examples, precast concrete was used to create moulded and curved façade modules incorporating window openings while maintaining the rigid modular Bauhaus inspired aesthetic.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch building. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay

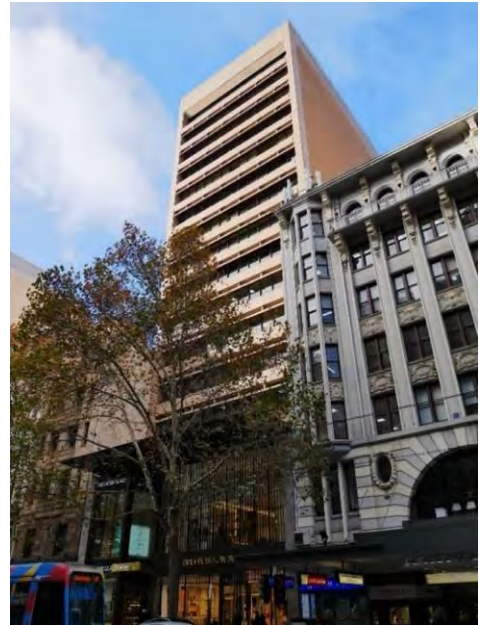
Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1974-73) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kalle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street
(Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



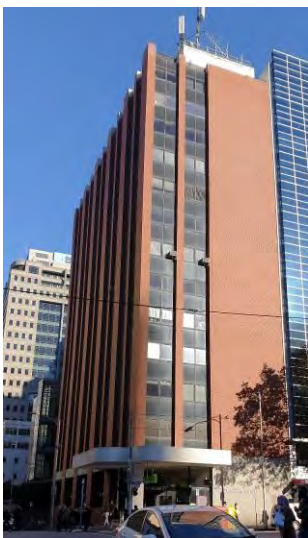
Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street
(Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street
(Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building,
359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon,
c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan
Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street
(Fischer Group, 1972)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

The former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch building at 85-91 Queen Street is comparable to a number of central Melbourne buildings included– or recommended for inclusion – in the HO, including the Scottish Amicable building at 126-146 Queen Street (HO1213), Equitable House at 335-349 Little Collins Street, and Royal Insurance Group Building at 430-442 Collins Street. These buildings all demonstrate the prominent Bauhaus grid design aesthetic of the Post-War Modernist style, based on repetitive nonloadbearing precast concrete façade modules to achieve a more three-dimensional depth to the facades and to maximise access to daylight.

The subject building also demonstrates how some designers used the potential of precast concrete to create moulded and curved façade modules incorporating window openings while maintaining the rigid modular Bauhaus inspired aesthetic. In this respect there are few comparative examples in central Melbourne with sufficient integrity to demonstrate these characteristics in their original condition. It is also unusual for its attention to detail on its secondary façades facing Austral Lane and

the rear of 394 Collins Street with applied decorative brick spandrel panels and precast concrete sills. One clearly comparable example is the former State Laws Office building at 221-233 Queen Street, recommended as individually significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

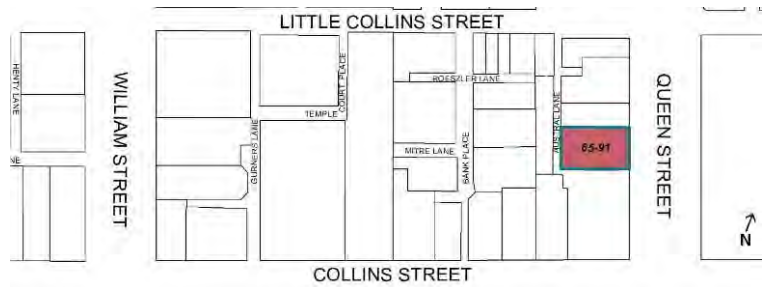
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch at 85-91 Queen Street, Melbourne, completed to a design by Meldrum and Partners in 1973, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- Original building form and scale;
- Original nonloadbearing precast concrete curtain wall cladding including recessed window openings to its principal (Queen Street) façade;
- Original nonloadbearing curtain walls to its secondary facades facing Austral Lane and the rear of 394 Collins Street; and
- Original aluminium frame windows set deep into the panels.

Later alterations, particularly at street level, are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch at 85-91 Queen Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch building, opened in 1973 and designed by Meldrum & Partners, is historically significant as evidence of the postwar development and rapid growth of corporate architecture of the 1950s-1970s that reflected the expansion of large national and international companies opting for construction and naming rights of new city office buildings as a form

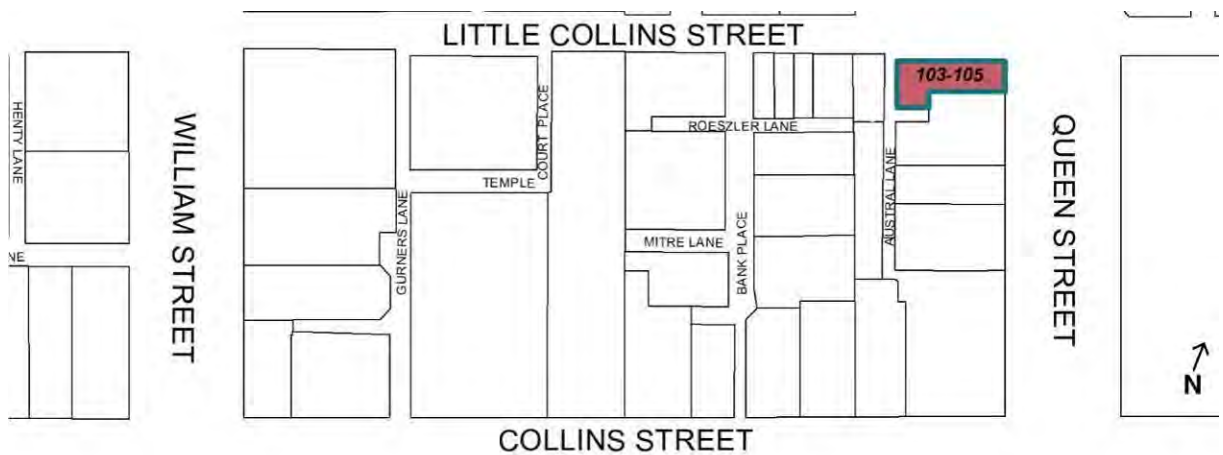
of promotion and fund investment. Located in the financial and commercial precinct of Queen Street, the former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch building is significant historically as it reflects the growth of banks in Victoria following deregulation of the financial sector from the mid-1960s, cementing Melbourne's pre-eminent role for financial institutions. (Criterion A)

The former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch building is significant as a highly intact example of postwar commercial development in central Melbourne that utilised the Post-War Modernist style, which characterised this wave of development. These buildings represented the new modernism in their modular, industrial, Bauhaus inspired aesthetic incorporating features such as consistent access to daylight and open floor plans to meet new standards for commercial office accommodation. The former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch is a substantial example of the later development in curtain wall design during the 1960s and into the 1970s and beyond when precast concrete was used to create moulded and curved façade modules incorporating window openings while maintaining the rigid modular Bauhaus inspired aesthetic. The building retains its original form and scale, as well as the key characteristics of its original design, including the distinctive free form or organic nonloadbearing precast concrete panels as the principal façade element. The western and southern elevations are highly intact retaining original structural precast concrete mullions, spandrel panels clad in face brick inlay panels below fixed windows with projecting precast concrete sills and ground level detailing to the western façade, and the same applied spandrel panels and precast concrete sills to the southern facade. (Criterion D)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former Ajax House
STREET ADDRESS	103-105 Queen Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	108067



SURVEY DATE: March 2019		SURVEY BY: Context	
HERITAGE INVENTORY	N/A	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	H D Berry	FORMER GRADE	C
		BUILDER:	Hansen & Yuncken Pty Ltd
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1965)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1956

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Hotels and lodging
1920s	Pubs
1960s	Offices, Services

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

A six-storey commercial office building with a basement, named Ajax House constructed in 1956 to the design of architect H D Berry for the Australian company Ajax Insurance Company. It was used as the company headquarters and for its Victorian branch for twenty years, until 1976. The design reflects the new modernism of the early postwar period, emphasising a modern and progressive aesthetic.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The L-shaped subject allotment at 103-105 Queen Street is part of Crown Allotment 9, Block 14, purchased by James Connell in 1837 ('Town of Melbourne' 1838). The site was occupied by the Temple Court Hotel, which, by 1954, had existed on the subject site for 118 years (*Herald* 13 February 1954:5; *Argus* 26 April 1855:5).

The hotel was auctioned in 1953, with its location being described as 'a magnificent corner site in the hub of the insurance, commercial and financial world, suitable for immediate development'. However, it was passed in at £62,500 (*Age* 11 November 1953:6; *Argus* 22 January 1954:7). Ajax Insurance Co Ltd purchased the subject site for £72,500 in January 1954. The plans to demolish the hotel and replace it with a new building, as tall as the 40 metre (132 foot) height limit, was announced at the same time (*Argus* 22 January 1954:7).

Australian company Ajax Insurance Company Limited was registered as a company in August 1934 (*Argus* 9 August 1934:6). With its head office in Melbourne, the company's objectives included the provision of insurance for fire, accident, employers' liability, fidelity guarantee, and all other kinds of

insurance (except life insurance) (*Dun's Gazette for New South Wales* 1934:5). In 1951, the company was absorbed by the Industrial Acceptance Corporation Ltd (IAC), a closely associated company (*Age* 17 February 1951:6) but continued to trade as Ajax Insurance Company. In 1981, the company became Citigeneral Insurance Australia Ltd, and later, Citicorp General Insurance Ltd. From 2005, the company operated as Metlife General Insurance Ltd, closing in 2013 (ABD; NIC).

The architectural plans for a building at 103-105 Queen Street, a six-storey office building, were prepared by architect H D Berry in March 1955, and the building permit application was lodged with the City of Melbourne in August 1955. Hansen & Yuncken were appointed as the building company for the construction work, estimated at £196,000 (*Age* 21 November 1956:58; MBAI 29299).

By September 1956, the building was under construction, with the reinforced concrete framework and external panelling underway (see Figure 1). The building was one of the major 40 metre high building projects carried out between 1954 and 1956, when Melbourne saw an office-building boom, especially along Queen Street (*Argus* 7 August 1956:4).

The head office and Victorian Branch of the Ajax Insurance Co Ltd was to operate from the new building. Named Ajax House after the company, the building was opened in March 1957 (see Figure 2) (*Age* 1 March 1957:6).

Internally, the ground, first and second floors were purpose-designed for the Ajax Company's Victorian branch (ground and first level) and head office (second level) operations, with the fourth and fifth floors reserved as open-plan office spaces for lease. The top level contained caretaker's rooms and a recreation room. The main ground-floor lobby and staircase were paved in terrazzo, while the main office areas were carpeted (PROV VPRS 11200/P7 unit 1066).

With the three lower levels of the building occupied by the Ajax Insurance Co, in 1960 the fourth and fifth level offices were leased to financial companies and professionals including Surrey Insurance Co Ltd; Ham, P Walter & Co, stock and share brokers; L B Wallace & Son, accountants; and Ross Wallace & Co, accountants (S&Mc 1960).

Featuring a non-loadbearing curtain walled section on each elevation, the building originally had a terracotta tiled finish to the Queen and Little Collins street elevations (see Figure 2 and Figure 3) (PROV VPRS 11200/P7 unit 1066). Only one formal entrance existed on Queen Street, with an opening made to the ground level façade of the Little Collins Street elevation, possibly in 1982, when alterations were made to the ground floor offices and the basement at a cost of \$100,000 (MBAI 54805).

In 1976, Ajax Insurance Co Ltd sold the building (*Age* 8 April 1976:23; CT:V9161 F608). Following the sale, the building continued to be tenanted through to the 1990s by professionals such as solicitors and auctioneers (*Age* 8 January 1977:99; 21 November 1990:62).

The removal of the terracotta tiling and the addition of concrete panels as recladding to today's ground retail spaces fronting Little Collins Street are likely to be alterations from 1996 when the building was refurbished (MBAI; CoMMaps).

Today, 103-105 Queen Street houses six business tenants and three food and drink outlets (CoMMaps).



Figure 1. 103-105 Queen Street during construction work in September 1956. (Source: *Cross-Section* 1956)



Figure 2. A newspaper illustration from March 1957, showing the completed building named Ajax House. (Source: *Age* 1 March 1957:6)

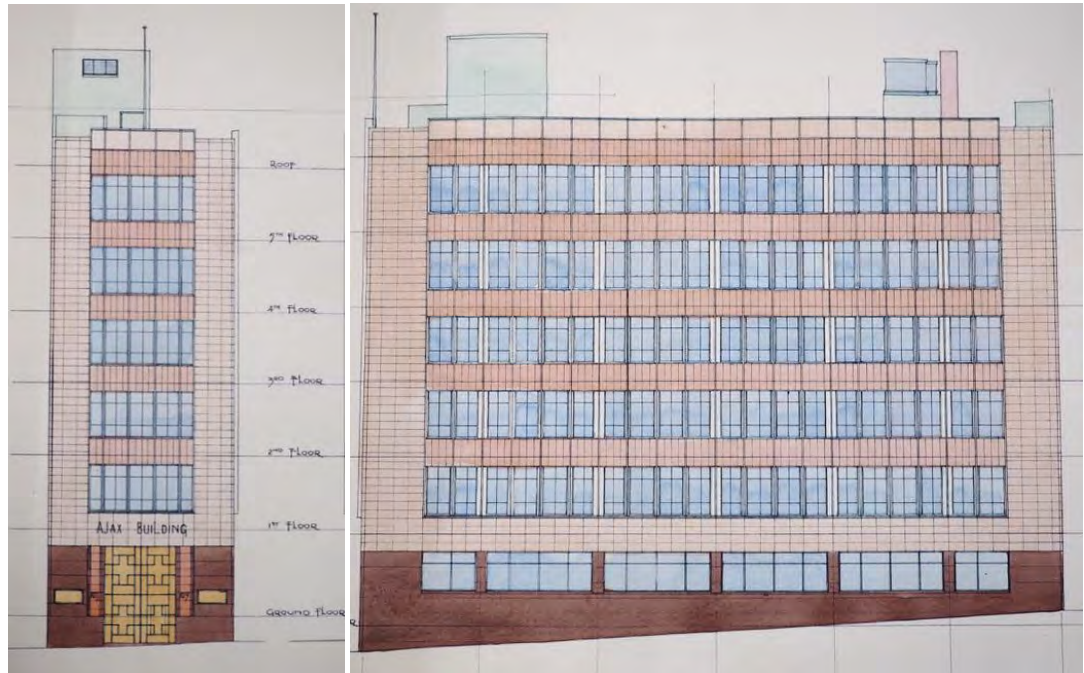


Figure 3. Original plans from 1955, showing the tile-clad Queen Street elevation (left) and Little Collins elevation (right) of the subject building at 103-105 Queen Street. (Source: PROV VPRS 11200/P7 unit 1066)

Australian company Ajax Insurance Company Limited was registered as a company in August 1934 (*Argus* 9 *Argus* 1934:6). With its head office in Melbourne, the company's objectives included the provision of insurance for fire, accident, employers' liability, fidelity guarantee, and all other kinds of insurance (except life insurance) (*Dun's Gazette for New South Wales* 1934:5).

In 1951, the company was absorbed by the Industrial Acceptance Corporation Ltd (IAC), a closely associated company (*Age* 17 February 1951:6) but continued to trade as Ajax Insurance Company. In 1981, the company became Citigeneral Insurance Australia Ltd, and later, Citicorp General Insurance Ltd. From 2005, the company operated as Metlife General Insurance Ltd, closing in 2013 (ABD; NIC).

H D Berry, architect

After serving in World War One, H D Berry passed his Professional Practice Examination in architecture in 1921, and by 1927 had opened his architectural practice at his residence 'Neangar' in Warragul Road, Oakleigh (RVIA 1921:158; November 1921:119 and March 1927:2). Berry's commissions included other city developments as well as buildings in Oakleigh. City projects included a design for a new building 'Central Hotel', located on the south side of Bourke Street between Russell and Exhibition streets (since demolished) (*Argus* 24 August 1939, as cited in AAI record no 17298) In 1959, after Ajax House, Berry was involved in the reconstruction of a hire car company depot at 60 Collins Place, Melbourne, for use by new owners the Industrial Acceptance Corporation (the parent company of Ajax Insurance Co), again with Hansen & Yuncken as builders (*Cross-Section* 1 August 1959:4, as cited in AAI record no 89035). The building has since been demolished.

Other buildings designed by Berry included the Oakleigh Memorial Hall and RSL at 95-97 Drummond Street, Oakleigh, opened in 1922; and a second wing for the Camberley Flats, at 17a Milton Street, Elwood (part of HO7, City of Port Phillip).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The former Ajax House, at 103-105 Queen Street, Melbourne, is a six-storey commercial building located on the south-west corner of Queen Street and Little Collins Street with Austral Lane at its rear. It was constructed in 1956 to a design by architect H D Berry, as the offices and headquarters of the Ajax Insurance Company. The building has a narrow frontage to Queen Street with a longer frontage to Little Collins Street. Although it was constructed after 1945, the building exhibits some characteristics of the new modernism and of the Interwar Functionalist style, particularly the three-dimensional expression of the window modules, although with a vertical rather than a horizontal expression as is more common for the style. The design incorporates modern features such as enhanced access to daylight and open floor plans to meet new standards for commercial office accommodation.

The principal facades to Queen Street and Little Collins Street are of painted render, probably over nonloadbearing brickwork. The building structure is of reinforced concrete post and slab construction. Above ground level both elevations are symmetrical, and heavily articulated with projecting painted frames around and separating the panels of window openings, providing a strong vertical emphasis. A plain recessed spandrel finished in painted render separates the window modules at each floor level. The window modules do not extend to the perimeters of the building, and are framed by areas of plain painted render walls. The original architectural drawings show these areas of wall were originally clad in terracotta tiles, which appear to have been removed in 1996.

The façade to Queen Street is divided into five vertical panels of glazing with the outer panels being narrower than the three centre panels. The Little Collins Street façade is divided into twenty vertical panels of glazing. Whilst this results in the façades having a strong vertical emphasis, the continuous bands of windows and solid spandrels reinforce the horizontal plane. What appear to be original openable multi-paned steel frame windows are extant, and are indicative of the building predating the use of air-conditioning.

The rear (western) elevation facing Austral Lane (and its return down a service lane) is an unadorned facade finished in roughcast render. A regular pattern of four narrow openable windows at each level provide light and ventilation to the amenities block positioned at the southern end of the building.

At the ground level along both Queen Street and Little Collins Street, the building has been substantially altered over time, with contemporary shopfronts replacing the original windows and masonry walls.

INTEGRITY

The former Ajax House at 103-105 Queen Street is largely intact above ground level with some changes visible to the original fabric. The building retains key characteristics of its early postwar design and construction that exhibit the new modernism and elements of the interwar Functionalist style, including in the fenestration and detail at the upper floor levels. The original reinforced concrete slab and post construction with vertical glazing and metal fins remain extant as do original openable sash windows across all facades. The original terracotta tiles to the upper levels have been replaced and the ground floor level altered with removal of windows and masonry walls. Despite the changes, 103-105 Queen Street retains its original scale and form, and characteristic stylistic details of the building remain highly legible, reflecting the era and original design in which it was developed. Overall the place is of high integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

During the early 1950s, following the end of the World War Two, building activities in central Melbourne slowly revived. The Post-War Modernist style, which accompanied the development of the curtain wall, was becoming popular and was used in many corporate buildings. While some examples adopted fully glazed curtain walls, in other examples a greater range of materials were used to achieve variety of expression. A group of buildings built in the mid-1950s to early 1960s combined expansive glazed panels with solid masonry sections to achieve a distinctive aesthetic.

While embracing the new curtain wall technique, the design of Ajax House at 103-105 Queen Street displays some characteristics of the Functionalist style. The style was fashionable pre-World War Two and continued to be popular in the postwar period, especially for modern service facilities such as car showrooms and institutional buildings, as well as for infrastructure buildings such as the Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building at 114-120 Russell Street. The style was also adopted for some medium-rise commercial buildings such as Ajax House.

The following examples are comparable with the former Ajax House, being of a similar style and use and construction date, although scale varies.

State-significant places

A comparative example in the City of Melbourne which is located immediately adjacent to the Hoddle Grid is ICI House, 1-4 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1958). This place is included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H0786).

Locally-significant places

Precinct Heritage Overlay

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from the early postwar period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme. Those constructed in the 1950s that are included in the Heritage Overlay are currently included as part of Heritage Precincts, but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places. These places are:



Former Gilbert Court, 100-104 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1954-55) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Hosie's Hotel, 1-5 Elizabeth Street & 288-290 Flinders Street (Mussen McKay & Potter, 1954-55), included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct as a Significant place.



Coates Building, 18-22 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1958-59) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Bank of Adelaide Building, 265-269 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, 1959-60) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Allans Building, 276-278 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb with Charles N Hollinshed, 1956-57) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Significant place.

Other Examples

Despite the demolition of many 1950s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the initial period of curtain wall construction in Melbourne and demonstrate similar characteristics to the subject building. The following examples are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places as part of the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review:



Lauren's House, 414-416 Lonsdale Street (Harold Bloom, 1956) (Interim HO1254).



Former Atlas Assurance Building, 404-406 Collins Street (H Garnet Alsop & Partners, 1958-61) (Interim HO1008).



Former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange, 376 Flinders Lane (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1957).



Former AMP Building, 402-408 Lonsdale Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1956-59).



Former Ajax House, 103-105 Queen Street (HD Berry, 1956).



HC Sleigh Building, 166-172 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1953-55).



London Assurance House, 468-470 Bourke Street (Bernard Evans, 1960).



Canton Insurance Building, 43-51 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1957).

Analysis

Ajax House at 103-105 Queen Street displays characteristics typically seen in the 1950s corporate buildings built in the Post-War Modernist style. While some early examples such as Gilbert House (individually significant in HO504) adopted a fully curtain-walled façade, the juxtaposition of light-weight curtain wall and solid masonry was not uncommon. Some examples assessed and recommended as individually significant places in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review share similar characteristics, exhibiting an operable glazing section surrounded by solid tiled areas. Similar examples from this study include Laurens House at 414-416 Lonsdale Street (interim HO1254), former Atlas Assurance Company at 404-406 Collins Street (interim HO1008), Sleigh House at 166-172 Queen Street and 376-382 Flinders Lane.

103-105 Queen Street also exhibits some influences of the interwar Functionalist style, reflecting the new modernism of the early postwar period, especially as its main façade elements demonstrate a vertical rather than the usual horizontal emphasis of the style. The Queen Street and Little Collins Street façades feature the expressed window modules projecting from a simple recessed masonry form which are typical of the style.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985**

D

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993**

C

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002**

Ungraded

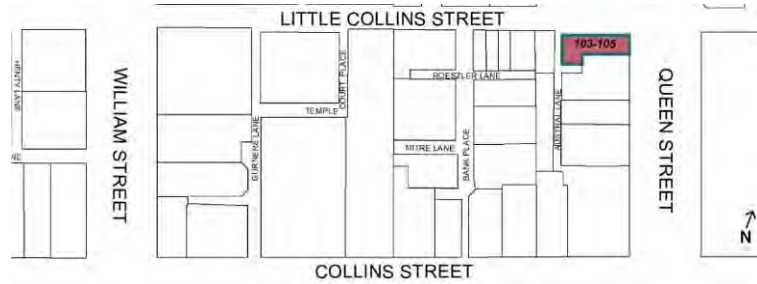
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011**

Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Ajax House

PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

Former Ajax House, at 103-105 Queen Street, Melbourne, constructed to a design by architect H.D Berry in 1956, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- Original building form and scale;
- Original pattern of fenestration, including projecting frames around and separating panels of window openings, projecting from a simple recessed masonry form, and pattern of window openings; and
- Original openable multipane steel frame windows.

Later alterations, particularly at street level, are not significant.

How it is significant?

The former Ajax House at 103-105 Queen Street is of local historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Former Ajax House is historically significant as a part of the postwar development and rapid growth of corporate architecture in central Melbourne of the 1950s-70s that reflected the expansion of large national and international companies opting for construction and naming rights of new city office buildings as a form of promotion and fund investment. The building was purpose-built in 1956 for Australian company Ajax Insurance Company Limited to house the company's head office (second level), and its Victorian branch (ground and first level) with the upper two floors reserved as open-plan office spaces for lease.

The Ajax Insurance Company occupied Ajax House until 1976. Located in the financial and commercial precinct of Queen Street, the building is significant historically as a reflection of the growth of insurance and assurance companies in Victoria during the 1950s-70s, cementing Melbourne's pre-eminent role in the state for financial institutions. (Criterion A)

Former Ajax House is a significant example of early postwar commercial development in central Melbourne. It retains its original form, scale and stylistic details which reflect the era in which it was constructed. It exhibits a similar design aesthetic and quality as other examples of its type, being medium-rise commercial office buildings designed to convey a modern and progressive aesthetic. Key stylistic details include the heavily articulated fenestration with projecting frames around and separating the panels of window openings. It is unusual for this articulation to have a strong vertical rather than horizontal emphasis. It also retains its original openable multipane steel frame windows to the upper commercial floors. (Criterion D)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

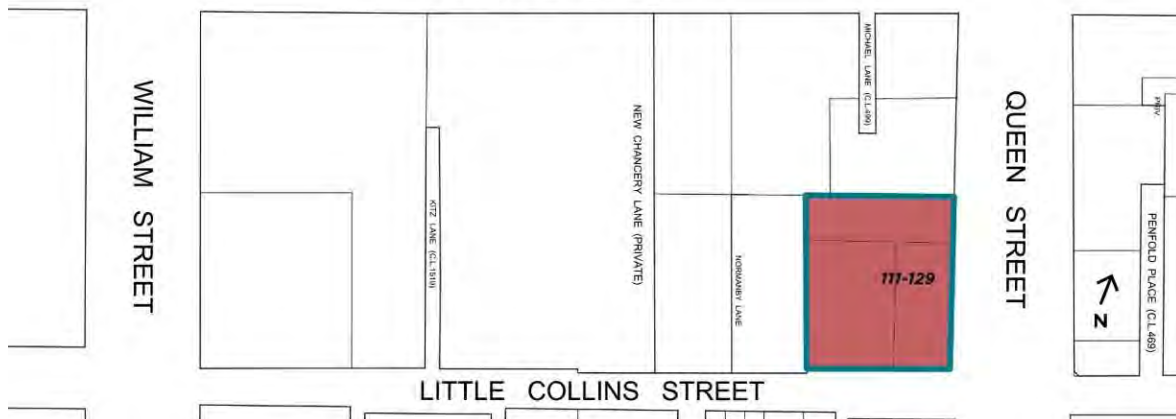
SITE NAME Former Royal Automobile Club of Victoria

STREET ADDRESS 111-129 Queen Street, Melbourne

PROPERTY ID 108068



BOURKE STREET



SURVEY DATE: May 2017

SURVEY BY: Context

HERITAGE INVENTORY NA **EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY** Yes – interim controls HO1068

PLACE TYPE Individual Heritage Place **PROPOSED CATEGORY** Significant

FORMER GRADE C

DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST: Bates Smart McCutcheon **BUILDER:** Lewis Construction Co.

DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: Postwar Period (1945-1965) **DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:** 1959-1961

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review Vols. 3 & 4 June 2016) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style
	1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
8 Enjoying the city	8.3 Entertainment and socialising

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Chambers, services, factories and workshops
1920s	Chambers, services, factories and workshops
1960s	Motor and service stations, club

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

The former Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV) at 111-129 Queen Street constructed in 1961 by Bates Smart McCutcheon, was the headquarters of the large and influential RACV, formed as a social club and becoming important advocates for the rights of Victorian motorists .

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Entertainment and socialising

The retail and entertainment precincts in Melbourne, which emerged in the early 1960s, were largely protected from consolidation and redevelopment due to lower plot ratio controls and difficulty in consolidating a sufficient number of properties to achieve a legitimate tower form. The level of

redevelopment in these precincts is more modest, with fine grained, smaller sized allotments along with valued heritage fabric. During this phase, conservation of heritage buildings was not yet an intentional pursuit, but rather a residual effect of the prevailing logic of the planning system (CoM 2016:5-7).

Higher disposable income, more leisure time, and larger metropolitan populations created an increase in entertainment and tourism industries in every Australian capital city. According to Marsden, only the office and finance sector has had more impact on the physical expansion and alteration of existing places, especially in central Sydney and Melbourne. Even though increased suburbanisation from the 1950s led to the closure of entertainment venues and theatres in Melbourne's city centre, other venues opened. In 1970, for example, Hoyts Cinema Centre in Bourke Street opened the first multi-cinema complex in Australia.

Clubs have also historically been an important part of city life. The Lyceum Club for women built new premises at 2-18 Ridgway Place in 1959 while new clubrooms for the RACV Club were built at 123 Queen Street in 1961. Such places provided patrons with a space in the city to meet, network and promote cultural activities.

Promoting tourism

The city's role in tourism declined with the increased popularity and ownership of the motor car. But this development saw the establishment of the RACV in 1918, which provided services to motoring tourists. Melbourne was promoted as a tourist destination in the 1920s and 1930s with the aid of appealing advertisements. The staging of the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne gave the city a major boost as an international tourist destination and won for Melbourne the reputation as the 'friendly city' (Context, 2011:74).

SITE HISTORY

Thomas D Weatherley is recorded as an early owner of the site on which the RACV Club is located (Crown Record Plan). Land use in the nineteenth century included Bank Chambers, a factory and Melbourne Chambers (MMBW, 1895).

The RACV Club was formed as the Automobile Club of Victoria in 1903 and was intended as a social club for car and motorcycle owners to enjoy motor sports and touring (RACV 2018). Its first car rally was held at Aspendale Park Racecourse in 1904. In 1916, it received the approval of His Majesty the King to prefix the title 'Royal' to its name. Since that time, it has been a major promoter of motoring and tourism in the State, creating opportunities for its members to engage with 'motoring' as a leisure activity. The first Club premises were on Collins Street, Melbourne.

'The first Club premises were three rooms rented from the Reform Club, at 243 Collins Street, including a billiard room, reading room and luncheon room/bar. By 1908, increasing membership led to a move to the larger Equitable Building at 91 Elizabeth Street. With female members welcomed to the Club the following year, an afternoon tea room and ladies' lounge were added.'

Before the subject site was built, the Club were based at a different, purpose-built location on Queen Street:

'The Club built its own headquarters at 94 Queen Street in 1925, including a fine dining room and even its own hairdresser. Key post-war developments included the 1952 country

club at Healesville, complete with extensive sporting facilities, and new headquarters at 111-129 Queen Street, which the Club moved to in 1961' (RACV 2018)

In 1939, the Council of the RACV Club purchased a building on the corner of Queen and Little Collins Streets with a view to its demolition and the construction of new clubrooms to replace its existing premises at 94-96 Queen Street. The RACV council invited the firm of Bates Smart McCutcheon to carry out an extensive survey of the site and the needs of the growing organisation. Their comprehensive report led to the decision to build, and the Australian Temperance and General Mutual Life Assurance Society Ltd agreed to advance a loan for the construction. The existing building was demolished and the foundation stone laid by Sir Dallas Brooks, Chief Patron of the RACV, on 30 October 1959. The RACV Club building was erected between 1959-61 for use by members of the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria. It was constructed by Lewis Construction Co to designs by Bates Smart McCutcheon.

Believed to be the first building in Melbourne to employ the fast track or staged approach to design and construction, the massive structure was completed in 1961 and incorporated both an office and a club building each serviced by separate entries and lifts to meet the strict liquor licensing requirements. The RACV Club offered accommodation, bars, billiard rooms, lounges and dining facilities for members all accessible directly from the basement car park or via a well-appointed lobby. Then regarded as a quiet tree-lined street, the architects provided a first-floor terrace to overlook the sylvan scene in Queen Street; balconies like this being now an uncommon element in the City of Melbourne. The terrace led from the dining and lounge areas and offered 'a beautiful summer rendezvous before lunch or for after dinner coffee'. Although a romantic concept that may not have lived up to its promise, the internal courtyard and flexible spaces of the lounge and dining areas, were thought to be new to Melbourne at the time. The club manager JJ Kelleher had toured overseas to ensure that the best ideas in bedroom comfort and food presentation went into the plans.

The building was opened on 11 March 1961, with the claim that it achieved a new accommodation standard for Melbourne. The opening speech was made by Sir Charles Lowe, the club administrator, in front of delegates from English, Scottish, American, Canadian and New Zealand automobile associations. Some 200 staff were hired to serve the new expanded facilities in all departments of the club, such that by 1970 the club employed over 1000 people to support its 500,000 members.

In 2007 the RACV moved their city club and office premises to 501 Bourke Street. The subject site has since been refurbished into a hotel, restaurants and bars.



Figure 1. RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street constructed 1961. (Source: Sievers 1961, SLV [copyright](#))

Bates Smart McCutcheon, architects

Bates Smart McCutcheon was formed in 1926 when Sir Osborne McCutcheon joined in partnership with E. A. Bates and C.P. Smart of Bates Smart. BSM had grown out of the notable practice, Reed & Barnes. During the 1950s BSM became Australia's expert in high rise office towers, largely through patronage by MLC, a leading client who employed BSM to produce headquarters in capital cities around Australia. The firm's office buildings shifted from glazed curtain wall to facades of artificial stone or pre-fabricated concrete panels. The firm continues as Bates Smart and has had many collaborations with international architects such as Skidmore Owings and Merrill (USA) and I.M. Pei (also USA). The work of BSM spans all types of commercial and institutional buildings and is firmly based in the various aspects of Modernism (Goad & Willis, 2012:73)

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

The RACV Club is one of several important social clubs in the central city, located in the financial district and having a largely professional membership, with strong connections to Melbourne's social elite. The facilities were designed to enable members to socialise together, meet with colleagues, hold informal and formal business meetings, and attend talks and functions. Government awards and announcements were held here, and a wide variety of organisations used the RACV Club premises for seminars and lectures.

As a membership-based organisation the RACV Club attracts a loyal following. Members used the club premises for important personal, family and business celebrations such as weddings,

anniversaries and announcements. The RACV Club also supported interest groups such as the Tripe Club and pennant grade snooker.

Oral history interviews with Club members, staff and RACV Board prior to the move to the new premises in Bourke Street reveal a strong sense of attachment to the Club premises. After the move, members expressed concern that their former club was being used as a night club, seeing this as a desecration of a space they felt strongly connected to.

The RACV Club also demonstrates the social conscience of the Board and Staff with initiatives such as establishing a hospitality training partnership with Holmesglen TAFE in 1996, the first of its kind, and offering employment to two of the twenty students at the program's conclusion (The Age, 24 January 1996, p. 24). Another initiative was enabling social charity the One Umbrella group to use the kitchen at the RACV Club to make 1000 pies each week, almost all with rescued food and distributed to groups such as Open Family, Anglicare and the Salvation Army (The Age 7 April 2002, p. 12).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The former RACV Club at 111-129 Queen Street comprises a three-storey transparent cantilevered podium, clad in elegant aluminium framed glass, and polished black granite and with its own canopy, surmounted by a 15-storey manganese brick clad tower free-standing on three sides. Although the building was not unduly tall by local standards, the façade width and floor plan were exceptionally large and provided for a typical floor area of almost 20,000m² at a time when half that figure was regarded as a good-sized area for city office use. The tower is distinguished by a rigidly regular arrangement of formerly brass-framed windows (now with white painted reveals) repeated at each floor level. This arrangement echoes the adjoining Perpetual Trustees Building at 100-104 Queen Street.

The elevated masonry-clad block rests on stilts above the podium as discrete and well formulated massing, the columns being visible as they pass through the podium on the south side. Not easily seen from ground level, the roof over the tower block has a butterfly form that floats above the façade which, combined with the glazed podium, gives the lightness and clarity of purpose sought by Modernist designers. The first-floor level has an undercroft that houses shops and has two exposed entry stairs ascending from the ground to first floor. River stones fill the paving strip between footpath asphalt and shopfront entry. On the south side a 'hit and miss' upper-level brick screen masks services, as a textured foil to the other all-glass cladding. The basement was equipped with a car lift and the entry foyer is multi-level. Externally, the building survives largely in its original form. The RACV Club has moved to a new site in Bourke Street.

INTEGRITY

The RACV Club was refurbished internally in 2007 with the addition of retail shops to the ground floor by filling in the undercroft, a conversion to hotel accommodation, restaurants and bars. The refurbishment works were carried out in stages over twelve months in 2007. Above the first-floor level the building has retained its integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The RACV Club building exemplifies a departure from the glass curtain wall of the 1950s to a brick-cladding over a concrete frame for the tower component. Notwithstanding the necessarily

standardised and repetitive nature of the construction system, there was still scope for individuality and aesthetic effect. This was generally expressed through a variety of design techniques at ground and first floor levels, sometimes incorporating double height spaces, mezzanine levels, shopfronts and sometimes cantilevered glazed features. Earlier versions of this type include Essington Lewis House at 500 Bourke Street (Meldrum & Noad, 1958-59; Dem. 1970s) with its façade of dressed Stawell freestone, and the premises of the Electrolytic Zinc Company at 390 Lonsdale Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1959, altered) which used pre-cast concrete units in a fashion that would be widely imitated over the next decade.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the RACV Club building. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay

Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1974-73) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street
(Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



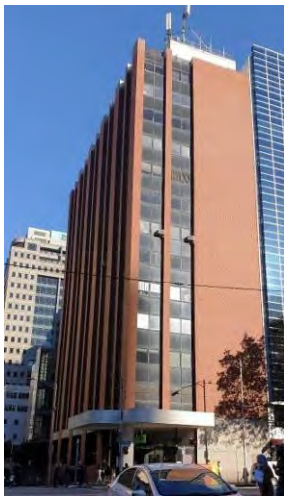
Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street
(Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street
(Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building,
359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon,
c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan
Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street
(Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

The RACV Club may also be compared to the Lyceum Club and Hosie's Hotel in terms of use and typology (hotels and recreation). Both these buildings were also constructed in the same period and are modernist in design.

The below images and descriptions are provided by CoM Maps unless stated otherwise, with images dating from c2000 or later.

Lyceum Club, 2-18 Ridgway Place (Interim HO1285)

2-18 Ridgway Place was designed in 1959 by architect Ellison Harvie for the Lyceum Club, the largest and most important club for professional women in Victoria. This modernist building is characterised by its floating first floor form and aesthetic expression of structural and building elements.



Figure 2. Lyceum Club, 2-18 Ridgway Place constructed 1959.

Hosie's Hotel 1-5 Elizabeth Street, 1956 (HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct, VHR H2094 mural only)

Hosie's Hotel is an exemplar building of precast concrete. Designed in the European manner and built for Melbourne's Olympic Games it was one of the first modern hotels to be built in central Melbourne (Flinders Gate Precinct HO505, exterior mural by Richard Beck H2094, HO938 mural only). It is also included on the RAIA Twentieth Century Buildings Register.



Figure 3. 1-5 Elizabeth Street constructed 1956.

Analysis

The RACV Club, like the Lyceum Club demonstrates an assured composition that expresses the function of a members' club. This is still evident despite having undergone alterations. The RACV Club's is a relatively early example of the return to the use of masonry for towers that was pioneered by Bates Smart McCutcheon in the early 1960s. Whilst having been altered at the ground and podium levels, it has survived relatively intact above this level.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*

The following sources and data were used for this assessment (Graeme Butler, 2011). Note that the citation prepared in 2011 did not provide in text referencing.

General sources

Historic Buildings Preservation Council reports on the Melbourne Central Business District from the 1970s

Melbourne City Council on-line i-Heritage database;

Mahlstedt fire insurance map series held in the State Library of Victoria collection and Melbourne University Archives;

Daily newspaper reports such as 'The Argus';

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Melbourne City Council building application drawings and files held at Melbourne City Council and the Victorian Public Records Office.

Keith and John Reid, CBD Study Area 7 Historic Buildings Preservation Council, 1976: page 139;

Twentieth Century Architecture Register of Royal Australian Institute of Architects:

MCC Building Permit Applications: March 1973, 43622 \$6,700,000 24 storey office building (followed by many fit-out applications) 1990, 68563 refurbish ground level

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** D

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** C

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** D

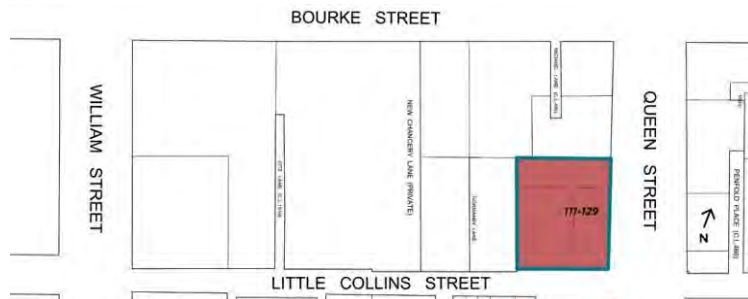
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** C

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Royal Automobile Club of Victoria



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The former Royal Automobile Club of Victoria building at 111-129 Queen Street, Melbourne, completed in 1961 and designed by Bates Smart McCutcheon.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing; and
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations, particularly at street level, are not significant.

How it is significant?

The former Royal Automobile Club of Victoria building at 111-129 Queen Street is of historical, representative, aesthetic, social and associative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The former Royal Automobile Club of Victoria building is historically significant as the headquarters of the large and influential RACV who were advocates for the rights of motorists, including the spending of significant public money on infrastructure for motorised transport. In the 1950s and 60s the RACV was highly influential in the promotion of tourism in Victoria. (Criterion A)

The former Royal Automobile Club of Victoria building is a fine example of a recreational club in the city centre. Built in 1961, and designed by noted modernist architects Bates Smart McCutcheon, it expresses its function through the glazed lower floors for public use and the masonry-clad residential tower above. In design it is a relatively early example of a modern tower departing from the curtain wall

of the 1950s. Its construction program was purportedly an early example of the fast-track method that enabled construction to commence concurrently with detailed design. (Criterion D)

The former Royal Automobile Club of Victoria building is aesthetically significant for its composition, of which the three-storey transparent cantilevered podium is a notable feature. Despite some alterations that have filled in the undercroft, the podium is still legible. Other attributes of aesthetic value include the main structural columns visible in a recessed glass clerestorey window above the podium and the butterfly roof over the tower block. (Criterion E)

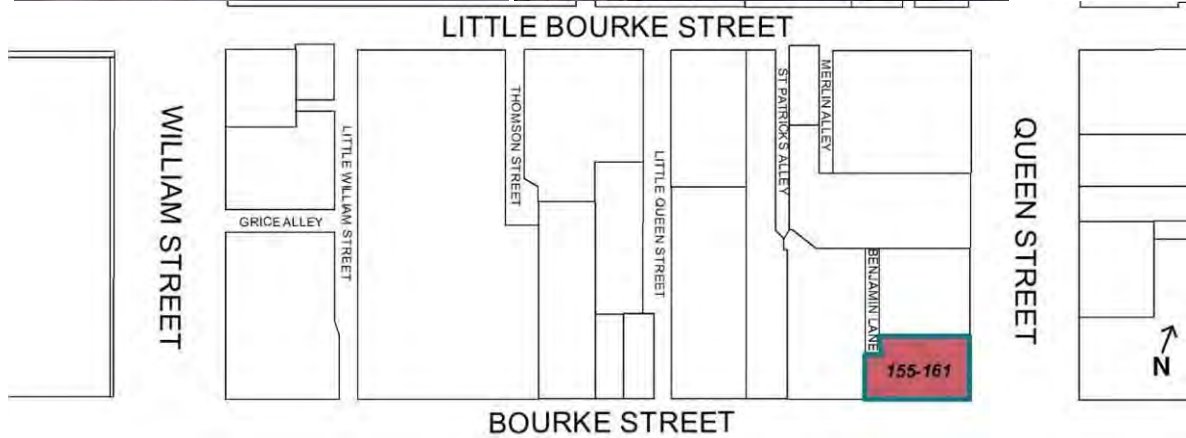
The former Royal Automobile Club of Victoria building is of social significance for its strong and long-standing association with the RACV Club members, staff and board. Designed as a central city meeting place for members, the club facilities served as a place of social congregation for RACV members for more than 45 years. Members used the Club as a place for business and for personal celebrations and events, resulting in a strong and continuing sense of connection to the premises even after the club had moved to its new premises. (Criterion G)

The former Royal Automobile Club of Victoria building is historically significant as the headquarters of the State's premier road lobbyist, as a major tourism promoter, and as a private club serving Melbourne's business, professional and social elite that has hosted many significant political and public events for more than four decades. It has remained a highly influential organisation over several decades with many amongst its wide membership also highly influential within Victorian society. (Criterion H)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building
STREET ADDRESS	155-161 Queen Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	108071



SURVEY DATE: March 2019	SURVEY BY: Context		
HERITAGE INVENTORY	N/A	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Bates Smart & McCutcheon	FORMER GRADE	C
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	BUILDER:	Costain, Hansen & Yuncken
		DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1961-62

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POST WAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LANDUSE	
1890s	Offices
1920s	Offices
1960s	Offices

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

The former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building at 155-161 Queen Street is a 13-storey postwar office building, constructed in 1961-62 by Costain, Hansen & Yuncken to a design by Bates Smart & McCutcheon for the South British Insurance Company. It has been used for offices since 1962.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

Prior to the construction of the subject building, its site, part of Crown Allotment 8, Block 19, was occupied by a series of buildings that ranged from two to five storeys. The buildings at the corner of the site, at the intersection of Bourke and Queen streets, were known as the Sun Buildings, built by 1895, in which year the subject site was addressed as 448-450 Bourke Street (Mahlstedt Map Section 1, no 16, 1925; CoMMaps).

The subject building was completed for the South British Insurance Company Ltd in 1962 (See Figure 1). Architects Bates Smart & McCutcheon were responsible for the design and engineering of the building, and Costain, Hansen & Yuncken were the builders (*Cross Section* 1962:3). The building was completed at a cost of £370,000 (*Cross Section* 1962:3).

The South British Insurance Company was founded in New Zealand in 1872 as the South British Fire & Marine Insurance Company of New Zealand, issuing their first policy in August of that year (Aviva 2019). By 1906, the company offered insurance policies across most sectors, including accident insurance, while maintaining their interests in maritime risks. In 1907, the company introduced its first motor insurance policy, a reflection of an increase in car ownership at the time. In 1907, the company was incorporated to become the South British Insurance Company Ltd (Aviva 2019).

By 1886, the South British Insurance Company Ltd had established branches in almost every major city in Australia, and was beginning to acquire other insurance companies, such as the Commercial

Insurance Company of Australia. The firm was registered at 11 Queen Street, Melbourne, by 1889, and in 1908 it purchased a site in Queen Street where it planned to build an office for £20,000 (Aviva 2019).

After the 1967 takeover of Australian Capital Assurance Ltd, the South British Insurance Company Ltd the company continued to grow, establishing branches in many Australian regional cities, as well as internationally (Aviva 2019).

The South British Insurance Company Ltd amalgamated with the New Zealand Insurance Company Ltd in 1981, at which point the firm was named the New Zealand South British Group Ltd. In 1984, New Zealand South British changed its name to the NZI Corporation Ltd, which was acquired by the General Accident Fire & Life Assurance Corporation in 1989, which the Aviva Group took over in 2002 (Aviva 2019).

When it opened in 1962, the building was described by the architecture journal, *Cross Section*:

In the trend from slick glass curtain wall cladding to more heavily modelled facades there will come a stage in which development becomes decadence. This building may bring about the fall, not because it is itself decadent, but because there are few architectural firms that can attempt this sort of surface enrichment and get away with it. South British succeeds by tasteful choice of colour and texture and by the consistent articulation of the different elements of the facade as separate entities. The cruciform white artificial stone panels (each 11 feet high and weighing half a ton) are delineated floor-by-floor by a continuous band of black vitreous tiles, and a small gap between adjacent units prevents the facade from tending to assume a monolithic character. The Skidmore Owings & Merrill design for a building in Brussels has a comparable system of articulated panels, but in the SOM design these panels were also the structural system — and this is where the danger lies, that in using a motif that began as a structural concept as a device for getting "expression" into wall cladding, caprice and whimsicality may oust common sense and sound design. The ground floor of South British is devoted to a luxurious lift lobby and some very good planting and landscaping. Air conditioning: low velocity to central zone, individually controlled high velocity induction units around the perimeter (Cross Section 1962:3).

The planting and landscaping referred to in the article in *Cross Section* and seen in Figure 2 was removed in 1975 as part of substantial remodelling work carried out to the building at this time. The illuminated roof of this section of the building, also seen in Figure 2, was also removed as part of the 1975 work (MBAI 45891). Other work to the building consisted of the construction of internal partitions to the offices at varying times (MBAI). The building was auctioned in 1986, when it was described in a sales notice as 'a prominent city building in the heart of the commercial district'. It was refurbished in 1988 (*Age* 4 December 1986:31; 28 March 1988:32).



Figure 1. South British Insurance building, corner of Bourke and Queen Streets, 1961. (Source: Sievers 1961, SLV copyright)



Figure 2. The entrance to the subject building as it appeared when it was built in 1961-62. (Source: Sievers 1961, SLV copyright)

The building has been used as offices, with multiple tenants in addition to the South British Insurance Company. By 1965, the building was tenanted by the offices of the Home Insurance Company, Harford Fire Insurance, a values assessor, the head office of Alcoa of Australia Pty Ltd (located in the building from 1962), and a shipping agency. All these firms were still present in 1970 (S&Mc 1965, 1970; *Age* 20 June 1962:22). By 1974, of this tenant group only the South British Insurance Company and the value assessor remained (S&Mc 1974). By 1977 the building was tenanted by Mutual Permanent Building Society and an image of the subject site can be seen in an advertisement from that time (see Figure 3). South British Insurance Company remained at the site until at least 1977 (*Age* 15 November 1977:7, *Age* 1 January 1977:41).

Since the mid-1990s, the building has been used as offices by multiple tenants, including accountants, solicitors and employment agencies (*Age* 1 November 1995:33; *Age* 27 September 1996:7; *Age* 1 August 1998:125). It is currently occupied by 19 businesses and four shops (CoMMaps).



Figure 3. The subject site, as it appeared in advertisements for the Mutual Permanent Building Society. (Source: *Age* 15 November 1977:7)

Bates Smart & McCutcheon, architects

Bates, Smart & McCutcheon (BSM) was formed when Osborn McCutcheon joined the existing firm of Bates & Smart in 1926. Bates & Smart had itself been born out of previous iterations of a firm that could be traced back to Reed & Barnes, thus making it one of the oldest practices in the country (Goad 2012:72). By the 1960s the firm had become one of the largest practices in the country (Goad 2012:72).

During the 1930s, BSM had earned a reputation for designing Georgian-style residences, but also went on to win RVIA awards for their work on the AMP Building in Collins Street, Buckley & Nunn Building in Bourke Street (now David Jones), and a church in Camberwell (Goad 2012:73).

By the 1950s, BSM had become Australia's 'expert' in high-rise office buildings (Goad 2012:73). Much of their work at this time was large structures with glass curtain walls, and in Melbourne this was exemplified by ICI House which broke the city's height limits (Goad 2012:73).

At the time, the firm also developed a reputation for their work on university and other educational facilities. They were responsible for much of the laying out of Monash University, as well as the construction of some of their original buildings, and had a hand in designing RMIT (Goad 2012:73). Commissions for schools include Yarra Valley Grammar School, Wesley College's Syndal campus, and the Peninsula Grammar School (Goad 2012:73). Their best-known piece of educational work is most likely Wilson Hall at the University of Melbourne, which was built on the site of an earlier Reed & Barnes Gothic structure (Goad 2012:73). Wilson Hall features a sculpture by Tom Bass, as does 160 Queen Street Melbourne (also designed by BSM), and the subject site (the sculpture of which is missing), showing a relationship between BSM and the sculptor.

BSM has continued to be an influential firm in the time since the construction of the subject site. Notable work by the firm includes the Crown Casino and promenade, and the Royal Children's Hospital (Goad 2012:74). BSM has also been involved in large collaborative designs in Melbourne with international architects, such as Melbourne Central with Kisho Kurokawa, Collins Place with I M Pei, and Federation Square with Lab Architecture Studio (Goad 2012:74).

Costain, Hansen & Yuncken, builders

Otto Yuncken was born in Lyndoch, South Australia in 1865 and trained as a carpenter under his German-born father. Together they built simple structures in the Barossa Valley before Otto left for Port Adelaide at the age of 18 (Carland 2009). By 1885 Yuncken had moved to Melbourne and taken up work with Clements Langford, one of the city's largest building companies. During his time with Clements Langford, Yuncken studied at the Working Men's College and attained first class in architectural drawing and carpentry (Carland 2009). After leaving Clements Langford, Yuncken partnered with Lauritz Hansen in 1918 to form Hansen & Yuncken (Hansen Yuncken 2019).

In 1962-63, the firm Hansen & Yuncken became Costain, Hansen & Yuncken Ltd (*Cross Section* 1 April 1963:1; NSW State Records 741116).

Hansen & Yuncken was responsible for some of Melbourne's 'most memorable buildings' (Carland 2009). Earlier works include the Collingwood Football Club Grandstand, the Port Authority building in Market Street (Carland 2009). The firm was responsible for renovations to Myer buildings and constructed the new spires at St. Patrick's Cathedral. The company also devised an innovative suspended scaffold to replaster the domed ceiling at the State Library of Victoria (Carland 2009).

The company exists today as Hansen Yuncken and has built many notable structures over the past decade, including the Myponga Dam (1959), The Alfred Hospital (1969-77) and Council House 2 for the City of Melbourne (2006) (Hansen Yuncken 2019).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building at 155-161 Queen Street is a 13-storey commercial building in the Post-War Modernist style, designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon and constructed in 1961-62. Located on the northwest corner of Queen Street and Bourke Street, it also has rear access to Benjamin Lane.

With its use of nonloadbearing precast concrete panels incorporating fixed vertical glazing and recessed transoms as the main cladding material, it is a later example of the style that developed in the 1960s which moved away from the use of modular aluminium frame glass curtain wall systems to more heavily articulated and three dimensional façade systems. The facades to both Queen Street and Bourke Street comprise vertical modules of recessed glazing and opaque transom panels set between concrete (referred to in the 1962 *Cross Section* article as 'artificial stone') mullions or 'pilasters' that are disconnected at each floor level to create a horizontal shadow line that also forms a continuous narrow band to demarcate each floor level. The building demonstrates the overall design aesthetic of the Post-War Modernist style which is based on repetitive horizontal and vertical modules. The building has no formal termination or parapet at the top level, as is typical of the style.

The original concrete peripheral columns of the main structural grid are extant at street level, however the original high undercroft area with its glazed entry lobby and garden set back within a colonnade (see Figure 2) have been replaced with contemporary shopfronts with an angled set back frontage to the corner surmounted by a projecting cantilevered box awning added to the Bourke Street frontage.

INTEGRITY

The former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building is largely intact with some changes visible to original or early fabric.. Above the street level, the building retains its original modular pattern of fenestration, and the materiality of the precast panels with their recessed window openings and transom panels set between concrete 'pilasters' appears as originally constructed.

At ground level, the original set back glazed entry lobby and garden have been replaced, and the undercroft area infilled with contemporary shopfronts and a projecting cantilevered box awning. Such alterations at ground level are common within Hoddle Grid. Overall the building is of high integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The 1950s saw the development of the modern multi-story office building in Melbourne, often built for insurance companies or finance companies, or for professional offices. From the late 1950s through into the 1970s and even beyond, the Post-War Modernist style enjoyed widespread popularity, particularly for medium and high-rise commercial buildings. Reinforced concrete frames provided the structural systems, allowing the façade to be clad in a non-load bearing curtain wall. In early examples, curtain walls were typically fully glazed with an aluminium frame, while in later examples, a greater range of materials such as precast concrete panels were used to achieve variety of expression.

The following examples are comparable with the former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building at 155-161 Queen Street, being of a similar use, scale, style and/or construction date.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)

- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



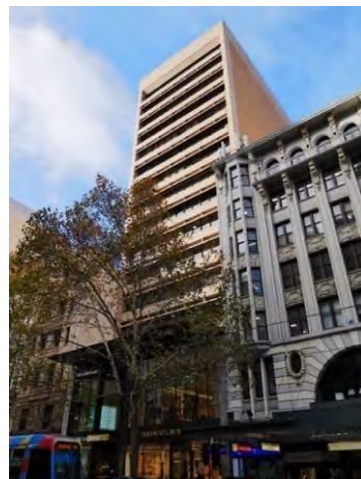
Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1974-73) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kelle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building, 359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

The former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building at 155-161 Queen Street is comparable to a number of central Melbourne buildings included – or proposed for inclusion – in the HO including the Scottish Amicable building at 126-146 Queen Street (HO1213) and the Royal Insurance Group building at 430-442 Collins Street (Interim HO1010). The buildings demonstrate the prominent Bauhaus grid design aesthetic of the Post-War Modernist style, based on repetitive nonloadbearing precast concrete façade modules to achieve a more three-dimensional depth to the facades and to maximise access to daylight. However, unlike the other HO examples, the subject building lacks the Bauhaus inspired minimalism and geometric clarity.

The VHR and HO listed Victorian State Offices at 1 Macarthur Street and 1 Treasury Place (H1526, HO174 Treasury Reserve Precinct) constructed in 1969, are also comparable to 155-161 Queen Street in terms of scale and architectural style. Both the subject building and the Victorian State Offices use multiple narrow precast concrete panels incorporating the window modules to create a

three dimensionality to the composition. Also designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, the Macarthur Street/Treasury Place group of buildings is however more sophisticated and geometrically resolved in their innovative use of precast concrete cladding.

155-161 Queen Street is also comparable to 158-164 Queen Street which has been assessed as individually significant as part of the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review. Both buildings were designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon and demonstrate a refined use of modular precast concrete panels that became popular during the 1960s, to create a three dimensionality to the composition. 151-155 Queen Street is an earlier example of this technique.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

✓

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** D

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** C

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

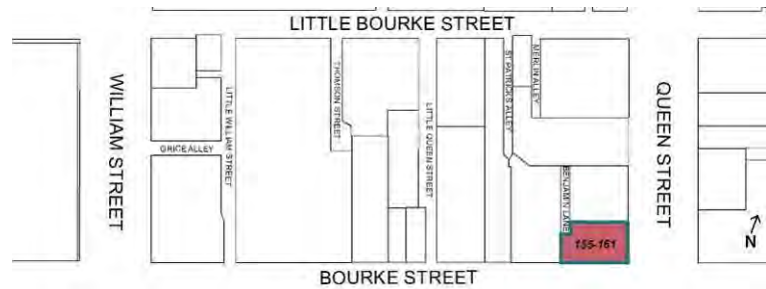
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building at 155-161 Queen Street, Melbourne, completed in 1962 to a design by Bates Smart and McCutcheon, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- Original building form and scale; and
- Original non-loadbearing precast concrete curtain wall cladding including recessed window openings and transom panels set between concrete 'pilasters'.

Later alterations, particularly at street level, are not significant.

How it is significant?

The former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building at 155-161 Queen Street is of historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, designed and engineered by Bates Smart & McCutcheon and constructed in 1961-62, is historically significant for the evidence it provides of the rapid growth of corporate architecture in 1950s-60s' Melbourne that reflected the expansion of large national and international companies opting for construction and naming rights of new city office buildings as a form of promotion and fund investment. Located in the financial and commercial precinct of Queen Street, the South British Insurance Company Ltd Building is significant historically as a

reflection of the growth of insurance and assurance companies in Victoria during the 1950s-60s, cementing Melbourne's pre-eminent role in the state for financial institutions. The South British Insurance Company owned and occupied the building from 1962 to 1977. (Criterion A)

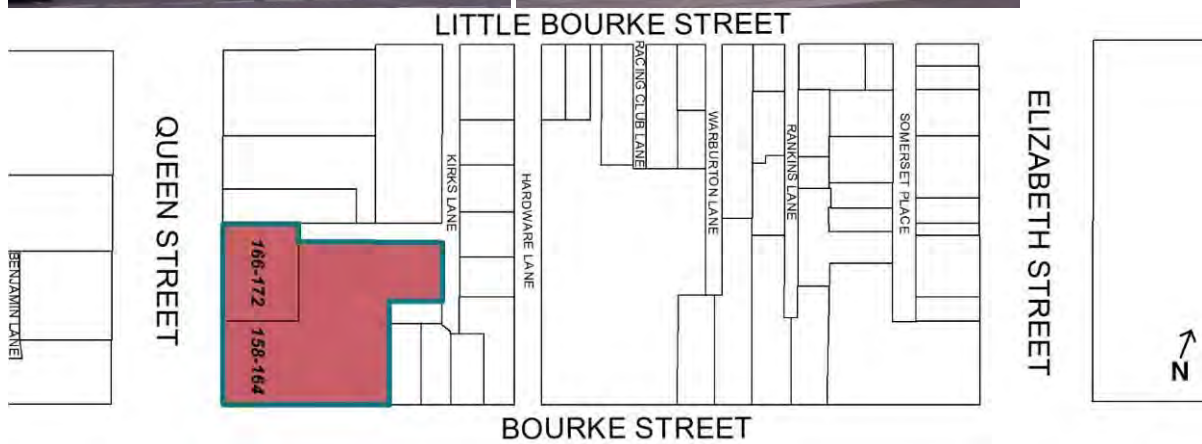
The former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building is significant as a largely intact example of postwar commercial development in central Melbourne in the Post-War Modernist style that characterised this new wave of development. These buildings represented the new modernism in their modular, industrial Bauhaus inspired aesthetic and incorporated features such as consistent access to daylight and open floor plans to meet new standards for commercial office accommodation. The subject building exhibits the key characteristics of the style, including its non-loadbearing precast concrete curtain wall cladding, recessed window openings and transom panels set between concrete 'pilasters'. (Criterion D)

The former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building is aesthetically significant as a refined and substantial example of the later development in curtain wall design constructed during the 1960s when a mix of materials was utilised to create a greater modularity and three-dimensional quality to the facades. Its aesthetic significance lies in the retention of the fine detailing of its facades to both Queen Street and Bourke Street, where vertical modules of recessed glazing and opaque transom panels set between concrete mullions or 'pilasters' that are disconnected at each floor level create a horizontal shadow line and give a refined modularity to the facade. (Criterion E)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former Sleigh Buildings (H C Sleigh Building & former Sleigh Corner)
STREET ADDRESS	158-172 Queen Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	108107 & 108108



SURVEY DATE:	March 2019	SURVEY BY:	Context
HERITAGE INVENTORY	N/A	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER GRADE	C
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Bates Smart & McCutcheon	BUILDER:	Hansen & Yuncken Pty Ltd (166-172)
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1953-1955 (166-172) 1964 (158-164)

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Retail, Warehouses
1920s	Retail, Warehouses
1960s	Offices

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

The former Sleigh buildings were built for HC Sleigh Ltd, founders of Golden Fleece petrol and service stations. The first building of eight storeys, the H C Sleigh Building, was constructed in 1953-55 at 166-172 Queen Street. It was occupied by HG Sleigh Ltd from 1955-65. Requiring new premises, a larger 15-storey building was constructed in 1964 for the company on the adjoining corner site at 158-164 Queen Street, the Sleigh Corner Building (now known as Elders House). HC Sleigh remained at the 1964 building until 1981. Both buildings were designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon in the Post-War Modernist style, which is differently expressed in the architecture of each building. 158-164 Queen Street retains its original publicly accessible plaza with sculpture 'Transformation' created by sculptor Tom Bass. Both buildings are used as offices, with 158-164 Queen Street occupied by Elders since 1983.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding,

screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The subject site, part of Crown Allotment 1, Block 20, was occupied at least by 1866. By 1888, on the land today known as 158-172 Queen Street, there were seven two-storey shops along Queen Street and two two-storey buildings and a larger scale complex known as Clarke's Buildings along Bourke Street. Clarke's Buildings comprised a four-storey main building fronting Bourke Street and three three-storey warehouses at the rear. By 1910, the rear area fronting Kirks Lane was further built with two three-storey warehouses developed for the Clarke's Buildings (Fels, Lavelle & Mider 1993, Inventory no 466; Mahlstedt Map, section 1, no 20, 1888; section 1, no 13, 1910).

All these buildings were noted as still being present in 1925 (Mahlstedt Map Section 1, no 13, 1925).

H C Sleigh Building, 166-172 Queen Street, constructed 1953-55

Four two-storey Victorian-era shops at 166-172 Queen Street were demolished immediately before the construction of the current building (*Argus* 7 September 1955:13).

The H C Sleigh Building was built 1953-55 as an office block for H C Sleigh Ltd to a design by architects Bates Smart & McCutcheon by builders Hansen & Yuncken Pty Ltd (*Argus* 7 September 1955:13).

In anticipation of its construction, the building was described as the 'first postwar' city office block to be constructed in Melbourne by a private company (*Herald* 14 August 1953:9). Construction of the building was delayed because of the postwar shortage of building materials and a subsequent freeze on the construction of large buildings (*Herald* 14 August 1953:9).

The building at 166-172 Queen Street was initially designed to be seven storeys, with two basements for parking, when the provision of on-site parking was understood as 'the modern overseas practice'. The design allowed for the addition of a further three floors to eventually provide 10 floors above ground level, at the 40 metre (132-foot) height limit (*Herald* 14 August 1953:9). The construction was to be carried out with reinforced concrete walls with hollow block concrete floors. The façade of the subject building was to be characterised by its 'flush granite plinth and terra cotta surround' and 'projecting stone grid containing recessed aluminium windows and metal spandrels' (see Figure 1) (*Herald* 14 August 1953:9).

By 1955, the H C Sleigh Building was eventually completed as an eight-storey building (see Figure 2). The planned height-limit additions were never carried out. H C Sleigh Ltd left the premises to move into a new building on the neighbouring site erected at 158-164 Queen Street in 1964.

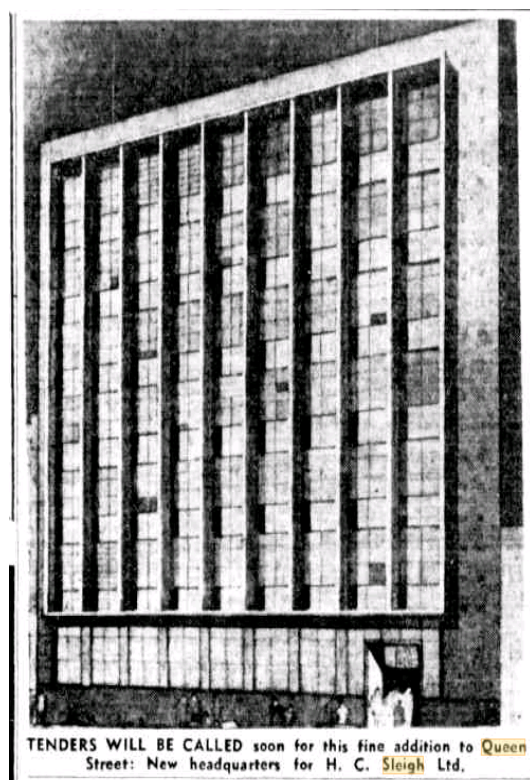


Figure 1. A drawing of the building as published in the *Herald* newspaper in 1953 before construction had begun. Note the elevation comprises seven levels. (Source: *Herald* 14 August 1953:9)



Figure 2. The building as it was soon after construction, faced in blue tiles. The building was actually constructed to be eight stories, rather than the initial seven. (Source: 'HC Sleigh and Co, 1957, NAA)

When the H C Sleigh Building was completed in 1955, the *Argus* reported on its use of innovative architecture and the scale of the undertaking:

The new H C Sleigh Building represents not only the heart and brain of an organisation which grew into something vast from the first courageous ideas of a small Melbourne businessman who set out 50 years ago as "an agent." Its official opening today marks not just the triumph of his initiative and drive. It marks also a triumph in the thinking, designing and planning by Australian architects; a triumph in building by the men who build buildings: a triumph in resolving threatening industrial quarrels before the quarrel really begins: a triumph in getting building materials to the building site on time. Everyone has "teamed up", on this job, and they have done mighty well. Outside appearance of the building is deceptive. It looks more squat than it is. Its squarish lines break down true concept of its height. First impression is of acres of glass, silvering glints of aluminium bluish tiles. The more observant of those who look at it from the street note the absence of artificial lights burning in daytime. The answer? At least three-quarters of, its eastern and western walls, are of glass, and whatever inner walls or partitions it needs are of glass, and glass has been used everywhere possible to bring in natural lighting. A similar impression is made when one enters the building because there is an air of spaciousness and of easy lighting. There is an air too, of quietness and of dignity. The ground floor embraces the shipping and main business offices which clients need to enter. Keen colours and attractive mural decorations, growing flowers, comfortable furniture, all tend to make it easier for the stranger entering the building. The upper floors accommodate the various office staffs, and the overall pattern is the same - comfort, good lighting, a variety of colouring to break monotony. Where large staffs have had to be accommodated large rooms with sound proofed ceilings have been provided. Offices for executives have been built along the side walls, but they have not been shut off from the main rooms. Their walls are low partition walls of fluted glass, and they have no doors so that an atmosphere of easy access can be encouraged. The upper floors house an excellent canteen, a theatre with equipment to show films or to be used as a conference room. The roof will have its garden in time, and-space for recreation. It carries a two-bed roomed flat for the building's caretaker - which would be the envy of many married people - equipped with all that one would want, tastefully coloured, convenient in every way. The rooms for the managerial staff and the board and for all senior executives are a mixture of luxury, dignity and austerity. They are not elaborate, but they are comfortable and excellent.

The building was completed in what is thought to be record time for anything comparable to it in Melbourne...Planning had been wise; industrial troubles were handled quickly and easily and amicably, and because of the diversity of its activities, H C Sleigh Ltd., for whom the building was being constructed, was able to get materials on site on time for the builders. Whatever of the 325 tons of structural steel and the 140 tons of reinforcing steel could not be bought in Australia was imported. Cement and glass were readily available. There was no shortage of labour and 130 skilled and unskilled men were employed at the peak of the work. Co-operation between Sleigh's, the architects, the builders, the sub-contractors, the unions, the workmen was excellent all the way through, and the building went on to schedule...

(Argus 7 September 1955:13).

When the building was constructed, the façade was clad in blue tiles (see Figure 2). These have since been removed, most likely after 1993; removal of tiles or the repainting of the building are not noted in the building permit card for the site (MBAI).

The H C Sleigh Building's primary use has been as professional offices from its opening year of 1955. H C Sleigh occupied the building from 1955 until 1964. The company then moved into a new building, also designed by architects Bates Smart & McCutcheon, which it erected next door at 158-164 Queen Street (known as 160 Queens Street) (S&Mc 1955; National Trust 2014:49). The building at 158-164 Queen Street is discussed below. The building at 166-172 Queen Street was occupied in the years that followed by various law firms, stockbrokers and shipping agents (S&Mc 1965, 1970, 1974). The Australian Guarantee Corporation and Traders Finance Corporation were both occupants of the building from at least 1965 to 1974 (S&Mc 1965, 1974).

CPA Australia was the tenant of the building by 1991 (*Age* 16 September 1991:22). The building was refurbished in 1991, and advertised for sale as CPA House in 1999 (*Age* 4 September 1999:96; CoMMaps 2019).

The building at 166-172 Queen Street is currently tenanted by 11 businesses, one shop and one food and drink outlet (CoMMaps 2019).

Former Sleigh Corner, 158-164 Queen Street, constructed 1964

In the 1960s, the Victorian-era shops and all structures that formed part of the Clarke's Buildings were demolished, to make way for the second H C Sleigh building at 158-164 Queen Street (Mahlstedt Map section 1, no 13, 1948).

The building at 158-164 Queen Street was constructed as the new headquarters for H C Sleigh Ltd in 1963-64 (Figure 3), with architects Bates Smart & McCutcheon again responsible for the design (as seen in Figure 4) (National Trust 2014:49). The building at 158-164 Queen Street, referred to as Sleigh Corner, was in use by February 1964 and was officially opened by the Honourable H E Bolte, MLA, Premier of Victoria in March 1964 (National Trust 2014:38; *Age* 12 March 1964:11).

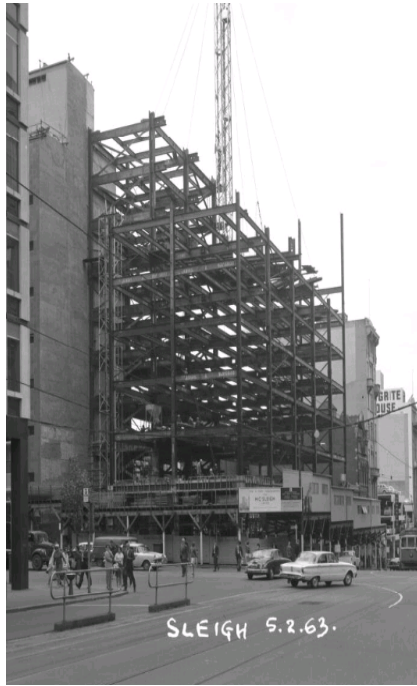


Figure 3. The subject building during construction. The sign on the scaffolding is advertising the site as the new headquarters for H C Sleigh. (Source: Sievers 1963, NLA)

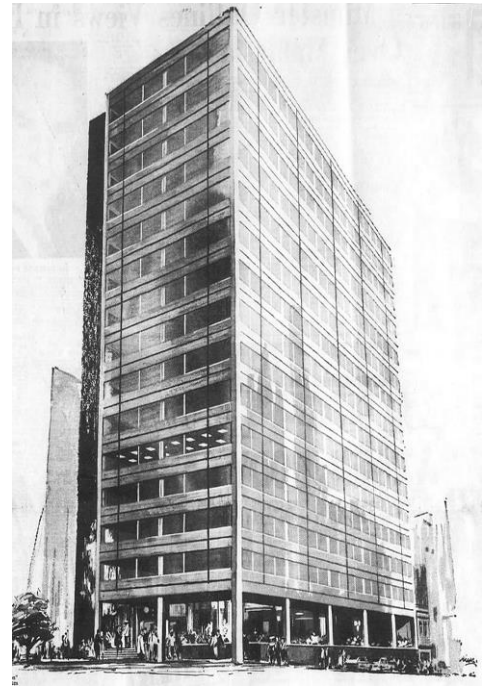


Figure 4. An illustration of the H C Sleigh Ltd building after its opening in March 1964. (Source: Age 12 March 1964:11)

H C Sleigh Ltd's decision to erect an office building almost double the size of its previous location within a decade indicates the company's prosperity and growth at the time when, by 1964, the H C Sleigh Ltd group of companies operated two monthly passenger and cargo services to Hong Kong and Japan; exported goods to the value of £7,000,000 in 1963; owned 2000 Golden Fleece service stations across Australia; operated ocean tankers for transporting crude oil for refining into Golden Fleece petroleum products; owned Sleigh Exploration, which was actively engaged in the search for oil in Australia; and owned the Hardie Rubber Company and Climatedmaster Engineering Pty Ltd, which manufactured and installed heating and cooling equipment (Age 12 March 1964:11).

From 1964, the provision of a plaza space within the curtilages of new high-rise buildings became apparent in the City of Melbourne, as a result of the introduction of the site plot ratios (or floor area ratios) control that remained until 1999. A portion of the subject building incorporates a plaza, and the rear wall of the plaza that forms part of the building's original design features a sculpture by Tom Bass, named 'Transformation', installed at the same time of the building's construction in 1963-64 (see Figure 6. Showing the plaque marking the planting of trees in Queen Street by H C Sleigh and the ANZ Bank in 1959. (Source: Context 2019). (Melbourne Art Critic 2019). Bates Smart & McCutcheon collaborated with Bass in earlier projects at 43-51 Queen Street (1958) (assessed as part of this study) and Wilson Hall for the University of Melbourne (1956) (Goald 2012:73).

Reflecting the popularity of the 'Featurist' approach from the late 1950s and to the mid-1960s, the original exterior featured a combination of various ornamental features including grey-blue ceramic tiling, gold glass tiling and wall panels 'of reconstructed stone surfaced with crushed porcelain, through [sic] into relief by recessed bands of black ceramic mosaic' (*Architecture in Australia* April 1967:256; as cited in National Trust 2014:38). The original cladding has been removed, except for the rough stone surfaced wall panels.

H C Sleigh Ltd's development of the Queen Street area extended to the planting of trees in 1959 in the centre of Queen Street, in conjunction with the ANZ Bank (Figure 5). These trees have since been replaced with plane trees.

The subject building at 158-164 Queen Street also incorporates a four-storey building facing Kirks Lane, at the rear of the 1964 structure. This building appears as a four-storey car park in a 1960s map (see Figure 7). The only reference that can be found to building works on this site is a 1970 advertisement placed by builders Hansen & Yuncken for carpenters to undertake formwork at the H C Sleigh site in Kirks Lane (*Age* 30 July 1970:18). It is possible that the car park was reconfigured into an office building at this time. No other information could be found about the Kirks Lane building.

H C Sleigh Ltd was the main occupier of the building at 158-164 Queen Street from 1964 to 1981 (S&Mc 1965, 1974; *Age* 14 March 1981:84). Other long-term office tenancies included the Department of Labour and Industry (1966-1980), which used offices to house its Divisional Technical Service, its Industrial Appeals Court, and its Chief Engineer; Avon Cosmetics (1965-1970); Western Assurance Co (1970-1974); and Tubemakers of Australia (1970-1974) (S&Mc 1965, 1970, 1974).

The building was occupied by three honorary consular offices, Monaco, Finland and Belgium, between 1965 and 1974 (S&Mc 1965, 1970, 1974). Hamilton Sleigh, whose company H C Sleigh Ltd constructed the building, was the Vice-Consul of Finland in Victoria in May 1925 (*Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* 7 May 1925:761). The location of the Finnish consular office in the Sleigh Corner building between 1965 and 1974 reflects Sleigh's role (S&Mc 1965, 1970).

By 1983, the building's main occupant was rural services business, Elders Ltd (*Age* 23 April 1983:105). After arriving in Adelaide from Scotland in 1839 to extend his family's merchant and shipping business, Thomas Elder formed Elder, Stirling & Co in Adelaide with Edward Stirling, Robert Barr Smith, and John Taylor in 1855. When Stirling and Taylor retired in 1863, Barr Smith and Thomas Elder formed Elder Smith and Co. In 1888 Elder Smith and Co was amalgamated with its subsidiary Elder's Wool & Produce Co Ltd, established in 1882, to form Elder Smith & Co Ltd. By 1915, Elders operated branches and wool stores in all major rural areas, and by 1939, the company had offices in Adelaide, Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Geelong and London, as well as 38 country branches in South Australia, 25 in Western Australia, and two in New South Wales (Elders 2019).

After the recession during the World War Two, the company expanded through the 1964 amalgamation with Goldsbrough Mort and acquisition of businesses during the 1970s and 80s. In 1989, due to an economic downturn, Elders sold Henry Jones IXL to The J M Smucker Co, and was renamed Elders Limited (Elders 2019). In 1995, the Futuris Corporation became the new owner, and in 1997 Elders launched Australian Wool Handlers as a joint venture, a wool handling and dumping company that quickly became responsible for more than 60 per cent of the national clip (Elders 2109).

Elders still occupies the building today as its state office and operates real estate and insurance services from the building (Elders 2019).

The building is currently occupied by 29 businesses and three shops (CoMMaps).



Figure 5. 'Transformation' by Tom Bass, on the Queen Street facade of the subject building. (Source: Context 2019)



Figure 6. Showing the plaque marking the planting of trees in Queen Street by H C Sleigh and the ANZ Bank in 1959. (Source: Context 2019).



Figure 7. Showing the four-storey car park in the 1960s (outlined in red), which may have formed the structure for the four-storey building incorporated as part of 158-164 Queen Street c1970. (Source: Mahlsted Map section 1, no 13, 1948, version 6, amended 1960s)

H C Sleigh Ltd was founded by Harold Crofton Sleigh in 1895 (*Herald* 30 June 1947:11). Sleigh, an Englishman, had started work in Australia barging cargo on the Murray and Darling Rivers (Langmore 1988). In 1895, Sleigh started a partnership with John McIlwraith, and from their office in Flinders Street won a contract to supply coal to Western Australia. McIlwraith retired from partnership not long after, and Sleigh continued to develop the company, winning another contract with the Western Australian government and taking possession of two brand new ships ordered specifically for the company from Glasgow (Langmore 1988).

In 1913, the company took possession of a cargo of petrol, which the original consignee was unable to pay for. This was to take the company in a different direction, with H C Sleigh registering the

product as 'Golden Fleece'. The company experienced a rapid increase in its oil importing interests during World War One and the 1920s, by which time Sleigh had set up twenty pump stations (Langmore 1988).

The company was eventually taken over by the founder's son, (Sir) Hamilton Sleigh, who sought to expand the holdings of the company (Walsh 2002). Under Hamilton Sleigh's leadership, the company owned subsidiary shipping firms and established facilities to handle the import of petroleum (Walsh 2002). By 1947, the company had also started merchandise and pharmaceutical businesses (*Herald* 30 June 1947:11). H C Sleigh Ltd became a public company in 1947, with an authorised capital of £1,500,000 (Flotilla Australia 2019; *Herald* 30 June 1947:11).

The 1950s saw a change in the petroleum markets, which led to single-brand stations and the rise of competition between companies. H C Sleigh established outlets for Golden Fleece and the company placed a large emphasis on the design of its service stations, establishing the unique merino ram as the company's trademark (Golden Fleece 2019).

By 1981, the company had sold the petroleum department, including Golden Fleece, to Caltex (Golden Fleece 2019). In 1984, the company became Petersville Sleigh, before eventually being sold to BORAL Ltd in 1992 (Delisted Australia 2019).

Bates, Smart & McCutcheon, architects

Bates, Smart & McCutcheon (BSM) was formed when Osborn McCutcheon joined the existing firm of Bates & Smart in 1926. Bates & Smart had itself been born out of previous iterations of a firm that can be traced back to Reed & Barnes, thus making it one of the oldest and, by the 1960s, one of the largest practices in the country (Goad 2012:72).

During the 1930s, BSM had earned a reputation for designing Georgian-style residences, but also went on to win RVIA awards for their work on the AMP Building in Collins Street, Buckley & Nunn Building in Bourke Street (now David Jones), and a church in Camberwell (Goad 2012:73).

By the 1950s, BSM had become Australia's 'expert' in high-rise office buildings (Goad 2012:73). Much of their work at this time were large structures with glass curtain walls, and in Melbourne this was exemplified by ICI House constructed in 1955, breaking the city's height limits (Goad 2012:73). This work was considered to have 'changed the skyline [of Melbourne] forever' (Goad 2012:73).

At the time, the firm also developed a reputation for their work on university and other educational facilities. They were responsible for much of the laying out of Monash University, as well as the construction of some of their original buildings, and had a hand in designing RMIT (Goad 2012:73). Commissions for schools include Yarra Valley Grammar School, Wesley College's Syndal campus, and the Peninsula Grammar School (Goad 2012:73). Their best-known piece of educational work is most likely Wilson Hall at the University of Melbourne, which was built on the site of an earlier Reed & Barnes Gothic structure (Goad 2012:73). Wilson Hall features a sculpture by Tom Bass, as does 158-164 Queen Street Melbourne (also designed by BSM), showing a relationship between BSM and the sculptor.

BSM has continued to be an influential firm in the time since the construction of the subject site. Notable work by the firm includes the Crown Casino and promenade, and the Royal Children's Hospital (Goad 2012:74). BSM has also been involved in large collaborative designs in Melbourne

with international architects, such as Melbourne Central with Kisho Kurokawa, Collins Place with I M Pei, and Federation Square with Lab Architecture Studio (Goad 2012:74).

Hansen & Yuncken, builders (164-172 Queen Street)

Otto Yuncken was born in Lyndoch, South Australia in 1865 and trained as a carpenter under his German-born father. Together they built simple structures in the Barossa Valley before Otto left for Port Adelaide at the age of 18 (Carland 2009). By 1885 Yuncken had moved to Melbourne and taken up work with Clements Langford, one of the city's largest building companies. During his time with Clements Langford, Yuncken studied at the Working Men's College and attained first class in architectural drawing and carpentry (Carland 2009). After leaving Clements Langford, Yuncken partnered with Lauritz Hansen in 1918 to form Hansen & Yuncken (Hansen Yuncken 2019).

The firm was responsible for some of Melbourne's 'most memorable buildings' (Carland 2009). Earlier works include the Collingwood Football Club Grandstand (1892), the Port Authority building (1930) in Market Street (Carland 2009). The firm was responsible for renovations to Myer buildings and constructed the new spires at St. Patrick's Cathedral. The company also devised an innovative suspended scaffold to replaster the domed ceiling at the State Library of Victoria (Carland 2009).

The company still exists today as Hansen Yuncken and has built many notable structures over the past decades, including the Myponga Dam (1959), The Alfred Hospital (1969-1977) and Council House 2 for the City of Melbourne (2006) (Hansen Yuncken 2019).

Tom Bass, sculptor (158-164 Queen Street)

A portion of the subject building's wall, the rear wall of the plaza that forms part of the building's original design, features a sculpture by the sculptor Tom Bass.

Tom Bass was a prolific Australian sculptor, who completed many public and private commissions, including the 'Trial of Socrates' at Wilson Hall at the University of Melbourne and another children's sculpture 'Genii' in Queen Victoria Gardens. Bass' community-focused work is featured in many prominent Australian public spaces and institutions, including schools, universities and churches, as well as government and corporate sites. In 1974, Bass established the Tom Bass Sculpture Studio School (still in operation), where he taught until his death in 2010. He was made a Member of the Order of Australia for his contribution to public art. A retrospective of Bass' work was held at the Sydney Opera House, where it was claimed that 'no artist has done more to shape the face of public art in Australia' (Brown 2010; Design and Art Australia 2011).

Bass was also responsible for the 'Children's Tree' sculpture in the forecourt of 308-336 Collins Street, Melbourne (former Colonial Mutual Life Building), which has also been assessed as part of the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site 158-172 Queen Street comprises two postwar office buildings developed for H C Sleigh Pty Ltd to a design by architects Bates Smart & McCutcheon.

H C Sleigh Building, 166-172 Queen Street, constructed 1953-55

The H C Sleigh Building at 166-172 Queen Street is an eight-storey commercial building in the Post-War Modernist style, designed by Bates, Smart & McCutcheon and constructed in 1953-55. Located on the eastern side of Queen Street between Bourke Street and Little Bourke Street, the building has a secondary frontage accessed off Kirks Lane at the rear.

The principal facade to Queen Street comprises a primary nonloadbearing aluminium frame curtain wall, which dominates the façade from the first to the seventh floors, over a secondary asymmetric solid form of painted render (probably over non loadbearing brickwork). The masonry form extends around the curtain wall, particularly to the south, where the wide vertical panel is punctuated by small rectangular openings (presumably to the stairwell). The narrow horizontal band immediately below the curtain wall at the first-floor level is clad with white stone, and across the top of the building is a row of seven small projecting studs and a projecting plain rectangular cornice with recessed parapet behind. A pair of flagpoles are located on the roof. The southern wall of the building returns to meet the recessed wall of the later Sleigh Corner building (1964) built next door, creating a plaza space.

The curtain wall is strongly modular, with one module of a slightly vertical proportion per floor and nine equal modules across the façade. The curtain wall section is relatively substantial. Each module is infilled with a single large pane of clear glazing.

At street level, the façade comprises a colonnade, with the main structural columns clad with white stone, and the spaces between the columns infilled with glazed shopfronts. The main entry to the building is at the southern end of the colonnade. The rear (east) elevation, accessed off Kirks Lane, comprises a regular arrangement of windows set within a masonry wall. The windows appear original and include openable sashes.

When it was first constructed in 1953-55, the building was known as the H C Sleigh Building, and was notable for its '... acres of glass, silvering glints of aluminium bluish tiles' amongst other characteristics of the new modernism appearing in central Melbourne. The building was refurbished in 1991. In its original configuration, each module of the main curtain wall included an opaque horizontal lower panel, with clear glazing above divided into four equal square sashes (refer figure 2), which have now been replaced with a single large pane of clear glazing. At street level, the original configuration also included multipane window modules above a solid masonry plinth, now replaced with a colonnade and shopfronts. The painted render masonry sections of the secondary form of the building were originally clad in blue tiles, but these have been removed. Originally the building had no formal termination or parapet at the top level, as is typical of the style, so the simple cornice and other details have been added.

Former Sleigh Corner, 158-164 Queen Street, constructed 1964

The former Sleigh Corner building at 158-164 Queen Street is a 15-storey pre-cast concrete and steel curtain wall corner building, constructed in 1964. Designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, it has a narrow frontage to Queen Street and deeper frontage to Bourke Street. With its use of applied concrete panels over an expressed structural system, it is a fine example of the Post-War Modernist style that developed in the 1960s when the style moved away from the use of uniform glass curtain wall systems to more heavily modulated facades giving a three-dimensional quality to the buildings.

The primary façade facing Queen Street is structurally divided into two equal bays with three expressed concrete columns continuing to the ground level. Horizontally proportioned aluminium framed windows divide each bay into three equal sections. The outer section of these bays features a secondary narrow concrete column that rises vertically through the building. Applied white concrete panels sit over the dark grey spandrels and provide a design refinement to the structural grid that emphasises the horizontal. Along Queen Street, at the western end, a recessed lift shaft rises above the main height of the building. Faced in non-load bearing bagged brickwork it provides a contrasting textural element to the building's otherwise precise rectilinear form.

The secondary façade facing Bourke Street is divided into five primary structural bays with columns continuing to ground level. At first floor level the façade is divided into a regular grid pattern utilising the same pattern of applied panels and expressed secondary structure used across the primary facade. The building has no formal termination or parapet at the top level, as is typical of the style.

At ground level the original concrete peripheral columns are extant, as is the recessing of the office foyer shopfronts along both street frontages, although the original shopfronts have been replaced. This recessing of the office foyer and adjacent lift shaft provides one of the few surviving plaza elements along Queen Street which is increasingly rare within the Hoddle Grid.

A Tom Bass sculpture known as 'Transportation' was commissioned by HC Sleigh in 1963 for the plaza. It remains in its original plaza setting attached to the bagged brick wall of the lift shaft. The copper fabrication sculpture displays a winged figure standing on a boat suspended from a pulley possibly representing the shipping and cargo aspects of the business.

INTEGRITY

The H C Sleigh Building (166-172 Queen Street) has some changes visible to original fabric; however, the building retains important defining characteristics, including its original scale, built form and configuration. Above the ground and first floor levels the building retains its original modular pattern of fenestration, although within each module of the curtain wall the original multipane window sashes and opaque panel have been replaced with a single pane of clear glazing, and at street level a colonnade and shopfronts have replaced the original multipane windows. Alterations include removal of the original blue tiles which were an important aspect of the original design, and the addition of a simple cornice and parapet. Despite these changes the original form and scale of the building, and key characteristics of its architectural style and the period in which it was constructed can be appreciated.

The former Sleigh Corner building (158-164 Queen Street) is highly intact in terms of its external features. Despite the removal of original grey-blue tile cladding, the original non-loadbearing curtain wall with horizontal glazed and applied concrete panels, expressed concrete structure and non-loadbearing bagged brick lift shaft remain extant. The original recessing of the office foyer shopfronts to both street frontages and a publicly accessible plaza created adjacent to the lift shaft remain. The Tom Bass sculpture 'Transportation' also remains in its original location within the plaza. The original shopfronts have been replaced. The building's original built form and scale, some materials and key stylistic details remain clearly legible and overall the place is of very high integrity.

For their ability to express different facets of the Post-War Modernist style and city planning, overall the two buildings are of high integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The 1950s saw the development of the modern multi-story office building in Melbourne, often built for insurance companies or finance companies, or for professional offices. From this time through to the 1970s and even beyond, the Post-War Modernist style enjoyed widespread popularity, particularly for high-rise commercial buildings. Reinforced concrete frames provided the structural systems, allowing the façade to be clad in a non-load bearing curtain wall. In some examples, curtain walls were typically fully glazed, while in some other examples, a greater range of materials were used to achieve variety of expression and flexibility of form. Many of these 1950s and 60s office towers featured a notable work of contemporary artwork, either within the foyer area or fixed to the outside of the building, or in some cases within a setback or public plaza.

A group of buildings built in the mid-1950s combined expansive glazed panels with solid masonry sections to achieve a distinctive aesthetic. These compare with the H C Sleigh Building and are detailed below.

State-significant places

A comparative example in the City of Melbourne which is located immediately adjacent to the Hoddle Grid is ICI House, 1-4 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1958). This place is included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H0786).

Locally-significant places

Precinct Heritage Overlay

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from the early postwar period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme. Those constructed in the 1950s that are included in the Heritage Overlay are currently included as part of Heritage Precincts, but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places. These places are:



Former Gilbert Court, 100-104 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1954-55) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Hosie's Hotel, 1-5 Elizabeth Street & 288-290 Flinders Street (Mussen McKay & Potter, 1954-55), included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct as a Significant place.



Coates Building, 18-22 Collins Street (John A La Gerche, 1958-59) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Significant place.



Former Bank of Adelaide Building, 265-269 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb, 1959-60) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Allans Building, 276-278 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb with Charles N Hollinshed, 1956-57) included in HO502 The Block Precinct as a Significant place.

Other Examples

Despite the demolition of many 1950s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the initial period of curtain wall construction in Melbourne and demonstrate similar characteristics to the subject building. The following examples are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places as part of the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review:



Lauren's House, 414-416 Lonsdale Street (Harold Bloom, 1956) (Interim HO1254).



Former Atlas Assurance Building, 404-406 Collins Street (H Garnet Alsop & Partners, 1958-61) (Interim HO1008).



Former Batman Automatic Telephone Exchange, 376 Flinders Lane (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1957).



Former AMP Building, 402-408 Lonsdale Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1956-59).



Former Ajax House, 103-105 Queen Street (HD Berry, 1956).



Former Coles and Garrard Building, 376-378 Bourke Street (Meldrum & Noad, 1957).



London Assurance House, 468-470 Bourke Street (Bernard Evans, 1960).



Canton Insurance Building, 43-51 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1957).

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the former Sleigh Corner building. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay

Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 19741-73 included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street
(Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



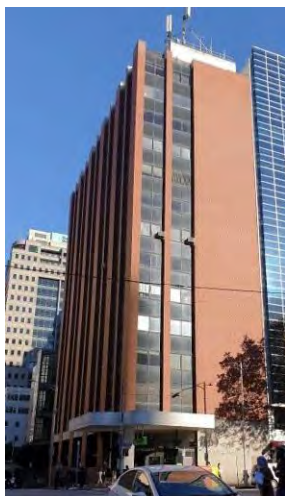
Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128
William Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim
HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street
(Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation
Building, 359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart &
McCutcheon, c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan
Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231
Queen Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

The H C Sleigh Building at 166-172 Queen Street is one of the earliest examples of non-loadbearing curtain wall buildings in Melbourne and contributed to a changing streetscape that included Post-War Modernist buildings alongside buildings from other eras. The building is comparable to a number of central Melbourne buildings that are included or are proposed for inclusion in the HO, including the Gilbert House at 100-104 Collins Street (significant in HO504) and Coates House at 20 Collins Street (HO504), which are noted as the first two buildings in Melbourne that adopted the fully glazed curtain wall façade.

The H C Sleigh Building is also comparable with the former Atlas Assurance Company building at 404-406 Collins Street and Laurens House at 414- 416 Lonsdale Street (all recommended as individually significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review). The main façades in all cases demonstrate the prominent Bauhaus grid design aesthetic of the Post-War Modernist style, based on

repetitive horizontal and vertical modules made possible by the use of a lightweight aluminium curtain wall system which maximises access to daylight.

The H C Sleigh Building is particularly comparable with Laurens House, and the former Batman Automatic Exchange at 376-382 Flinders Lane (recommended as individually significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review), as all are examples of the early 1950s commercial buildings that utilise a major curtain wall component in conjunction with a solid masonry form, rather than the curtain wall being the sole façade element.

Designed in 1953, the H C Sleigh Building is particularly notable as a very early example of a curtain-walled office building, which predates the earliest fully glazed example, the Gilbert House, constructed in 1955.

The former Sleigh Corner building at 158-164 Queen Street is comparable to a number of other central Melbourne buildings included – or proposed for inclusion in – the HO including Royal Insurance Group Building at 430-442 Collins Street, the Victorian State Offices at 1 Macarthur Street and 1 Treasury Place (included in the VHR) and the RACV Club at 123 Queen Street.

The former Sleigh Corner building demonstrates the prominent Bauhaus grid design aesthetic of the Post-War Modernist style, based on repetitive horizontal and vertical modules made possible by the use of curtain wall systems which maximise access to daylight. In this instance it is representative of a later iteration of the style in which architects moved away from slick glass curtain wall cladding to more heavily modelled facades utilising different materials. It is distinguished by the tall lift shaft clad in bagged non-loadbearing brickwork providing a contrasting textural element to the building's otherwise precise rectilinear form.

Like other buildings of its time and type, former Sleigh Corner building incorporates a street level plaza with a notable work of art. Incorporation of a public plaza within the building setback is characteristic of the era, a result of the plot ratio regime in place between the mid-1960s and 1999. Retention of public artworks in situ is increasingly uncommon. Some inner-city sculptures dating from the 1950s and 60s classified by the National Trust Victoria have been removed from their original locations, often in association with demolition or redevelopment of the building or loss of the plaza. 'Five Low Relief Panels in Bronze' by Pasquale Marinelli (National Trust File Number B6309), at the street level façade of 108 Flinders Street, and 'Birds' by Michael Meszaros (National Trust File Number B6820) at the front set back of 350 St Kilda Road were removed and are no longer publicly accessible.

The sculptural work by Tom Bass is notable. The 'Transportation' sculpture compares in terms of artistic significance as a piece of art within its original publicly accessible location to the 'Children's Tree' sculpture at 308-336 Collins Street which has been recommended as significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review.

The former Sleigh Corner building retains a very high level of integrity above the ground floor and maintains its early foyer shopfront setbacks and garden plaza with original artwork. It compares favourably with other examples of the style in central Melbourne.

As a pair, the two buildings differently express the Post-War Modernist style, and their scale and form express changes in architecture and in city planning.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** D (158-164)
Ungraded (166-172)

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** C (158-164)
C (166-172)

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded (158-164 & 166-172)

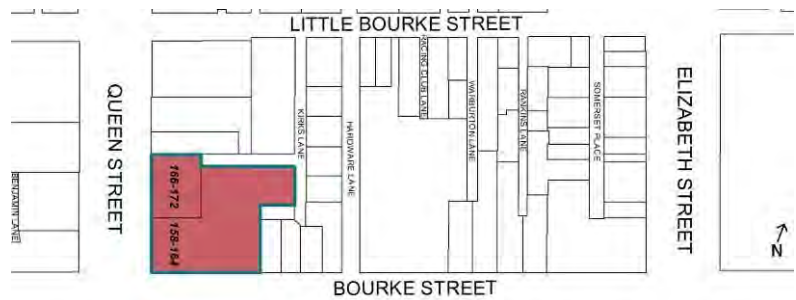
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded (158-164 & 166-172)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Sleigh Buildings (H C Sleigh Building & former Sleigh Corner)



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The former Sleigh Corner building at 158-164 Queen Street, and the former H C Sleigh Building at 166-172 Queen Street, Melbourne, both completed to a design by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, are significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- Original building form and scale (158-164 & 166-172);
- Original asymmetric solid painted render form and nonloadbearing curtain wall to its principal (Queen Street) façade, square windows to southern end wall (166-172);

- Original masonry wall with fenestration pattern and windows to its rear (off Kirks Lane) façade (166-172),
- Original concrete peripheral columns and recessed foyer and shopfronts along both street frontages at ground level (158-164);
- Original non-loadbearing curtain wall, horizontal fenestration pattern, and applied concrete panels, expressed concrete structure and non-loadbearing bagged brick lift shaft (158-164);
- Recessed office foyer and adjacent setback lift shaft and plaza (158-164); and
- Tom Bass sculpture known as 'Transportation' (1963) in its original plaza setting (158-164).

Later alterations, particularly at street level, are not significant.

How it is significant?

The former Sleigh Buildings, comprising the H C Sleigh Building at 166-172 Queen Street, and the former Sleigh Corner, at 158-164 Queen Street, are of local historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The former Sleigh Buildings are historically significant as a part of the postwar development and rapid growth of corporate architecture of the 1950s and 1960s. Located in the financial and commercial precinct of Queen Street, they reflect the expansion of large national and international companies opting for construction and naming rights of new city office buildings as a form of promotion and fund investment. The buildings were built for Australian company H C Sleigh Ltd (estab. 1895), founder of the Golden Fleece brand of petrol and service stations. H C Sleigh owned and occupied the building at 166-172 Queen Street from 1955 to 1964, before moving to their new, purpose-built premises next door at 158-164 Queen Street. The building at 166-172 Queen Street is notable as the first postwar city office block to be constructed in Melbourne for a private company. It is further significant as a very early example of a curtain-walled office building, the design of which predates the earliest fully gazed example (Gilbert House, constructed in 1955), and as an early and well-executed design in the the Post-War Modernist style by noted architectural firm of Bates, Smart & McCutcheon. (Criterion A)

Viewed together, the former Sleigh Buildings highlight the shift away from the earlier use of uniform glass curtain wall systems in the 1950s to a greater three dimensional quality, achieved during the 1960s through the use of assertive textures and precast concrete cladding panels. The two buildings also illustrate the rapid development of the Post-War Modernist style over a decade, from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s, and the enthusiasm with which large corporations embraced the style to reflect their rapid growth and status. At almost twice the height of its eight-storey neighbour at 166-172 Queen Street, and incorporating a publicly accessible plaza, the 15-storey former Sleigh Corner building illustrates the mid-1960s changes in city planning associated with the lifting of the 40 metre (132 foot) height restrictions after 1958. (Criterion A)

The H C Sleigh Building at 166-172 Queen Street is representative of the earlier development of the Post-War Modernist style that prevailed prior to the 1960s abolition of the 40 metre (132 foot) height control that had been in place since 1916. The principal façade to Queen Street exhibits an

asymmetrical combination of a solid modernist form, painted but originally blue tiles, with an offset projecting curtain wall which dominates the principal façade and extends from the first to the eighth floor. The building clearly expresses the key characteristics of its style and time of construction through retention of the simple strong modularity derived from its 1953-55 design. The former Sleigh Corner building, at 158-164 Queen Street, demonstrates later developments in the Post-War Modernist style. With its use of applied concrete panels over an expressed structural system, the former Sleigh Corner is a fine example of the Post-War Modernist style of the 1960s that moved away from the use of uniform glass curtain wall systems to more heavily modulated facades giving a three-dimensional quality to the buildings. (Criterion D)

The former Sleigh Corner building is aesthetically significant as a refined and substantial example of later development in curtain wall design. Constructed in 1964 it utilises a mix of materials to create a greater modularity and three-dimensional quality to the facades. Its aesthetic significance lies in the retention of the original building form, including original entry foyer and shopfront setback to both street frontages, the plaza setback and original sculpture on the rear wall of the publicly accessible plaza. The plaza form was once a common type for buildings of this era, created in response to the site plot ratio regime between 1964 and 1999, but which is becoming increasingly rare within the Hoddle Grid. The aesthetic significance is further enhanced by retention of the original Tom Bass sculpture 'Transportation', attached to the rear wall of the plaza (lift shaft). (Criterion E)

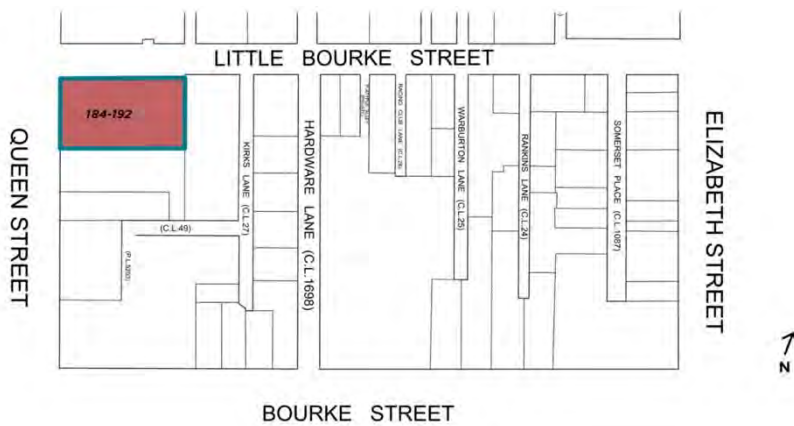
Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME The Former Houston Building [also known as Aviation House]

STREET ADDRESS 184-192 Queen Street, Melbourne

PROPERTY ID 108104



SURVEY DATE: October 2019

SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage

HERITAGE INVENTORY No

EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY No

PLACE TYPE Individual Heritage Place

PROPOSED CATEGORY Significant

FORMER GRADE Ungraded

DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST: E & G Kolle & Associates

BUILDER: Clementsons Pty Ltd

DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: Postwar Period (1945-1975)

DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION: 1964-1965

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall 1.10 Brutalism and brickwork
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Hotel
1920s	Hotel
1960s	Hotel, Retail

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The Former Houston Building was designed by architects and engineers E & G Kolle & Associates as an office building for owners United Land Properties Pty Ltd. The building was constructed in 1964-1965 by builders Clementsons Pty Ltd.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Brutalism and brickwork

Brutalism was another architectural style that emerged in commercial building design in Australia as early as 1959, when Harry Seidler used off-form concrete for an eight-storey office block in Ultimo, NSW. That same year, Melbourne architect Kevin Knight (from the office of Oakley & Parkes)

prepared plans for the International Order of Oddfellows (IOOF) Building at 380 Russell Street, Melbourne that broke new ground with its banded façade of reinforced concrete spandrels.

Based on the work of modern architecture pioneer Le Corbusier, and largely inspired by his design for the *Unité d'Habitation* in Marseilles (1952), this architectural style became widely accepted internationally. Brutalism incorporated ideas of integrity in expression of materials (especially off-form concrete), structure and function, and often gave rise to dramatic sculptural forms (VHD Hoyts Cinema Centre).

Brutalism became more widespread in central Melbourne in the 1970s. The Mid City Centre at 194-200 Bourke Street (Bogle & Banfield, 1969-70), is a notable example, with its façade of chamfered concrete volumes.

During the 1960s and 70s, face brickwork also made a return with the Houston Building at 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1964-65), the State Savings Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton & Lobb, 1967-68) and the 13-storey Nubrik House at 269-275 William Street by architects Buchan, Laird & Buchan (1972) (NTAV 2014:22).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The Houston Building was designed by architects and engineers E & G Kolle & Associates for owners United Land Properties Pty Ltd (BAP). The building was constructed in 1964-1965 by builders Clementsons Pty Ltd (*Cross-Section*, Aug 1965; S&Mc).

Architectural drawings of 'The Houston Building' dated March 1964 show the key elevations with the original ground floor design, and the ground floor plan with a plaza and landscaped area off Queen Street (Figure 1 – Figure 3). The City of Melbourne received a building permit application for the 'new office building' at 184-190 Queen Street in April 1964 (with an estimated total cost of £856,243) (BAI), after which construction was completed in 1965 (Figure 4 & Figure 5). Photos dated 1966 show the completed building plaza design (later infilled) (Figure 6).

The name of the building changed to 'Aviation House' as early as 1967 (*Age*, 13 May 1967:59). Into the 1970s the entire building was occupied by the Civil Aviation Department and External Territories Department, both Commonwealth Departments (S&Mc).

E & G Kolle & Associates, architects

The firm E and G Kolle & Associates, architects and engineers, was formed c1963 by Erike Kolle and Grethe Kolle and appears to have operated until c1975 (*Age* 18 Apr 1963:7; 21 Sep 1974:74).

Contemporary newspapers indicate that the firm designed major office buildings, hotels and industrial developments (*Age*, 6 Jul 1968:71). In the 1960s their offices were addressed to 85 Queen Street, Melbourne (*Age*, 28 Sep 1963:64).

Erik Kolle was a Danish engineer practising in Melbourne in the postwar era (*Age*, 23 Jan 1951:3; 11 Feb 1956:58). He established Erik Kolle & Associates Pty Ltd, a chartered engineering consultants' firm, c1956 with offices located in William Street, Melbourne (*Age*, 11 Feb 1956:58). Kolle was reputedly responsible for introducing lightweight foam concrete to Australia, a patented technique that involved adding aluminium powder to cement mixture to create a lightweight concrete (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 Jul 1951:2).

Danish born architect Grethe Kolle arrived in Melbourne in 1952, where she worked in an architect's office while studying for an examination to be registered as an architect in Australia. She had studied at a technical college in Copenhagen before taking her degree at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Denmark (*Age*, Sep 1958:49; *Sun-Herald*, 28 Nov 1954:60; *News*, 11 Nov 1954:20).

E and G Kolle & Associates designed the Unitarian Peace Memorial Church in Grey Street, East Melbourne, which opened in 1966 (*Cross-Section* 1966). Other notable commissions included The Houston Building, 184-92 Queen Street (1964-65), Marland House at 566-574 Bourke Street, Melbourne's largest office tower at the time of construction in 1971 (*Cross-Section*, 1971; *Age*, 2 Apr 1969:24) and Cowan House, the 16-storey building at 457-469 Little Collins Street, Melbourne (1969; which the firm occupied upon completion) (*Age*, 19 Apr 1969:75). Sydney commissions included the \$50 million development at the Royal Agricultural Society Showgrounds, Moore Park, Sydney, and the MLC Centre in Martin Place, Sydney (1975) (*Age*, 27 Apr 1971:13; 18 Aug 1973:5; NSW State Archives and Records; SRIA 1994:15).

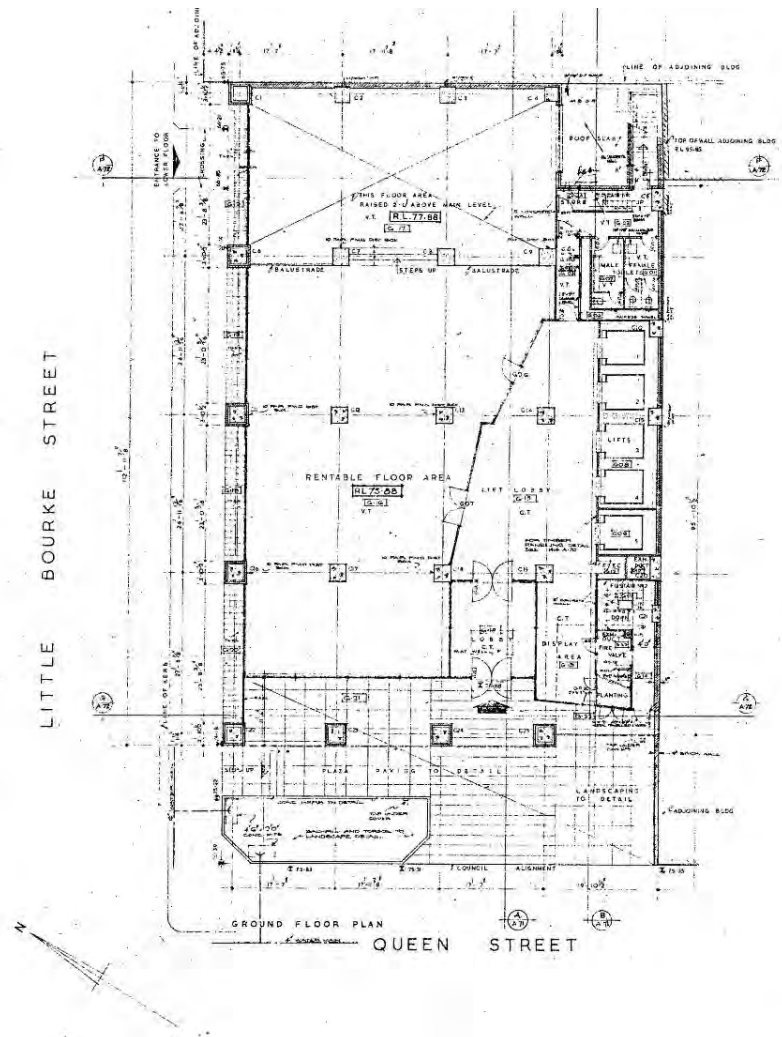


Figure 3. Ground floor plan showing the plaza and landscaped area off Queen Street. Drawing by E & G Kelle & Associates, dated March 1964 (BAP).



Figure 4. Image of the building under construction, published in the August 1965 edition of *Cross-Section* as part of an



Figure 5. Houston Building nearing completion in 1965 (NLA, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, object)

advertisement for Dunlop flooring.

160396088).



Figure 6. The completed building in 1966 (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H99.50/146).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former Houston Building at 184-192 Queen Street is a 17-storey commercial building located on a sloping site at the south-east corner of Queen and Little Bourke streets. Constructed in 1964-1965 to a design by E & G Kolle & Associates, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

Clearly visible above adjacent buildings, the Former Houston Building comprises two rectangular forms – the main building with broad frontage to Little Bourke Street and a parallel service core to the south. Together these present two narrow façades to Queen Street, with the service core façade set back from the main building line.

Sitting on a podium base, the building is of reinforced concrete column and slab construction with curtain walls of cream brick. The main building form presents two grid-like façades to Little Bourke and Queen streets. In contrast, windowless walls surround the service core and extend to a portion of wall at the south end of the Queen Street façade. The glazed façades contain rows of individual single pane windows, divided by brick piers, and alternating rows of plain brick spandrels. This results in a regular, near-square, grid. Detailing is restricted to square pigeonhole brickwork at the corners of the building and similar detailing at the junctions between piers and recessed spandrels. This main building form has a flat-topped hipped roof which conceals a caretaker's flat and roof-top plant.

The adjacent service core building form is narrower than the main building and is recessed at both the east and west ends, enabling the insertion of short horizontal strips of windows at both ends of the

south façade of the main building form. Highly decorative diagonal brickwork patterning covers the entirety of the recessed end facades, and a matching vertical strip of brickwork decorates the centre of the east façade of the main building form.

The building sits on a stone-faced base which is visible below the reclad street level façade to Little Bourke Street. Recent cladding obscures the original four large glazed windows with dividing piers. An entrance to a basement car park is situated at the lower east end of this north façade. The original recessed street façade in Queen Street has been demolished and infilled with a single storey retail space, which extends across the deep recess of the service core to the south.

INTEGRITY

The Former Houston Building, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building above street level, remains highly intact to its original construction of 1964-1965. Works to the building at street level have altered the original design.

Overall, the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone alterations at street level, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey office building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Former Houston Building at 184-192 Queen Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of a 1960s to mid-1970s multi-storey commercial building. Located on a corner site and set back from Queen Street, the building's solid grid-like curtain wall facades of regularly spaced, frameless glazed openings set in plain cream brick facades, the clear expression of the service core and extensive use of decorative brickwork patterning, can be clearly observed from both Queen and Little Bourke streets. Despite the redesign of the street-level facades, the upper facades of the Former Houston Building remain highly intact to its original design.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the Former Houston Building. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay

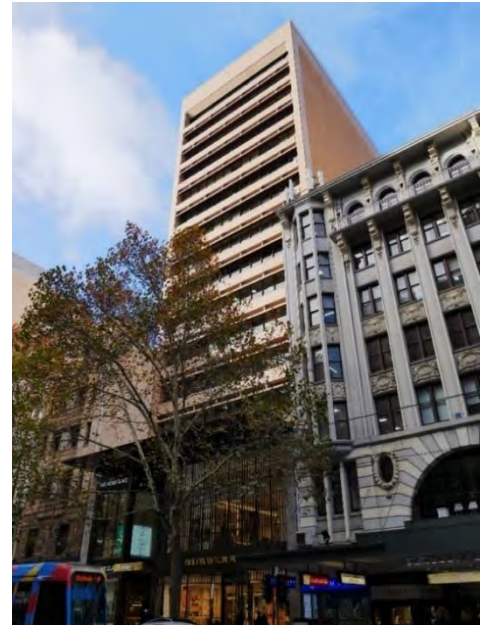
Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1974-73) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)

1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle,

Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)

1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street
(Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



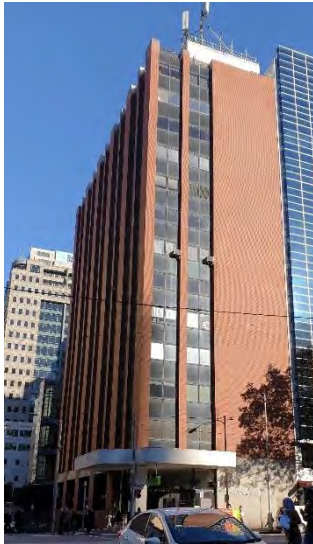
Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street
(Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (Perrot
Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building,
359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon,
c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

As a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building, the Former Houston Building at 184-192 Queen Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey commercial buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne. Similar to the small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings presently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme – and a number of other examples identified above – the Former Houston Building clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

REFERENCES

Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*

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State Library of Victoria (SLV), picture collection, images and photographers as cited.

Steel Reinforcement Institute of Australia (SRIA) 1994, *Australia's 100 Tallest Buildings*, Digest no D3, September 1994.

Sun-Herald.

Sydney Morning Herald. *The Age*.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

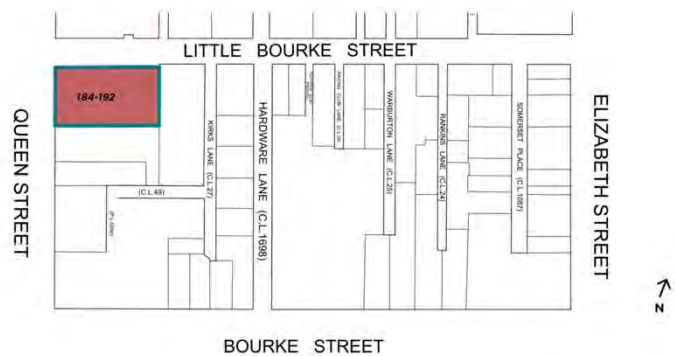
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: The Former Houston Building



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street, a multi-storey office building constructed in 1964-1965.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made to the street level frontages are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former Houston Building at 184-192 Queen Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed in 1964-1965 to a design by E & G Kolle & Associates, the Former Houston Building has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and prestige afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

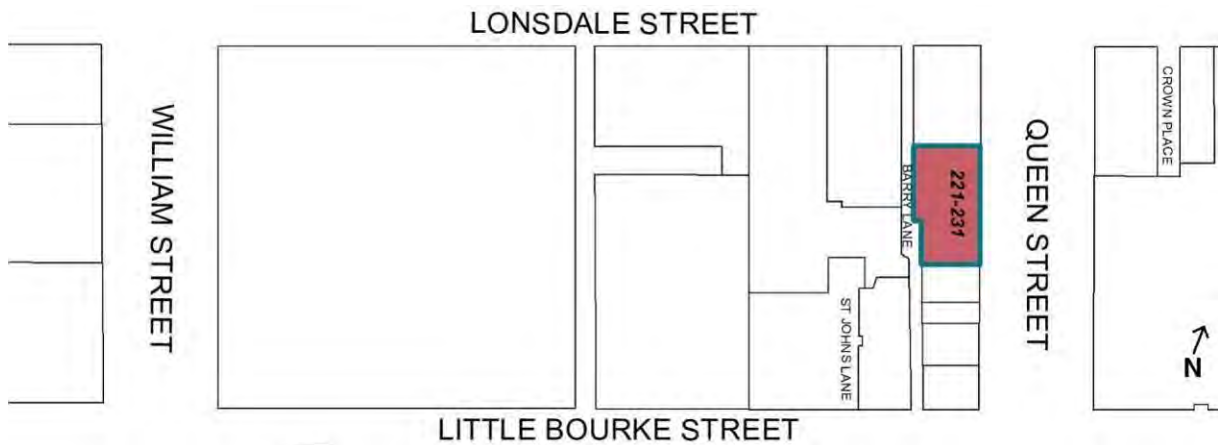
The Former Houston Building at 184-192 Queen Street is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building. The building strongly reflects the style which was popular in the 1960s through to the mid 1970s, particularly in central Melbourne. Constructed as a 17-

storey building, the Former Houston Building clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a 1960s to mid-1970s structure, including solid grid-like curtain wall facades of regularly spaced, frameless glazed openings set in plain cream brick facades, clear expression of the service core and the innovative and extensive use of decorative brickwork patterning. These demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style (Criterion D).

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former Law Department's Building
STREET ADDRESS	221-231 Queen Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	108079



SURVEY DATE: March 2019	SURVEY BY: Context		
HERITAGE INVENTORY	N/A	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER GRADE	C
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Fischer Group Architects	BUILDER:	A J Galvin Pty Ltd
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD :	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1972

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Retail, Residential, Warehouses
1920s	Retail, Residential, Warehouses
1960s	Retail, Residential, Warehouses

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

The former Law Department's Building, at 221-231 Queen Street, is an 11-storey postwar office building completed in 1972 to a design by Fischer Group architects, built by A J Galvin Pty Ltd. The building opened in 1972 for Sydney based firm, ADC Properties (Victoria) Pty Ltd and was owned by that company until 1989. Known as the Law Department's Building, it housed a number of State government law agencies until c1987. It continues to be used mainly for office space today.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding,

screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The subject site at 221-231 Queen Street is part of Crown Allotments 10 and 11, Block 19, purchased by Charles Scott and Charles Howard respectively in 1837 ('Town of Melbourne' 1838). From the 1880s the subject land comprised three allotments, with two shop-residences at 221 and 223 Queen Street, and a large warehouse at 225-231 Queen Street. The latter was occupied by Sidney Cooke printers, furnishers and ink manufacturers until at least 1970 (see Figure 1) (Mahlstedt Map, no 19, 1888; MMBW Detail Plan no 1016, 1895; S&Mc 1955-1970).



Figure 1. A detail from a 1966 photograph of the western side of Queen Street showing the Victorian shop-residences and Sidney Cooke warehouse that previously occupied the subject site at 221-231 Queen Street. (Source: Halla 1966, SLV)

In 1969, Vic State Developments Pty Ltd lodged a preliminary permit application with Melbourne City Council to construct an 11-storey building at 225 Queen Street, with the superintending architects listed as Design & Construction Consultants Pty Ltd (a subsidiary of the Fischer Group of companies, also referred to as Group Architects); both the submitting and superintending architect firms were listed at the same address in Sydney, possibly indicating they were they run by the same company (BP 40357).

In 1970 ADC Properties (Victoria) Pty Ltd, likely the result of a change in business name, became the proprietor of the three allotments addressed as 221-231 Queen Street; this company featured in all later correspondence to Melbourne City Council (CT:V8858 F901).

Developers ADC (Australian Development Corporation) Properties Pty Ltd was founded in Sydney in 1960. The company acquired key sites across Sydney and Melbourne, including the subject site at 221-231 Queen Street, on which they built large-scale investment developments, often for the sole purposes of leasing. The firm partnered with the Fischer Group of companies on many of the development projects, extending their joint interests to Melbourne in 1969 with the construction of office buildings at 221-231 Queen Street and the corner of St Kilda Road and Armadale Street (*Sydney Morning Herald* 9 October 1969:12). The company's headquarter was in ADC House, 189 Kent Street, Sydney. The company continues to operate today with a focus on subdividing real property into lots (Bloomberg 2019).

In February 1970, ADC Properties (Victoria) Pty Ltd formally applied to develop the land at 221-231 Queen Street, with the construction of an 11-storey office building with basement carpark to replace the existing shop, office and warehouse buildings on site (BP 1880). While the original building plans are not available, from available correspondence and other plans it is clear that Group Architects were responsible for the design of the subject building with Taylor Thomson Whitting Pty Ltd operating as consulting engineers.

In March, a tender notice for the excavation of a site on Queen Street, measuring 103 feet by 56 feet, was advertised by Group Architects, which is likely related to the clearing of part of the subject site (*Age* 18 March 1970:25; BP 1880; CT V8858 F901). In July of the same year, 'demolition hands' were invited to apply for work at 225 Queen Street (*Age* 31 July 1970:20).

In June 1972, architects A V Pupedis & Associates submitted detail drawings for the brass-coloured infill panels planned for the building's pre-cast concrete façade (BP 41245).

By July 1972 the subject office building at 221-223 Queen Street was completed (see Figure 2) (*Age* 1 July 1972).



Figure 2. Detail from Mahlstedt fire survey plan dated 1948, and presumably amended in the 1970s, shows the subject building as an 11-storey building with basement of reinforced concrete construction. (Mahlstedt Map Section 1, no 16, 1948).

In November 1972 a newspaper article reported that the building's pre-cast concrete façade had been made using moulds from an earlier building in York Street, Sydney, also designed and constructed by the Fischer Group for ADC Ltd. The fact that moulds had been reused to cast the panels for another building, albeit with slight dimensional modifications, was unheard of at the time. A leading firm in the Australian stone and concrete industry, Melocco Bros Pty Ltd, carried out the adjustments to the panels (see Figure 3) (*Age* 6 November 1972:23). 95-99 York Street, Sydney, had an almost identical façade design (lower levels now altered) as seen in Figure 4 (*Sydney Morning Herald* 21 July 1969:54; *Age* 6 November 1972:23). The Melbourne model, however, was given a different finish: sand-blasted in quartz aggregate and white cement, while marble aggregate was used in Sydney. Also, slight dimensional changes were made to the panels by Melocco Bros, to suit the local site (*Age* 6 November 1972:23). Built in 1969 by the Fischer Group in collaboration with Melocco Bros, another ADC building at 87 Elizabeth Street, Sydney (Figure 5) had a very similar arched ground-level colonnade (since altered) (*Sydney Morning Herald* 9 October 1969:12).



Figure 3. Photography of the subject building from 1972 reveals that few changes have been made to its exterior. (Source: Halla c1972, SLV (left); Age 6 November 1972:23 (right))

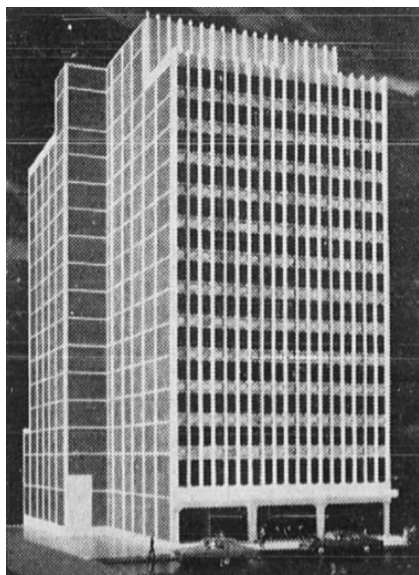


Figure 4. Rendering of 95-99 York Street, Sydney, built in 1970 using same precast concrete moulds. The secondary elevation to 168-172 Clarence Street also features same panels. The lower section of York Street façade has been since altered. (Source: *Sydney Morning Herald* 21 July 1969:54)



Figure 5. 87 Elizabeth Street, Sydney (corner Elizabeth and King streets), built in 1969 and now substantially altered. (Source: *Sydney Morning Herald* 9 October 1969:12)

Throughout the 1970s the property changed hands often between numerous investment holding companies (CT:V8901 F556). From 1974, 221 Queen Street housed the State government Law Department's offices, including the executive government law agencies of the State Law Office, Attorney General, Crown Solicitor and Parliamentary Counsel (S&Mc 1974). In 1974, the Law

Department's Building, as it was known, was addressed as 221-223 Queen Street, and by 1980s as 221 Queen Street (*Age* 14 June 1986:179).

In 1985, 221-231 Queen Street was purchased by investment company Hextrom Pty Ltd, possibly a subsidiary of the Burns Philp Trustee Company based in Sydney, which was the firm listed on the certificate of title (*Age* 13 November 1985: 33; CT:V9666 F001). Originally a major Australian shipping line, by the 1980s Burns Philp was a multinational company in control of over 200 firms spanning 100 industries (SLQ 2009).

In late 1985, the subject building housed a number of offices of the Victorian Public Service (*Age* 7 December 1985:169). The building was refurbished in 1987, in which year 'superb office suites' were advertised for lease. This may indicate the year that the State government relinquished its offices in the building (*Age* 3 December 1987:27).

In 1989 the building was sold for \$16.25 million and was promptly strata subdivided into multiple office units across the eleven floors (*Age* 12 April 1989:27; CT:V9889 F972). Numerous investors purchased office space in the building, with various professional services firms taking up residency, including the ANZ Bank (*Age* 18 April 1990:23).

Changes to the building since its construction have been largely confined to the interior spaces, including the construction of internal partitions to a number of floors from 1980 to 1992 (BP). Building permit cards also detail 'repairs to the external façade' in 1982, though it is not known which repairs these relate to as the upper floors of the building appear to be externally intact from the time of construction. Permit documentation also records refurbishments pertaining to the ground floor shops in 1986-1992. These changes at street level have retained the original structure of the colonnade, with retail and office foyer shopfronts fitted with contemporary units (see Figure 6).

Today, the basement level of the subject building is occupied by a restaurant bar, and the ground level houses café businesses. The offices of numerous law and financial firms and professional services consultancies, including real estate agency Marvelli Town & Associates, who have tenanted offices in the building since at least 1989 and who purchased an office unit on the first floor in 1994, occupy levels 1, 2, 4-8 and 10 (*Age* 18 November 1989:256; CT:V9889 F977). Levels 3 and 9 are occupied by the Reformed Theological College and Australian Pacific College, respectively.



Figure 6. Image from a 1989 auction notice for one of the ground-level shops shows the original structure of the colonnade. (Source: *Age* 7 November 1989:33)

Fischer Group, architect

The Fischer Group of companies was a consortium of companies providing design, construction and management services. In the 1960s, Sydney Fischer formed a number of subsidiary firms including Design & Construction Consultants Pty Ltd, Fischer Constructions Pty Ltd, Hydraulic Installations Pty Ltd, Shop & Office Fitters Pty Ltd, Glass Products Pty Ltd, and Airstream Pty Ltd. As a package, the company offered the construction and fit out of numerous large-scale development projects, a large number of which occurred in Sydney.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, the Group carried out a number of projects for ADC Properties Pty Ltd, including the ADC Houses at 189 Kent Street, Sydney (1964), which both ADC Properties and Fischer Group used as their headquarters; 95-99 York Street, Sydney (1970); 87 Elizabeth Street, Sydney (1969); in 77 Pacific Highway, North Sydney (1969); and the subject building at 221-231 Queen Street, Melbourne (1972) (*Sydney Morning Herald* 9 October 1969:12; *Sydney Morning Herald* 21 July 1969:54).

Melocco Bros Pty Ltd, contributing designers

Based in Annandale, NSW, Melocco Bros was also associated with the other Fischer Group and ADC Properties Pty Ltd's projects including the subject building at 221-231 Queen Street.

The Italian Melocco brothers, Peter, Antonio and Galliano, were the first tradesmen to practice mosaic craft in New South Wales and introduced terrazzo to Australia. It has been estimated that about 90 per cent of the marble, scagliola and terrazzo work in Sydney between 1910 and 1965 was undertaken by the Meloccas and their studio. Galliano, who joined the family business in the 1920s after completing his education in engineering, was responsible for building up the construction and concrete aspects of the business. He introduced ready-mixed concrete to Australia in 1941 (Kevin 2005).

Taylor Thomson Whitting, consulting engineers

The engineering firm Taylor Thomson Whitting was established in Sydney in 1959 when noted structural engineer Dick Taylor (1921-2018) was joined by Jock Thomson and Alan Whitting. Operating today as TTW, the firm remains one of Australia's leading engineering consultancies. Notable commissions include the State Office Block, Sydney (1961, now demolished), the Walk Through Aviary at Taronga Zoo (1972), and more recently, The Mint, Sydney, and Bunjil Place in Narre Warren, Melbourne (Taylor Thomson Whitting 2019).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The former Law Department's Building at 221-231 Queen Street is an 11-storey commercial building in the late Post-War Modernist style. It was constructed in 1972, and designed and constructed by subsidiaries of the Fischer Group. The building is located on the western side of Queen Street between Lonsdale Street and Little Bourke Street, and also has a rear frontage to Barry Lane.

The building demonstrates the characteristics of the style, particularly through its use of free form or organic nonloadbearing precast concrete panels as its principal facade instead of the flat, aluminium framed glass curtain-wall systems that characterised the initial phase of the style, or its later derivative that used precast concrete elements but with a rectangular emphasis.

The principal facade to Queen Street comprises a nonloadbearing precast concrete panel curtain wall that is divided vertically into eight bays, separated by projecting vertical ribs that terminate in modest finials above the roof parapet. Cast into each panel are three vertically proportioned window openings with curved corners, with what appears to be frameless glazing. Also within each module, below the window at floor level, is a recessed square panel with rounded corners and a brass (possibly anodised aluminium) finish. There is a lesser vertical rib between each window module, which similarly terminates as a finial above the parapet. Other than the repetitive modest finials, the building has no formal termination or parapet at the roof level, as is typical of the style.

At street level, the main structural grid of the building is expressed as a colonnade that divides the frontage into four equal shopfront modules. The actual shopfronts are recessed and the curved vocabulary of the window modules to the upper levels is expressed within the street level openings with curved corners where the columns meet the linear line of the first floor precast concrete panels, emphasised by unusual corbelling cast into the soffits. Contemporary shop fronts sit within these four equal bays. Early photographs indicate that the original shop fronts may have been further recessed creating a colonnade. A bronze relief Victorian Coat of Arms is extant near the central entrance and is indicative of the building's original use as the Law Department's building. A second bronze relief, possibly depicting St George and the Dragon, is positioned internally above one of the lifts in the main lobby. The signage 'ADC Queen' seen in the 1972 photography (Figure 5) has been removed.

The southern end wall is exposed above the neighbouring building, revealing the basic precast concrete post and beam construction infilled with nonloadbearing brickwork.

The rear elevation facing Barry Lane is of nonloadbearing brickwork laid in stretcher bond with steel bands attached to the façade at the floor levels. The original pattern of fenestrations is extant with steel framed windows and louvres, with sloping brick sills.

INTEGRITY

The former Law Department's Building at 221-231 Queen Street is highly intact with very few changes visible to original or early fabric. Above the street level, the building retains its original modular pattern of fenestration, and the materiality of the precast panels with projecting vertical ribs and finials, window openings and brass-finished recessed square panels with rounded corners. The rear and side (south end) facades of nonloadbearing face brickwork with original pattern of fenestrations are also intact.

At the street level the original structure of the colonnade that divides the frontage into four equal shopfront modules remains, including corbelling and curved corners where the columns meet the linear line of the first-floor precast concrete panels. The original retail and office foyer shopfronts have been fitted with contemporary shopfronts, and the setback to the alignment of the shopfronts may have been reduced. Other than these changes the building is unusually intact at street level by comparison with other examples. Overall the building is of very high integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The 1950s saw the development of the modern multi-story office building in Melbourne, often built for insurance companies or finance companies, or for professional offices. From this time through to the 1970s, the Post-War Modernist style enjoyed widespread popularity, particularly for high-rise commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne. Reinforced concrete frames provided the structural

systems, allowing the façade to be clad in a non-load bearing curtain wall. In early examples, curtain walls were typically fully glazed with an aluminium frame, while in later examples, precast concrete was used to create moulded and curved façade modules incorporating window openings while maintaining the rigid modular Bauhaus inspired aesthetic.

The following examples are comparable with the former Law Department's Building at 221-231 Queen Street, being of a similar use, scale, style and/or construction date.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



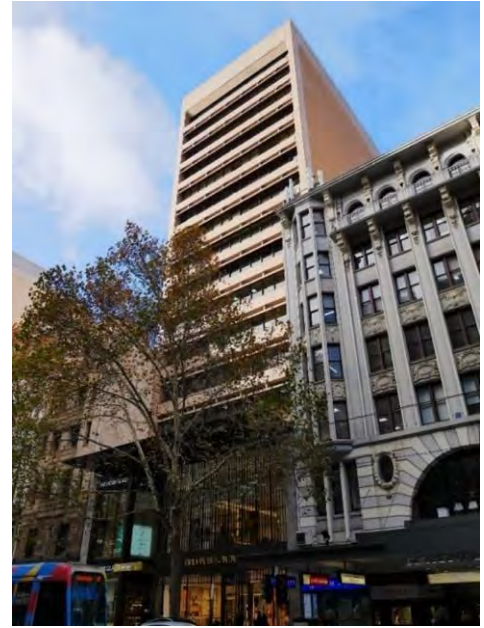
Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 19741-73 included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



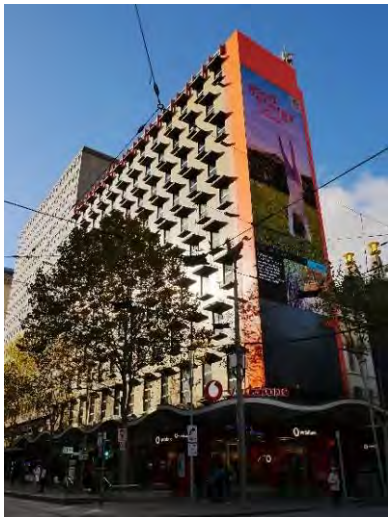
Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street
(Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street
(Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street
(B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street
(Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street
(unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street
(Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building, 359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

The former Law Department's Building at 221-231 Queen Street is comparable to a number of central Melbourne buildings included – or recommended for inclusion – in the HO. In particular, the subject building demonstrates how some designers used the potential of precast concrete to create moulded and curved façade modules incorporating window openings while maintaining the rigid modular Bauhaus inspired aesthetic. In this respect there are not many comparative examples in central Melbourne with sufficient integrity to demonstrate these characteristics in their original condition. Comparable examples are the Royal Insurance Group building at 430-442 Collins Street (interim HO1010) and Equitable House at 335-349 Little Collins Street (recommended as individually significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review). These buildings all demonstrate the use of repetitive non-loadbearing precast concrete modules to achieve a three-dimensional depth to their facades, although in a much more rectilinear and much less curvaceous aesthetic. A more direct comparison would be with the former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch building at 85-91 Queen Street (Recommended as individually significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review), although unlike the largely intact street level of 221-231 Queen Street, the lower levels at 85-91 Queen Street have been altered. The subject building is unusually intact at street level by comparison with other examples.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985**Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993**C

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002**Ungraded

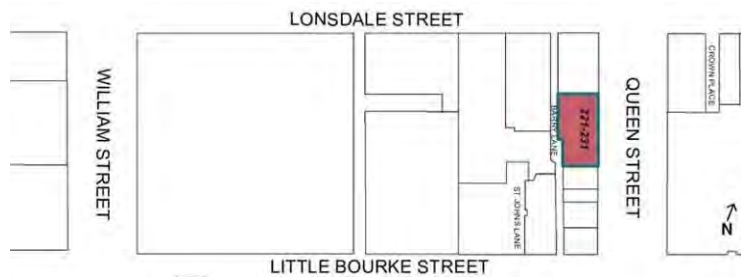
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011**Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Law Department's Building



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The former Law Department's Building at 221-231 Queen Street, Melbourne, designed and built by the Fischer Group of companies in 1972, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- Original building form and scale;
- Original non-loadbearing precast concrete curtain wall to its principal (Queen Street) façade;
- Original frameless glazing to upper level windows;
- Original street level colonnade, with corbelling and curved corners that divides the frontage into four equal shopfront modules, and set backs to shopfronts and entry lobby; and
- Original non-loadbearing face brick wall with fenestration pattern and windows to its rear (Barry Lane) façade.

Later alterations are not significant.

How it is significant?

The former Law Department's Building at 221-231 Queen Street is of historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The former Law Department's Building, opened in 1972, is historically significant as evidence of the broadening of state government powers after World War Two, a shift that resulted in increased occupation of buildings by State government offices in the Melbourne city centre. The State

government's law offices were housed in the building from 1972 until c1987. The former Law Department's Building is historically significant as a large-scale building that demonstrates the growth in government demand after the war. (Criterion A)

Located in the financial and legal precinct in the western part of the city, the former Law Department's Building provides evidence of the significant investment made in city building by interstate interests as a form of fund investment after World War Two, in this case by Sydney firm, ACD Properties Pty Ltd. (Criterion A)

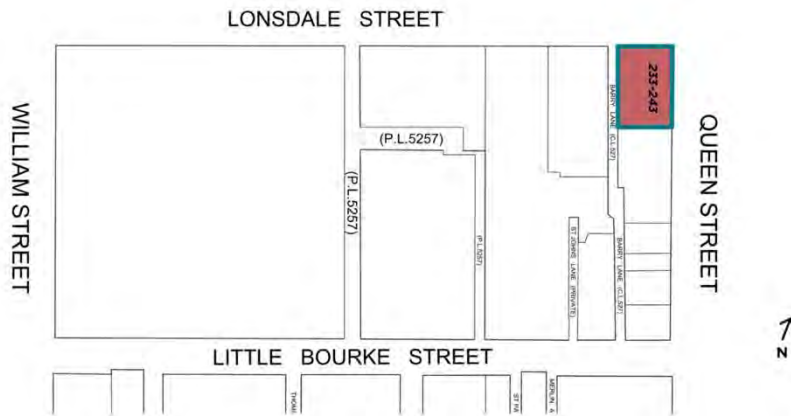
The former Law Department's Building is significant as a highly intact example of postwar commercial development in central Melbourne utilising the Post-War Modernist style that characterised the wave of development in curtain wall design during the 1960s and 1970s. These buildings represented the new modernism in their modular, industrial Bauhaus inspired aesthetic incorporating features such as consistent access to daylight and open floor plans to meet new standards for commercial office accommodation. The building exhibits key characteristics of later examples of the style, with a precast concrete curtain wall used to achieve variety of expression and flexibility of form. (Criterion D)

The former Law Department's Building is aesthetically significant for its unusual curtain wall detailing, with curved windows and elaborate brass spandrel panels (designed by architects A V Pupedis & Associates) to achieve a much more organic aesthetic. It is also notable for its unusual and highly intact street level colonnade, with corbelling and curved corners and set back shopfronts and entry lobby. (Criterion E)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former State Savings Bank of Victoria [also known as Melbourne Chambers (current name)]
STREET ADDRESS	233-243 Queen Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	108080



SURVEY DATE: October 2019

SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage

HERITAGE INVENTORY	No	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Godfrey & Spowers Hughes, Mewton and Lobb	FORMER GRADE	Ungraded
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	BUILDER:	Not known
		DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1967-1968

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall 1.10 Brutalism and brickwork
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Buiness and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Office, Stables, Retail, Hairdresser
1920s	Retail, Workshop, Office, Garage, Education, Workshop/Manufacturers
1960s	Retail, Health/Fitness, Bank, Office

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The multi-storey office building on the south-west corner of Queen and Lonsdale streets was designed by architects and engineers, Godfrey & Spowers Hughes, Mewton and Lobb to house the titles office branch of the State Savings Bank of Victoria. The building was constructed in 1967-1968.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Brutalism and brickwork

Brutalism was another architectural style that emerged in commercial building design in Australia as early as 1959, when Harry Seidler used off-form concrete for an eight-storey office block in Ultimo, NSW. That same year, Melbourne architect Kevin Knight (from the office of Oakley & Parkes)

prepared plans for the International Order of Oddfellows (IOOF) Building at 380 Russell Street, Melbourne that broke new ground with its banded façade of reinforced concrete spandrels.

Based on the work of modern architecture pioneer Le Corbusier, and largely inspired by his design for the *Unité d'Habitation* in Marseilles (1952), this architectural style became widely accepted internationally. Brutalism incorporated ideas of integrity in expression of materials (especially off-form concrete), structure and function, and often gave rise to dramatic sculptural forms (VHD Hoyts Cinema Centre).

Brutalism became more widespread in central Melbourne in the 1970s. The Mid City Centre at 194-200 Bourke Street (Bogle & Banfield, 1969-70), is a notable example, with its façade of chamfered concrete volumes.

During the 1960s and 70s, face brickwork also made a return with the Houston Building at 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kollé & Associates, 1964-65), the State Savings Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton & Lobb, 1967-68) and the 13-storey Nubrik House at 269-275 William Street by architects Buchan, Laird & Buchan (1972) (NTAV 2014:22).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The multi-storey office building on the south-west corner of Queen and Lonsdale streets was designed by architects and engineers, Godfrey & Spowers Hughes, Mewton and Lobb for the State Savings Bank of Victoria (BAP), and constructed in 1967-1968.

The origins of the State Savings Bank of Victoria can be traced back to 1842 when it was founded in Melbourne as the Port Phillip Savings Bank under New South Wales' legislation. Branches of the Bank were subsequently established in other parts of the colony. Owned by the State of Victoria from 1852, from 1853 each bank branch was made a separate and independent institution with its own trustees and officers.

Between 1896 and 1912 the independent Savings Banks of Victoria merged to become a single institution, formalised by legislation in 1912. By 1929 deposits with the Bank accounted for almost two thirds of deposits across all banks in Victoria (Merrett 2008; Trove 2009).

The bank took a keen interest in social welfare and contributed to the construction of housing. In the 1920s the State Savings Bank created a housing estate in Port Melbourne, one of a number of initiatives to encourage home ownership in the early to mid-twentieth century. After World War Two the Bank began lending on overdraft to the co-operative housing societies. By June 1954 some 51 societies had received overdraft facilities from the State Savings Bank, amounting to £15.7 million. (Merrett 2008) The State Savings Bank was sold to the Commonwealth Bank in 1990 (Trove 2009).

The State Savings Bank of Victoria had occupied an earlier building at 241-243 Queen Street from 1958 (*Progress*, Feb 1968:2; S&Mc), before constructing the present building. Architectural drawings dated January 1967 show the key elevation and floor plans of the new building. The plans showed the banking chamber entrance off Lonsdale Street (which had a two-storey ceiling height), and entrances to a lettable space and the lift lobby off Queen Street (Figure 1 - Figure 3). The City of Melbourne received a building permit application for the multi-storey office building in September 1967 (with an estimated total cost of £1,074,097) (BAI).

The February 1968 edition of the State Savings Bank of Victoria staff magazine *Progress* published an illustration of the building on its cover (Figure 4) and reported that the 11-storey building, that would house the bank's titles office branch (which had occupied the earlier building on the site), would be completed by the end of 1968. The article continued

... the fully air conditioned building, designed by Godfrey and Spowers, Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, under the direction of our Chief Architect, Mr R Cousland, is based on the use of steel sections from the new BHP mills at Whyalla, South Australia. The frame using this metal is lighter and more economical than has previously been possible with Australian steel.

The bank was to occupy part of the ground and first floors, with the remainder of the building available to let. This was the second multi-storey building the bank erected in the post-war period (*Progress*, Feb 1968:2).

In 1970 the second to seventh floors were occupied by the Town and Country Planning Board and seventh to tenth floors by the Valuer-General's Office (S&Mc, 1970). In 2019 the building is called Melbourne Chambers (CoMMaps).

Godfrey & Spowers Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, architects

Godfrey and Spowers was established in c 1901 by architects, William Scott Purves Godfrey and Henry Howard Spowers. The firm designed a large number of houses, warehouses and institutional buildings and was best known for its designs for bank buildings.

Godfrey's son, William Purves Race Godfrey, joined the practice in 1931 as a student. Spowers died the following year and Race Godfrey was made partner in c 1934. The firm was suspended in 1941 as a direct result of World War II, during which time Race Godfrey worked with the RAAF as a civilian architect in Melbourne and Sydney and his father, William Godfrey carried out commissions for air-raid shelters. Race Godfrey recommenced practice late in 1944. His father did not continue with the new firm, and retired from practice in the same year.

By the early 1950s, Race Godfrey expanded the firm to include new partners, Eric Hughes, Geoffrey Mewton and John Lobb, becoming Godfrey Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb. The expanded firm specialised in large office and institutional buildings. Notable commissions within central Melbourne included the Allans Building at 278 Collins Street (1959), the Bank of Adelaide Building, 265-69 Collins Street (1959-60), the AMP Building, 344-50 Collins Street (1966-68) and the State Savings Bank of Victoria, 233-43 Queen Street (1967-68). The National Mutual Building, Collins Street, Melbourne (1962-5, demolished 2015) was a key work for the firm during this period.

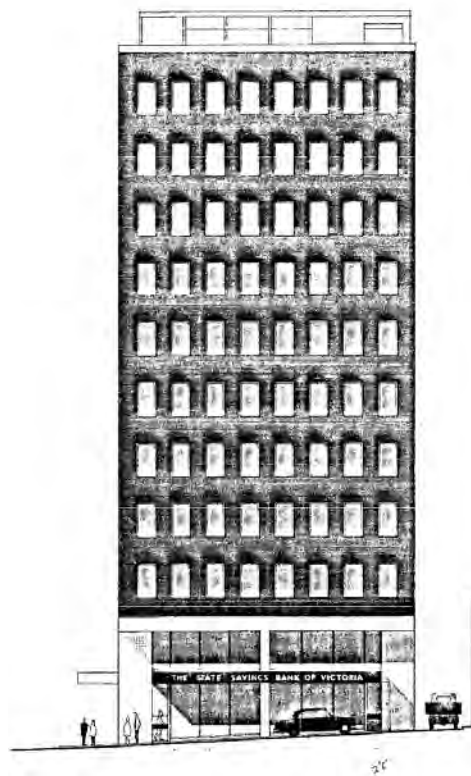


Figure 1. North elevation to Lonsdale Street. Drawing by Godfrey & Spowers Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, dated January 1967 (BAP).

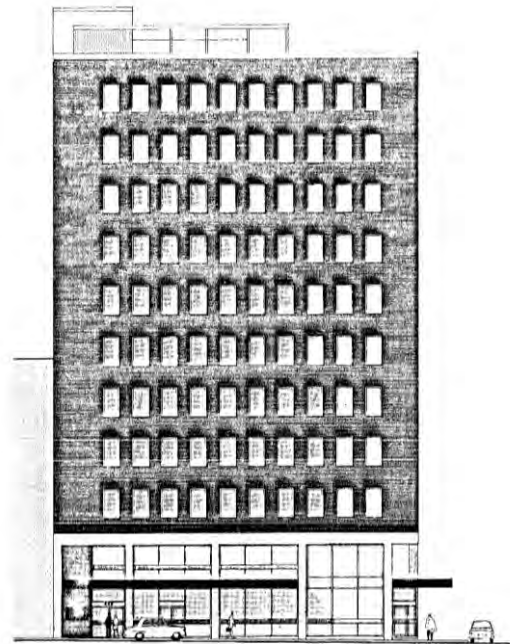


Figure 2. East elevation to Queen Street. Drawing by Godfrey & Spowers Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, dated January 1967 (BAP).

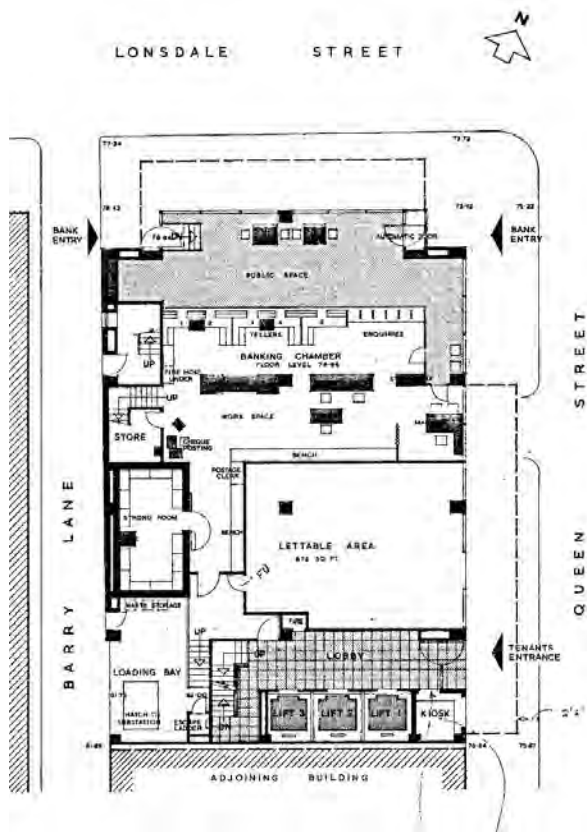


Figure 3. Ground floor plan showing the banking chamber adjacent to Lonsdale Street. Drawing by Godfrey & Spowers Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, dated January 1967 (BAP).



Figure 4. Illustration of the building published on the front cover of the February 1968 edition of *Progress* magazine, the staff publication for the State Savings Bank.



Figure 5. The building in 1984 (City of Melbourne Libraries online Heritage Collection, Reference no. Butler14364).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former State Savings Bank of Victoria building at 233-243 Queen Street is a 10-storey commercial building located at the south-west corner of Queen and Lonsdale streets. The building has main frontages to Queen and Lonsdale streets and a secondary façade to Barry Lane which forms the western boundary of the site. Constructed in 1967-1968 to a design by Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

Sitting on a dominant double-height podium, the rectangular building is of concrete encased steel column and beam construction with curtain walls of manganese brickwork. The upper walls of the main east and north facades have regularly spaced, individual windows placed across the entire wall surfaces. These windows are set in fine stainless-steel-clad timber frames which project beyond the brick surface; otherwise the walls are undecorated and terminate at a crowning row of brickwork with fine rendered parapet. The secondary west façade, also of face brickwork, has a vertical strip of similarly framed windows at the north end, otherwise the wall contains rows of multi-paned, metal-framed windows.

The double-height podium extends around the two main corner facades and provides the building with a strong, contrasting base. Although re-clad, the form and much of the detailing of this podium has been retained. This includes a deep fascia and projecting canopies, which provide the composition with strong horizontal lines; the form of the Lonsdale Street entrance, with projecting bay and doorways perpendicular to the façade, and the window sets with dividing mullions and piers. Original mosaic tiles which framed windows at street level (indicated on original architect's drawings), have been replaced.

INTEGRITY

The Former State Savings Bank of Victoria building, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building above street level, remains highly intact from its original construction in 1967-1968. This includes the form of the podium base. Works to the building at street level have altered the original design.

Overall, the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone some alterations at street level, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey commercial building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Former State Savings Bank of Victoria building at 233-243 Queen Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of 1960s to mid 1970s multi-storey commercial building design. Located on a corner site, the building's solid grid-like curtain wall facades of regularly spaced, frameless glazed openings set in plain dark brick facades and highly prominent, contrasting podium base, can be clearly observed from both Queen Street and Lonsdale Street. Despite re-cladding of the street-level facades, the form of the podium and the upper facades of the Former State Savings Bank of Victoria building remain highly intact to its original design.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the former State Savings Bank of Victoria. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



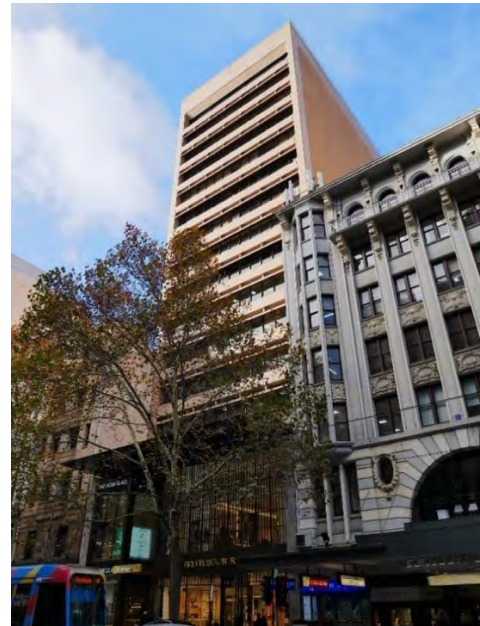
Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1974-73) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kelle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building, 359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorpe de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

As a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building, the Former State Savings Bank of Victoria building at 233-243 Queen Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey office buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne. Similar to the small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings presently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme – and a number of other examples identified above – the Former State Savings Bank Building clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

- Contextual History references contained within City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975
- Building Application Index (BAI), City of Melbourne.
- Building Application Plans (BAP), City of Melbourne.
- City of Melbourne Libraries online Heritage Collection, reference nos. as cited.
- City of Melbourne Maps (CoMMaps), Site Details.
- Goad, Phillip, Ed. (2003), Judging Architecture, Royal Australian Institute of Architects (Victoria).
- Murphy, Guy & Bryce Raworth (2012), 'Godfrey & Spowers' in Philip Goad & Julie Willis's (Eds.) (2012), The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture, Port Melbourne.
- Progress, State Savings Bank of Victoria Staff Magazine, via StateBank of Victoria Social Networking Site, <http://www.statebankvictoria.org/?page_id=3698>, accessed November 2019.
- Sands & McDougall Directories (S&Mc).

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

**Review of Heritage
Overlay Listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former State Savings Bank of Victoria

PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street, a multi-storey office building constructed in 1967-1968.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made to the street level facades are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed in 1967-1968 to a design by Godfrey & Spowers Hughes, Mewton and Lobb, the Former State Savings Bank of Victoria building has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and status afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

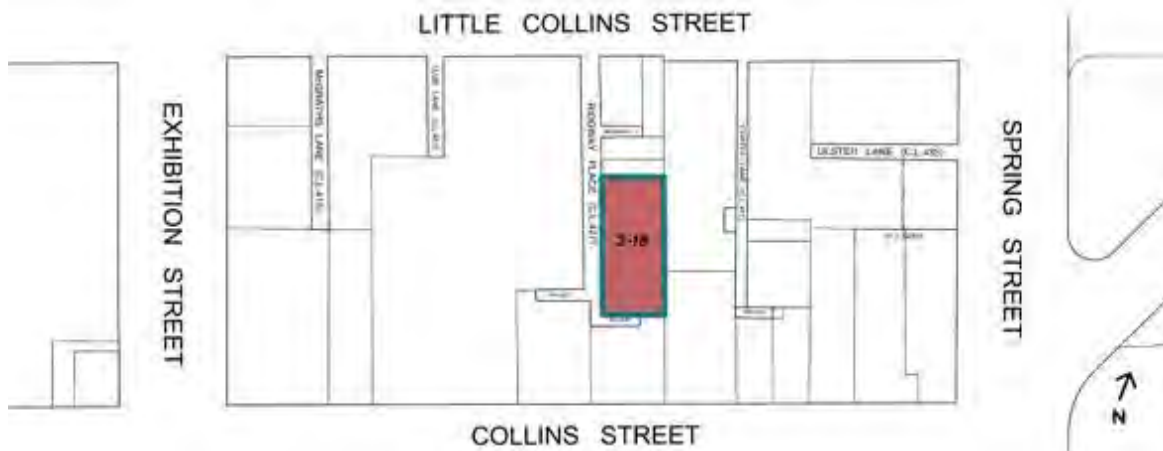
The Former State Savings Bank of Victoria building is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building. The building strongly reflects the style which was popular in the 1960s to the mid 1970s, particularly in central Melbourne. Constructed as a 10-storey building, the

Former State Savings Bank of Victoria building clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a 1960s to mid 1970s structure, including solid grid-like curtain wall facades of regularly spaced, frameless glazed openings set in plain dark brick facades and a highly prominent, contrasting podium base. These demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style (Criterion D).

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context P/L & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Lyceum Club
STREET ADDRESS	2-18 Ridgway Place, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	108274



SURVEY DATE: June 2017		SURVEY BY: Context	
HERITAGE INVENTORY	H7822-1777	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Place Type	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER GRADE	D
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Ellison Harvie	BUILDER:	Pollard Brothers
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1965)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1959

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style
8 Enjoying the city	8.3 Entertainment and socialising

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Not able to be determined
1920s	Not able to be determined
1960s	Clubs and Unions

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

2-18 Ridgway Place was designed in 1959 by architect Ellison Harvie for the Lyceum Club, the largest and most important club for professional women in Victoria. This modernist building is characterised by its floating first floor form and aesthetic expression of structural and building elements. It sits comfortably in its compact laneway location.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Entertainment and socialising in the postwar period

The retail and entertainment precincts in Melbourne, which emerged in the early 1960s, were largely protected from consolidation and redevelopment due to lower plot ratio controls and difficulty in consolidating a sufficient number of properties to achieve a legitimate tower form. The level of redevelopment in these precincts is more modest, with fine grained, smaller sized allotments along with

valued heritage fabric. During this phase, conservation of heritage buildings was not yet an intentional pursuit, but rather a residual effect of the prevailing logic of the planning system (CoM 2016:5-7).

Higher disposable income, more leisure time, and larger metropolitan populations created an increase in entertainment and tourism industries in every Australian capital city. According to Marsden, only the office and finance sector has had more impact on the physical expansion and alteration of existing places, especially in central Sydney and Melbourne. Even though increased suburbanisation from the 1950s led to the closure of entertainment venues and theatres in Melbourne's city centre, other venues opened. In 1970, for example, Hoyts Cinema Centre in Bourke Street opened the first multi-cinema complex in Australia.

Clubs have also historically been an important part of city life. The Lyceum Club for women built new premises at 2-18 Ridgway Place in 1959 while new clubrooms for the RACV Club were built at 123 Queen Street in 1961. Such places provided patrons with a space in the city to meet, network and promote cultural activities.

SITE HISTORY

The site of 2-18 Ridgway Place was originally purchased as part of the fifth Crown Land sale in 1839, with lanes and subdivisions developed by the same year. By 1850, a building had been constructed and in 1888, the site comprised seven houses. By 1905-06 there were six two-storey houses fronting a lane. (Fels, Lavelle & Mider 1993).

In 1959, the Lyceum Club opened its clubrooms at 2-18 Ridgway Place.

The Lyceum Club

The following history on the Lyceum Club has been taken from the National Trust file (B6902), which in turn has been extracted from the history in Allom Lovell and Associate's 1998 management plan for the Lyceum Club.

The Lyceum Club held its first meeting in 1912 at rented premises, the Brunton Chambers, at the corner of Elizabeth and Collins streets. After six years of operation, the club's 150 members had outgrown the space, and the Lyceum moved to the fifth floor of the Auditorium Building at 167 Collins Street. With the end of World War One, and the subsequent increased involvement of women in professional and public work, membership continued to rise. The new premises soon reached capacity, resulting in the Lyceum Club needing to limit membership numbers to 450 and create a temporary waiting list.

Membership increased from 500 in 1921 to 625 in 1922. In 1925 the Lyceum Club accepted an offer from the ES&A Bank to lease an empty floor within the Stock Exchange building. The club had the opportunity to adapt the space to meet its needs, with the architects devising a system of folding doors so that the main rooms could be opened to make one large room for special occasions.

Later in 1925, the Lyceum Club's constitution was changed to allow for its incorporation under the

Companies Act of 1916. In 1928, the club's rules were altered to allow membership to increase from 800 to 1000, which it reached in the 1940s.

The Lyceum Club remained in the Stock Exchange building until 1934, when it moved to Bank House, at the corner of Collins and Queens streets. The planning of new premises at Bank House offered an opportunity to provide accommodation, with three bedrooms for guests made available on the third floor.

Membership after World War Two continued to rise and by 1947, in order to absorb the number of people on the waiting list, the Articles of Association were altered to allow membership to increase from 1000 to 1200. In 1956, the club was advised that Bank House would no longer be made available for its use. Architect member and associate in the partnership of architectural firm, Stephenson & Turner, Ellison Harvie, surveyed members regarding their wishes for future club premises. It was decided that the Lyceum Club should investigate the possibility of buying a property in the city and that members would be encouraged to take up £25 debentures.

After investigations, a block in Ridgway Place was chosen in 1957 as a potential site for the club's new premises. It was described at a special club meeting as being approximately 7000 square feet, on which six small two-storey houses stood, one of which remains today at 20 Ridgway Place. The cottages were once owned by the adjacent Melbourne Club, who used them as accommodation for its coachmen, but by the 1950s the houses were privately owned and tenanted. The Lyceum Club took up the option of the Ridgway Place site and purchased the land for £26,000 in 1957. A decision to demolish the cottages and construct a new building on the Ridgway Place site was made in May 1958.

The construction of the Lyceum Club's new building was coordinated by Ellison Harvie, with assistance from fellow architects Hilary Lewis and Jessie Madsen. The club was relocated to temporary accommodation provided by the ES&A Bank at 140 Flinders Lane.

Harvey's design for the new building included car parking, an entrance on the ground floor, dining room, kitchen and clubrooms on the first floor, with a small lounge and six bedrooms opening to a roof terrace on the second floor. The terrace and the full-length windows on the first floor overlooked the garden of the adjacent Melbourne Club. The tender for the construction of the building was awarded to Pollard Brothers for the sum of £75,857. The new building was officially opened by Lady Mayoress F W Thomas on 26 May 1959.

Over the next 10 years, various work on the building was undertaken by architects Stephenson & Turner. After Ellison Harvie retired from the practice in 1967, Stephenson & Turner continued to act as the club's regular architects. In 1972, extensive repairs were undertaken following flooding, which occurred after torrential rain in late 1971.

At the same time, the club appointed an honorary architect from its own members, Berenice Harris, who had been a director with the firm Romberg & Boyd since 1961. Harris's work over the next few years included minor works but culminated in the early 1980s when a large renovation program was implemented, including extensions, the construction of ensuite bathrooms and the installation of a lift. After Harris's retirement in the 1980s, the Lyceum Club's building and maintenance work became the responsibility of the local firm of Cunningham & Keddie. In addition to minor works over the years, the most substantial work undertaken by the firm was the fit-out of the library on the second floor, which involved the consolidation of three original bedrooms facing the sun terrace.

Other architect members of the Lyceum Club likely to have made contributions to the building over the years include Cynthea Teague, Ailsa Trundle, Lorna Phillips, Muriel Stott, Mary Turner Shaw, and Babs Delaney. Other notable local women professionals who have contributed to the building include artists Anne Montgomery (mural painting) and Bee Taplin (textiles), interior decorator Joyce Godfrey (club rooms and lounge), and landscape designer Millie Gibson.

In sum, the building was built and adapted regularly to meet the changing needs of the club and its membership. The organisation dates to 1912, and the building to 1959. The building was purpose built for the club and is its first permanent home (previous spaces were leased). Construction of the building enabled an expansion of the membership of the club and development of facilities for members. The Club's first president was Pattie Deakin, wife of the prime minister Alfred Deakin, and many of its early members were among the first female professionals in their particular fields: Dr Constance Ellis (medicine), Christian Jollie Smith (law), and Marion Mahoney Griffin (architecture). As a result of bequests and member donations, the Lyceum Club houses an important collection of furniture, artwork and reference books (National Trust 2005).

Ellison Harvie, architect

The Australian Dictionary of Biography contains this entry for Ellison Harvey:

Edythe Ellison Harvie (1902-1984), architect joined Sir Arthur Stephenson in his recently established firm in 1921 and remained there throughout her professional life.

In 1925-28 Harvie attended the Melbourne University Architectural Atelier (1925-28), where she excelled, her work being later recognised in the award of a diploma of architectural design (1938) - the first received by a woman. Registered as an architect and elected an associate (1928) of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects, Harvie specialised in hospital architecture, a field in which Stephenson & Meldrum gained an international reputation. She led work on the Jessie Macpherson wing of the Queen Victoria Hospital (1928), and on designs for the St Vincent's (1933), Mercy (1934, 1937-39) and Freemasons (1935) hospitals...

Harvie was made an associate of the new partnership Stephenson & Turner in 1938 and soon placed in charge of work on the Royal Melbourne Hospital...In 1946 she was made a partner of the firm and elected a fellow of the RVIA—the first woman to gain this status. She was also a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects and, later, a life fellow of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.

A committed modernist, Harvie drew much of her inspiration from the innovative institutional work she observed during travels through the United States of America and Europe. Deploing the lack of architectural appreciation in Australia, she served on the RVIA's Board of Architectural Education (1946-56) and on the board of the University of Melbourne's faculty of architecture (1945-73).

Harvie also became an advocate for the professional development of women, urging their full participation in public life and an end to discrimination against them in employment. She continued to work on hospitals until her retirement from full-time practice in 1968, but also designed two buildings specifically serving women: The Lyceum Club (1959) and St Hilda's

College (1963), University of Melbourne. The former has an elegance typical of late 1950s modernism; the latter, in spare, pale brick, is tempered with modest references to the traditions of collegial gothic...

Ellison Harvie was president (1963-65) of the Lyceum Club and a foundation member (1948) and honorary treasurer of the Melbourne Soroptomist Club...She died at East Melbourne on 27 September 1984 and was buried in Boroondara cemetery, Kew (Edquist 2007).

The Lyceum Club was one of only two commissions Harvie accepted outside the Stephenson & Turner office (National Trust 2005).

Stephenson & Turner, architects

The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture contains the following information about Stephenson & Turner:

At its peak, Stephenson & Turner was Australia's largest architecture firm, with offices in Melbourne, Sydney, Newcastle, New Zealand and Hong Kong. It was formed in 1921 by A. G. Stephenson and Percy Meldrum as Stephenson & Meldrum, after both had returned to Australia after WWI, having met at London's Architectural Association. The firm had relatively modest beginnings, with a range of projects and clients, including the State Savings Bank of Victoria (its chairman, Sir William McBeath, had encouraged Stephenson to return to Melbourne to set up a practice.) The firm's first hospital client, the Melbourne Children's Hospital in 1925, and a proposed reform to the hospital system, prompted Stephenson to imagine a new direction for his fledgling firm and he audaciously borrowed money to take an extensive overseas trip in 1926-27 to the United States and Canada to gather intelligence and experience with a view to becoming a firm specialising in hospitals...

The firm established a Sydney office in 1934 led by Donald Keith Turner, and were known in NSW from 1935 as Stephenson, Meldrum & Turner, taking on several large hospital projects including Gloucester House at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney (1936) ... Meldrum was becoming increasingly uncomfortable with Stephenson's interest in taking on more hospital work...The result was a very rapid and acrimonious split in the partnership...

Turner and Stephenson continued as Stephenson & Turner, continuing their hospital work during WWII, and afterwards promoted a number of their associates, such as Ellison Harvie, Geoffrey Moline and John D. Fisher, to partners. Beyond their hospital work, the firm also undertook key industrial complexes, commercial office buildings, banks, town plans (including Shepparton (1946) and the Australian pavilions at the Paris Exposition (1937) and the New York World's Fair (1939-40).

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Establishing its own club premises at 2-18 Ridgway Place in 1958, the Lyceum Club, as an organisation has been highly influential in the lives of generations of Victorian women. There is a direct association between the organisation, membership and the building that has endured for nearly 60 years.

With its large influx of immigrants, Melbourne was a city that inspired and promoted literature and art, movements that were accompanied by the establishment of art and literary clubs and societies. One such club was the Lyceum Club, established in 1912:

had its origins in the Woman Writers' Club, founded ten years earlier by the three female members of the Institute of Journalists who, excluded from the institute's premises, wanted a place to meet and write. In 1912 they joined with the group of women active in philanthropic and community work, education, science and the arts who had met through the 1907 Women's Work Exhibition, and members of the Catalysts, a women's discussion group, founded in 1910. The first overseas group to affiliate with the London Lyceum, the Club was open to university graduates and women who had achieved distinction in their own right. Its purpose was evident in a series of 'circles' that allowed members to learn new skills or discuss social problems (Swain 2008).

The Lyceum Club is considered to be of social significance for its association with a community of professional women. The relevant significance indicators include:

- The community or cultural group has a deep sense of ownership/stewardship and/or connectedness to the place or object
- The place is important to this community's sense identity
- Important as a place of community service (including health, education, worship, pastoral care, communications, emergency services, museums, etc.)

It may also be important to this community as an 'Important as a place of collective socialisation'.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Lyceum Club is located at the end of the narrow laneway Ridgway Lane, which runs off Little Collins Street, towards the eastern end of the CBD. The long narrow building runs over several addresses (numbers 2-18). It faces the high masonry wall of the Melbourne Club across the laneway. Although comprised of three levels, the building fits appropriately in the laneway setting, without appearing to dominate the confined space.

The middle storey is cantilevered over the ground floor and the flat roofed profile of this level results in a low section that presents as a horizontal band running the full length of the building. In keeping with the modern aesthetic, the building has an unadorned façade, with primary aesthetic interest derived from the arrangement of structural elements, and most notably, windows. Identical bays of timber framed windows run the full length of the building, giving a distinctive pattern and rhythm to the façade. Main meeting rooms and functions areas are located on this level.

Entry to the building is from street level. The compact entry foyer has extensive glazing and a textured cream brick wall. The internal stair is visible from the entry point. A row of equally spaced concrete columns runs along the build line. The open spaces on this level are used for car parking. Metal screens between the columns are a later addition.

The contemporary garage roller doors obscuring the ground floor space and entry of the building are still used by the Lyceum Club. An upper floor and alterations to the building were completed in 2018, designed by KTA Architects. This has respected and added to the original design.



Figure 1. Aerial Photo by Wolfgang Sievers, 1976 (Source: Sievers 1976).

INTEGRITY

Extensive alterations and extensions have occurred at the upper level in 2017-18, undertaken by KTA Architects. This has succeeded in adapting the building to the changing needs of the Lyceum Club and its members. Extensive works were also undertaken in 1981 when a seminar room was added to the upper level. Currently the built form extends to the building edge in two locations on the upper floor. This alteration impacts somewhat on the reading of the middle level as a single horizontal band. However, the façade of the important middle level remains intact and the design intent of the original arrangement is still clear.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Lyceum Club as an organisation has been highly influential in the lives of generations of Victorian women. There is a direct association between the organisation, its membership and the building that has endured for nearly 60 years. The only other known women's club, the Alexandra Club is primarily a private hotel for rural and regional women and has a different mission.

The Alexandra Club, 81 Collins Street, 1934 (HO568, HO504 Collins Street East precinct)

The Alexandra Club was designed by Anketell & K Henderson in 1937. It features a neo-Georgian brick façade of five storeys. The interior retains its' 1930s design in decorative columns and coffered ceiling, concierge's cabin and lift lobby.



Figure 2. 81 Collins Street, Alexandra Club constructed 1934. (Source: CoMMaps)

As a place, the Lyceum Club compares with several other modern buildings and/or former clubs. In conceiving more modest city buildings, some architects embraced the modernist theme of apparent weightlessness, where, like the Lyceum Club at 2-18 Ridgway Place, the upper floor(s) projected above a recessed ground floor (National Trust 2014:73). This was also achieved in other buildings such as:

Sapphire House, 11-25 Crossley Street, 1957 (HO500 Bourke Hill Precinct)

Built 1957, Sapphire House is a two-storey brick masonry building with recessed glazing within protruding white window frames (National Trust 2014:73).



Figure 3. 11-25 Crossley Street constructed 1957. (Source: CoMMaps)

Latrobe Photographic Studios, 152 Little Lonsdale Street, 1964

Designed by architect Harry Ernest in 1964, two levels of office space (expressed externally with alternating bays of windows and wide brick piers) project over a fully-glazed ground floor level (National Trust 2014:73).



Figure 4. 152-156 Little Lonsdale Street constructed 1964. (Source: CoMMaps)

RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street, 1959-61 (Interim HO1068)

Designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, the elevated masonry clad block rests on stilts above the podium as discrete and well formulated massing, the stilts or columns being visible as they pass through the podium on the south side. The tower block appears to float above the façade and when combined with the glazed podium, gives the lightness and clarity of purpose sought by modernist designers.



Figure 5. 111-129 Queen Street constructed 1959-61. (Source: CoMMaps)

Analysis

The Lyceum Club as an organisation historically and socially has few peers in Melbourne, with the Alexandra Club being the only other known private women's club in the city. Today the Lyceum Club and the Alexandra Club at 81 Collins Street both provide private clubs for women with the Lyceum catering specifically for professional women.

It is one of only two private commissions by pioneering architect Ellison Harvie, outside her role at Stephenson & Turner.

As a place, the Lyceum Club, including its recent extensions and alterations, is a representative example of hybrid modern and contemporary architecture, comprising the 1959 building and the 2018 extension.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

✓

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

✓

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** D

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** D

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

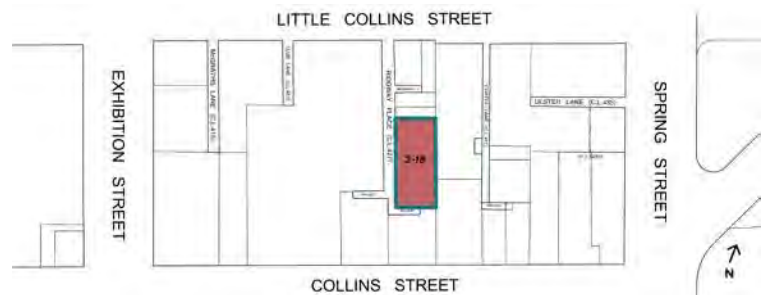
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Lyceum Club



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Lyceum Club at 2-18 Ridgeway Place, Melbourne, designed by architect Ellison Harvie and completed in 1959.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing; and
- The building's continuous use as a women's club.

How it is significant?

The Lyceum Club at 2-18 Ridgeway Place is of local historic, social and associative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Historically, the Lyceum Club is significant as a purpose-built club house, designed by and for women. Importantly, the 1957 building commission and all subsequent alterations and additions, have involved local women architects from the original design and construction by Ellison Harvie, to subsequent work by Hilary Lewis, Jessie Madsen, Berenice Harris, Cunningham & Keddie and KTA (Kerstin Thompson Architects). Other notable local women professionals who have contributed to the design of the building include artists Anne Montgomery (mural painting) and Bee Taplin (textiles), interior decorator Joyce Godfrey (club rooms and lounge), and landscape designer Millie Gibson. This tradition of continuous and almost exclusively female design input on the one project, over a sustained period has few precedents (National Trust 2005). (Criterion A)

Historically, the Lyceum Club is significant as the largest and most important club for professional women in Victoria. Having been formally established in Melbourne in 1912 to provide a place of retreat, meeting and discussion for professional and retired women, it is significant for its pioneering role in furthering the status of women within the professional sphere dominated by men at the time. As a result of bequests and member donations, the Lyceum Club houses an important collection of furniture, artwork and reference books (National Trust 2005). (Criterion A)

The Lyceum Club is of social significance for its strong and enduring association with the organisation and its membership. The building reflects the aspirations and needs of the organisation in providing and

sustaining a place of social congregation and intellectual exchange amongst professional women.

(Criterion G)

The Lyceum Club is significant for its association with its designer, architect Ellison Harvie. Harvie, as a member of the Club and a partner in the firm of Stephenson & Turner, was the first woman to gain a Diploma of Architectural Design from the Architectural Atelier in 1938, and the first Australian woman to be nominated as a Fellow of the RIBA in 1949. Her work at Stephenson & Turner contributed to the design of numerous major hospitals in Sydney and Melbourne, including the Royal Melbourne Hospital in 1942. (Criterion H)

The Lyceum Club is associated with many highly regarded women including the first president, Pattie Deakin and many of its early members were among the first female professionals in their particular fields including Dr Constance Ellis (medicine), Christian Jollie Smith (law), and Marion Mahoney Griffin (architecture) (National Trust 2005). (Criterion H)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

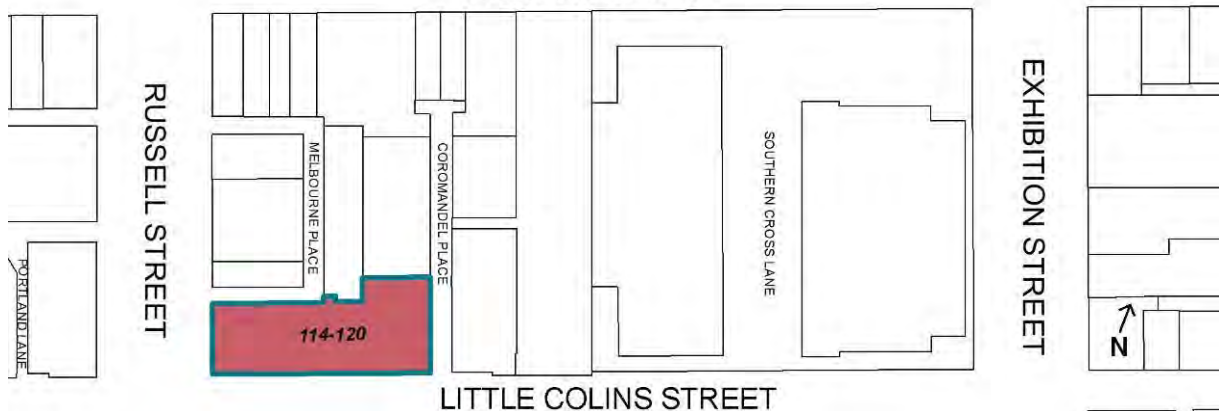
SITE NAME Former Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building [Hero Apartments (current name)]

STREET ADDRESS 114-120 Russell Street, Melbourne

PROPERTY ID 108591



BOURKE STREET



SURVEY DATE: October 2018

SURVEY BY: Context

HERITAGE INVENTORY N/A

EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY No

PLACE TYPE Individual Heritage Place

PROPOSED CATEGORY Significant

FORMER GRADE B

DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST: Commonwealth Department of Works (1948-54), Nonda Katsaildis (1999-2001)

BUILDER: Probuild Constructions (1999-2001)

DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: Postwar Period (1945-1975)

DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION: 1948-1954, 1999-2001

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POST WAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
2 Governing, administering and policing the city	2.1 Commonwealth government

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Retail and residential
1920s	Telegraphic and telephonic
1960s	Telegraphic and Telephonic

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

The former Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building, now Hero Apartments, at 114-120 Russell Street Melbourne, was constructed by the Commonwealth government in 1948-54 in the interwar Functionalist style to a design by the Commonwealth Department of Works.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Commonwealth government

In 1948, the Commonwealth Government compulsorily acquired land on either side of Little Lonsdale Street, between Spring and Exhibition streets. The Commonwealth Centre (now demolished) was subsequently constructed on this block of land (with a street address of 11-39 La Trobe Street) over the period 1958 to the early 1960s. Its construction transformed 'the image of the Federal government in central Melbourne into that of a modern corporation' (Lewis et al 1993:223-24, 255).

As Commonwealth powers increased after World War II, Commonwealth buildings in city centres rose in number. Of particular influence was the transfer in 1942 of income tax revenue from the states to the Commonwealth and the resultant construction of buildings for the Taxation Office, including a building in Bourke Street, which opened in 1958. Marsden writes that the Commonwealth government presence, including the establishment after the war of the new Department of Housing and Construction, reinforced Melbourne's continuing pre-eminence as Australia's financial centre, at least until the 1960s.

A telephone exchange and postal hall building was constructed by the Commonwealth government at 114-120 Russell Street in the period 1948-54. In 1956 the building served as a relay station for the broadcasting of newly arrived television. In 1959, the Commonwealth Arbitration Courts opened at 450 Little Bourke Street, and in 1965 the Reserve Bank of Australia opened at 56-64 Collins Street. Telephone exchanges were also constructed by the Commonwealth Department of Works at 376-382 Flinders Lane (opened in 1957) and at 447-453 Lonsdale Street (1969).

SITE HISTORY

The subject building at 114-120 Russell Street was constructed in two distinct phases: the first between 1948-1954 when it was built as the Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building. A second phase of development, spanning 1999 to 2001, saw the exchange and postal building converted to the Hero Apartments tower (Hermes record for '114-120 Russell Street, Melbourne').

Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building: 1948-c1999

The land comprising the subject site is part of Crown Allotments 19 and 17 of Block 10, first purchased in 1837 by Anthony Hordern of Sydney, and Charles Williams of Melbourne (CoMMaps; Badman 1892 & S&Mc 1892). A row of narrow Victorian buildings ranging from one to three storeys in

height and numbered 114-120 Russell Street, and 154-136 Little Collins Street, were built between 1885 and 1890 (MMBW 1018,1895; S&Mc 1885, 1890).

In 1946, the Commonwealth Department of Public Works acquired the subject site, whose buildings it described as some of the oldest and most dilapidated in Melbourne (Commonwealth of Australia 1945-46). The Department of Public Works prepared plans for the Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building in the same year (Commonwealth of Australia 1945-46).

The Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building, opened in 1954, was the first large building constructed in the city after 1940 and, according to the National Trust citation, it was the last to express the solid, masonry architectural traditions that were typical of architecture before World War Two (see Figure 1) (National Trust 2008; *Age* 15 September 1954:2). Carried to the City of Melbourne height limit of 40 metres (132 feet) and divided into nine storeys, the building was one of the tallest in the city at the time of its completion (see Figure 2) (*Age* 15 September 1954:2).



Figure 1. photograph of the Russell Street Telephone Exchange and Postal Building in 1956 (Source: Sievers 1956, SLV: accession no: H99.50/299 copyright)



Figure 2. Aerial view of the Telephone Exchange and Postal Building, Russell Street, Melbourne, Victoria 1954-60. (Source: Charles Pratt and Airspy 1954-56, SLV copyright)

Construction was slow and expensive; taking six and a half years and costing £1 million, over double the initial estimates (*Age* 15 September 1954:2). On completion of construction, the design was described as belonging to a 'past-era' and the cost to taxpayers was lamented (*Age* 15 September 1954:2).

Associated with the building was a 1600 feet telephone cable tunnel from Flinders Lane to Bourke Street (*Age* 15 September 1954:2). Bendigo miners cut the tunnel that descended 30 feet below Russell Street (see Figure 3). A Federal Parliamentary Accounts Committee inquiring into the cost of the building in 1953 found that the inflated price was in part due to changing labour conditions following the war, including a marginal increase in the basic wage; as well as the shortage of local building materials and, consequently, the increased cost of imported materials, including the cement

used in the building, imported at an increased cost of 204%, and much of the steel which was also purchased at an inflated price (*Age* 15 September 1954:2).

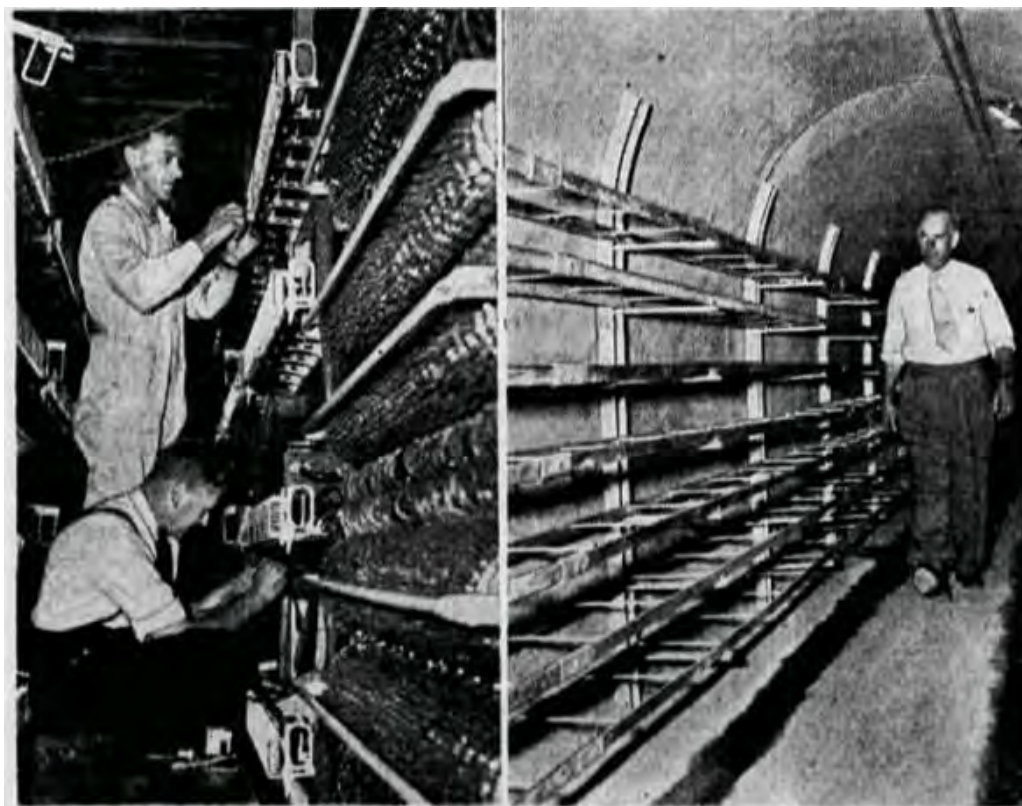


Figure 3. Photograph showing underground tunnels with telephone wires installed upon completion of the Exchange building's construction. (Source: *Age* 31 March 1954:5)

The automatic exchange was constructed to house 20,000 telephone lines (*Age* 27 March 1954:11).

Use of the Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building was distributed across the building as follows:

- The ground floor was used as a postal hall.
- The basement, first, second and third floors were fitted with automatic telephone equipment.
- The fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh floors were subdivided, using terracotta block partitions, into departmental office space.
- The eighth floor comprised a cafeteria (Commonwealth of Australia 1945-46).

The postal hall was fitted with an elaborate interior with an Italian Modernist influence, and featured a striped floor, metal grill work, stainless steel telephone booths and substantial pink granite stylised Doric columns (Hero Apartments 2018). Sculptors S J Hammond and G H Allan designed the low-bas relief sculpture on the western elevation of the building, fronting Russell Street and a 300kg timepiece affixed to the exterior of the building in 1954 (see Figure 4). The subject building also reputedly contained the first air-conditioned postal hall in Australia (*Age* 8 September 1955:4; VHD 2008)



Figure 4. Extract from photograph showing the 6cw (approximately 300kg) timepiece being installed at Russell Street Exchange building in 1954. (Source: Age 23 July 1954:8)

After the initial changeover in November 1953, 3000 telephone lines were progressively moved in 1954-1955 from the Central Exchange on Lonsdale Street (installed in 1911) to Russell Street (*Age* 27 March 1954:11; Commonwealth of Australia 1945-46). In 1956 the building served as a relay station for the newly arrived television services.

Constructed during a period of architectural and economic stagnation in Victoria, Miles Lewis maintains that the former Telephone Exchange and Postal Building was one of 'the last vestiges of the mannered metropolitan architecture of the 1930s' (Lewis et al 1993:224). By 1955 there were 48 major building projects either recently finished or being erected in Melbourne, including the first glass curtain walled building in the city at 100 Collins Street, which represented the strikingly different style of Modernism (*Age* 8 September 1955:4; VHD 2008).

The building continued to function as a postal building and telephone exchange until c1998, when it was offered for sale by tender (see Figure 5) (*Age* 9 May 1998:105).

From May to July 1999, the Russell Street Telephone Exchange building was used as a major exhibition venue during the first Melbourne International Biennial (*Age* 14 May 1999:48).



Figure 5. Photograph from 1998, showing the building shortly before the sale. (Age 9 May 1998:105)

Hero Apartments: 1999-2001

Between 1999 and 2001 the building was converted into a residential tower. Nonda Katsilidis, then practising as Nation Fender Katsalidis, was the lead architect of the six-storey addition and apartment conversion. Probuild Constructions carried out the works (FK 2006). According to Fender Katsalidis, the six-storey roof top addition was designed to counterpoint the Telephone Exchange building's 1940s cubic geometry, with the addition expressed in modern vernacular, 'accentuated by a materials' palette predominated by Corten steel and galvanised iron'. The architects described the additions as a 'dramatic and richly detailed skyline sculpture [that]...celebrates the here and now, while re-validating the integrity of the site's architectural past' (FK 2006).

The tower presently contains 112 residential properties, one business, eight retail shops and four food and drink outlets (CoMMaps).

Commonwealth Department of Works, designer

The Commonwealth Department of Works was established in 1901 to look after the creation of public works in the newly federated nation. Although the agency has operated under different titles in its history – it was known as the Department of Works from 1952-73 – it is commonly referred to as the Commonwealth Department of Works (CDW) to distinguish it from state-based agencies. The Department was responsible for the design, construction, alteration and maintenance of Commonwealth buildings and other engineering works. Its offices were located in Melbourne until 1929, when they were transferred to Canberra. There was a period of intensive works carried out by the CDW during and immediately after World War Two, as the Department managed the building of essential infrastructure as well as significant postwar planning (Smith 2006). By the early 1970s, the activities of the CDW were slowly declining; its functions were transferred to the Department of Housing & Construction in 1978; then the Department of Transport and Construction in 1982 and from

1987, it was known as Australian Construction Services. The vestiges of the CDW were sold off to an engineering firm in 1997 (Willis 2012).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The former Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building at 114-120 Russell Street was originally a nine-storey building designed in the interwar Functionalist style and opened in 1954 to the 40 metre (132 foot) height limit then in force in central Melbourne. Although it was constructed after 1945, the building has a strong horizontal emphasis and other characteristics typical of the interwar Functionalist style; however, it also demonstrates a number of eclectic and innovative features that are more derivative than characteristic of the style.

The subject site is located at the corner of Russell and Little Collins Street. To the north of the property is Melbourne Place. The building has a narrow frontage to Russell Street, but is on a very deep block that extends a considerable distance along Little Collins Street to the east.

The building structure is of reinforced concrete post and slab construction. The original façades to Russell Street and Little Collins Street are constructed in light coloured non-loadbearing brickwork laid in stretcher bond. Both elevations are heavily articulated with projecting windows and other elements, and the perimeter framing for these windows is of glazed terracotta (or faience), rather than concrete or rendered brick as is usually the case. Most of the projecting window modules are in repetitive square or vertically proportioned modules rather than strong horizontal forms linking multiple window panels usually associated with the interwar Functionalist style. These more typical interwar Functionalist forms are present, but are limited to the first and second floors on both elevations, as well as the top level below the projecting roof cornice. The first floor horizontal panel on Russell Street frames an artwork in the 'Surrealist' style that has been placed over the original first floor bay of windows (refer figure 2).

In general, the windows appear to be original steel (or possibly aluminium) framed windows with some opening sashes as the building predates the widespread use of air conditioning. The building features a large and dramatic recessed entry space on the Russell Street frontage, surmounted by a lintel clad in glazed terracotta and supported on three circular columns clad in granite. Adjacent to the entry is also a bass relief sculpture attached to the wall at ground level which is a common element of a high-quality building of this period and intended to be enjoyed by the public.

Between 1999 and 2001 the building was converted to an apartment complex, including the addition of six additional storeys above the original roof and other alterations within the original structure, including the insertion of balconies, to the design of architects Nation Fender Katsalidis.

The additional storeys are primarily of metal and glass, separated from and floating above the original building with a deep undercroft. There are two large vertical fins crossing the floors of the extension on Little Collins Street, which terminate above the roof of the extension with an 'Art Deco' flourish. A number of original windows have been removed to create balconies, however this does not disrupt the rhythm of the elevation despite the glazing line being moved back. Two new vertically proportioned windows have been inserted at the third and fourth floor levels to the Russell Street façade, and are surrounded by an overscaled 'bar code' motif. Overall, the contrast between the form and detail of the original building and the additions, and the design and material quality of both, results in an interesting and complimentary architectural composition.

INTEGRITY

The original nine-storey building is largely intact with the original face brickwork, projecting steel framed windows with projecting glazed terracotta faience frames, glazed terracotta lintel to the entry supported on three granite clad circular columns and bas relief sculpture still evident.

Alterations and additions completed in 1999-2001 include the addition of six storeys above the original roof line, projecting balconies to the Little Collins Street elevation, the removal of a number of windows along Little Collins Street to create recessed balconies and the addition of two windows to the Russell Street elevation with 'bar code' decorative panel.

Although the 1999-2001 alterations and additions to the building have had some impact on the authenticity and integrity of the earlier building designed by the Commonwealth Department of Works, the original building remains clearly legible as a high quality, if somewhat eclectic, example of the interwar Functionalist style and its architectural qualities have not been overwhelmed by the additional forms. Therefore, despite the alterations, overall the building is of high integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

After the end of the World War Two, building activities in the central city slowly revived during the early 1950s. Structural steel and reinforced concrete framing became popular building materials in interwar period and continued to be used extensively in postwar Melbourne construction, inspired by Chicagoan architecture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Departing from load-bearing brick walls, these new building methods allowed windows to become larger and more prominent on facades, whilst also facilitating increased building heights.

In the 1930s and 1940s new lower scale buildings such as factories and other modern service facilities such as car showrooms often utilised the interwar Functionalist style, emphasising a modern aesthetic and characterised by its progressive image using 'streamlined' horizontal spandrels and extensive horizontal bands of glazing. However, in the period prior to and following World War Two, the style was also used for some high-rise commercial buildings, including the Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building, designed by the Commonwealth Department of Works.

The following examples are comparable with the former Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building, although their construction date and scale varies. The images and descriptions below are provided by CoM Maps unless stated otherwise, with images dating from c2000 or later.

Batman Exchange, 376-382 Flinders Lane, 1956-57 (Recommended as individually significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review)

Designed by the Commonwealth Department of Works, the Batman Exchange has an unusual asymmetrical treatment of the façade with a combination brick masonry with a glass curtain wall sections.



Figure 6. 376-382 Flinders Lane, built in 1956. (Source: Context 2018)

Lonsdale Exchange Building, 447-453 Lonsdale Street, 1969 (Recommended as individually significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review)

The Lonsdale Exchange Building at 447-453 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne was built in 1969 by P D C Construction to a design by the Commonwealth Department of Public Works. The 15-storey building, built in the Post-War Modernist and Brutalist styles, replaced an earlier telephone exchange on the site.



Figure 7. 447-453 Lonsdale Street, built in 1969.

The former Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building at is an example of a substantial multi-storey building designed broadly in the interwar Functionalist style, and completed during the postwar years in 1954. It has the strong horizontal emphasis of expressed façade elements and windows, and other characteristics typical of the style, but also demonstrates a number of eclectic and innovative features that are more derivative than typical of the style, making it difficult to compare with other examples.

Nevertheless, some comparison can be drawn with other examples of postwar telephone exchanges in the City of Melbourne, also designed by the Commonwealth Department of Works, including the

Lonsdale Exchange Building, the former Batman Exchange (both recommended as individually significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review), and the Telstra City West Exchange Building at 436 Little Bourke Street (HO1054). The former Batman Exchange is particularly comparable, as a high quality building from the period that shares some of the characteristics of the Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building. The two buildings share a similar scale, a façade of light coloured non-loadbearing brickwork articulated with projecting windows, two repetitive top levels, and vertically-proportioned modules rather than strong horizontal forms linking multiple window panels that is usually associated with the interwar Functionalist style. While the main glazing element for the Flinders Lane building has expanded to a large multi-level expanse of windows constructed as a curtain wall that anticipates the dominant curtain wall facades of the later Post-War Modernist style, the expressed glazed curtain wall element is framed by a projecting masonry frame that is characteristic of the interwar Functionalist style.

As a type, the three examples are representative of postwar public works and are good examples of the technical and utilitarian application of design for Commonwealth communication services. These are all refined examples of early postwar Melbourne buildings that demonstrate some key aspects of the Post-War Modernist style as well as some other styles (including Brutalist style, and the interwar Functionalist style, for the subject building), while incorporating features that express their utilitarian interior functions and a major design aesthetic. The Telstra City West Exchange Building at 436 Little Bourke Street (HO1054) is comparable as a purpose built, government designed exchange but is distinguished by its architectural style and period of construction. It is the only telephone exchange currently included in the City of Melbourne Heritage Overlay.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the</p>

significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

- Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*
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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** D

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** B

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

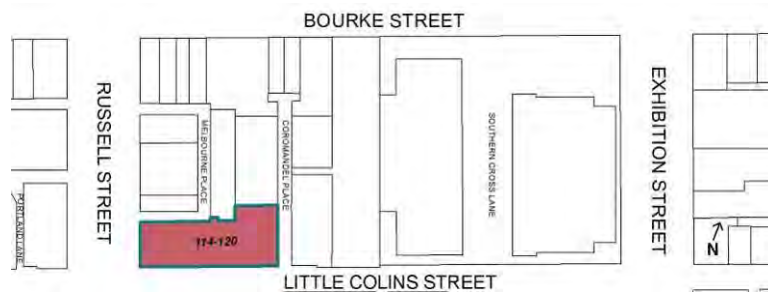
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The former Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building at 114-120 Russell Street, Melbourne, originally constructed as a nine-storey telephone exchange and postal hall in 1948-54 is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- Original building form and scale;
- Original pattern of fenestration, including projecting glazed terracotta (faience) clad horizontal and vertical frames to window openings and horizontal bands of glazing;
- Recessed entry on the Russell Street frontage including a faience-clad lintel supported by circular columns clad in granite;
- Original steel/aluminium frame windows; and
- Bas relief sculpture to the Russell Street façade at the ground level.

Later alterations are not significant.

How it is significant?

The former Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building at 114-120 Russell Street is of historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The former Russell Street Telephone Exchange and Postal Building, opened in 1954, is historically significant for the evidence it provides of the broadening of Commonwealth powers after World War Two, a shift that resulted in increased construction of Commonwealth buildings in city centres including Melbourne. The former Russell Street Telephone Exchange and Postal Building is historically significant as one of the first large buildings constructed in the city after World War Two, and is the last to express the solid masonry, architectural traditions typical of the era prior to World War Two. The building also reputedly contained the first air-conditioned postal hall in Australia. (Criterion A)

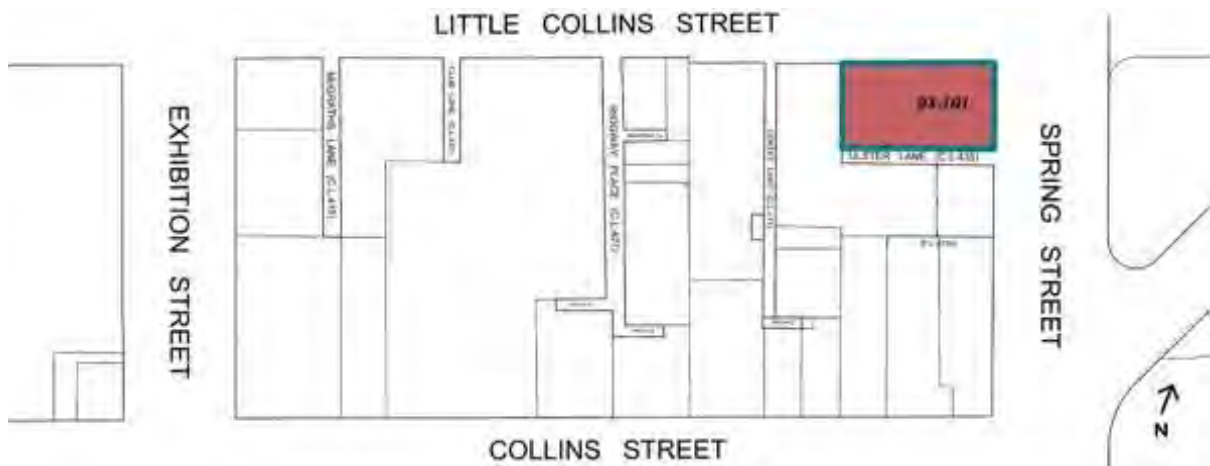
The former Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building is significant as a largely intact example of a substantial public building in central Melbourne built to the 40 metre (132 foot) height limit then in force. The interwar Functionalist style adopted for the building was popular during the interwar and early postwar periods, often for low rise industrial buildings, schools and institutional buildings, for its modern, progressive aesthetic. Designed by the Commonwealth Department of Works, which was responsible for a number of high quality major public buildings during the period (such as the telephone exchange building at 376-382 Flinders Lane), the building demonstrates a commitment to the high-quality architectural design for major public buildings by the Commonwealth Department of Works. (Criterion D)

The former Russell Street Automatic Telephone Exchange and Postal Building has several unique features that contribute to its aesthetic significance. Although built following World War Two, the building exhibits elements of the interwar Functionalist style that are characteristic of a pre-World War Two modernist character. This includes its large and dramatic recessed entry space on the Russell Street frontage, surmounted by glazed terracotta lintel and supported on three circular granite columns adjacent to a bass relief sculpture attached to the facade. (Criterion E)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Treasury Gate
STREET ADDRESS	93-101 Spring Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	108982



SURVEY DATE: November 2018		SURVEY BY: Context	
HERITAGE INVENTORY	N/A	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER GRADE	Ungraded
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Moore & Hammond Pty Ltd	BUILDER:	Leighton Contractors Pty Ltd
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1971

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall 1.10 Brutalism and brickwork
5 Living in the city centre	5.1 Housing and lodging

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Hotels and lodgings
1920s	Hotels
1960s	Car parks, retail, office, residential

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

Designed by architects Moore and Hammond in 1971, this modern residential apartment building is an early example of this building type in Melbourne. It is distinctly modernist in form and aesthetic, and suggestive of the Brutalist style in its deliberate expression of concrete and brick.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Brutalism and brickwork

Brutalism was another architectural style that emerged in commercial building design in Australia as early as 1959, when Harry Seidler used off-form concrete for an eight-storey office block in Ultimo, NSW. That same year, Melbourne architect Kevin Knight (from the office of Oakley & Parkes)

prepared plans for the International Order of Oddfellows (IOOF) Building at 380 Russell Street, Melbourne that broke new ground with its banded façade of reinforced concrete spandrels.

Based on the work of modern architecture pioneer Le Corbusier, and largely inspired by his design for the *Unité d'Habitation* in Marseilles (1952), this architectural style became widely accepted internationally. Brutalism incorporated ideas of integrity in expression of materials (especially off-form concrete), structure and function, and often gave rise to dramatic sculptural forms (VHD Hoyts Cinema Centre).

Brutalism became more widespread in central Melbourne in the 1970s. The Mid City Centre at 194-200 Bourke Street (Bogle & Banfield, 1969-70), is a notable example, with its façade of chamfered concrete volumes.

During the 1960s and 70s, face brickwork also made a return with the Houston Building at 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kollé & Associates, 1964-65), the State Savings Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton & Lobb, 1967-68) and the 13-storey Nubrik House at 269-275 William Street by architects Buchan, Laird & Buchan (1972) (NTAV 2014:22).

Housing and lodging

The provision of accommodation has always been a major function of Australian city centres, and has included the establishment of hotels, hostels, boarding houses and serviced apartments, as well as terraces, flats and medium-density housing. Since the 1950s, the market sought by inner-city developers has moved to an almost exclusively middle- to higher-income group. New forms of accommodation from the 1950s replaced older buildings with high-cost, high-rise buildings for a restricted range of users (Marsden 2000:53).

The postwar era saw the introduction of apartments and flats in the well-established inner suburbs of South Yarra and St Kilda, spreading to Caulfield, Malvern, Camberwell, Hawthorn and Prahran. Victoria's first block of 'own-your-own' or 'OYO' flats were built in Hawthorn in 1949 and the subsequent introduction of strata title legislation by architect and Lord Mayor Bernard Evans led to the proliferation of this housing type from the early 1950s (Heritage Alliance 2008:23).

The apartment boom reached the inner city in the late 1960s, facilitated by the *Conveyancing (Strata Titles) Act* of 1961. An Australian innovation, the legislation allowed each lot or apartment to have its own title deed (Stent 2018). Many émigré architects, who were experienced in higher density living in Europe, specialised in apartment design. Viennese-born architect Kurt Popper, for example, built two blocks of residential flats in central Melbourne – Park Tower, 199-207 Spring Street (1969) and 13-15 Collins Street (1970) (Heritage Alliance 2008:21).

Although marketed as a glamorous and convenient lifestyle, high-rise city apartment living was not popularly embraced. Exhibition Towers, an 11-storey residential building located at the north-west corner of Exhibition Street and Little Lonsdale Street, was designed and built as a residential and commercial building. Constructed in 1968-69 to a design by Kenneth McDonald & Associates, the building was an endeavour to provide 'OYO' flats in the city centre. 'High prices, high bills and Melbourne's conservative living style' contributed to difficulties in finding buyers for the units and the building was converted to the Courtesy Inn Motel in 1971 (*Age* 17 February 1971:3). It was also reported in 1971 that Park Tower was using its tenants' car spaces as a public car park and the flats were being let on short-term leases. Similarly, the two-month-old 13-15 Collins Street apartments

contemplated filling its lower four floors with shops, offices and medical practices (*Age* 17 February 1971:3, Figure 8).

In 1974, the MCC introduced a policy to encourage residents back to the city through the construction of a variety of residential typologies. However, because development was market driven, it was predominantly offices and retail spaces that were constructed in the city centre (Marsden 2000:54, 112).

SITE HISTORY

The land at 93-101 Spring Street was part of the Crown Allotment 9, Section 9, purchased by A McKillop. Located on the corner of Spring and Little Collins streets, the site was associated with hotels dating from the 1850s. The Ulster Family Hotel or Ulster Hotel was established on the site in the 1850s and was later renamed as the New Treasury Hotel in 1876 (S&Mc 1859-1876).

The New Treasury Hotel was sold in 1950 and again in 1967. An auction notice in 1967 described the site as having an investment potential suited for a maximum high-rise redevelopment (*Age* 12 August 1950:35; *Age* 18 October 1967:np). The property was sold for \$42 a square foot, approximately one third of the estimated value (*Age* 8 June 1971:19).

In 1969, the project group Treasury Gate Pty Ltd was established to develop the block at a cost of more than \$5 million (*Age* 25 October 1969:7). Treasury Gate Pty Ltd was formed by a number of local businesses including:

- J V Edgar & Co Pty Ltd, project consultants and managing agents,
- Moore & Hammond Pty Ltd, architects,
- Rider Hunt & Partners, quantity surveyors,
- W L & W L Meinhardt, structural engineers,
- Kuttner Collins & Partners, mechanical engineers,
- R Terenyi & Associates, electrical engineers,
- Leighton Contractors Ltd, building contractors, and
- Russell Kennedy & Cook, solicitors (J V Edgar & Co Pty Ltd 1969).

J V Edgar & Co Pty Ltd was initially declared as the sole selling agency, and later partnered with Abercromby & Beatty Pty Ltd and K Gardner & Lang Pty Ltd (*Age* 7 July 1973:5).

J Edgar told the *Age* in 1971 that the project would be different from earlier city apartments, which struggled to attract local residents still reluctant to buy inner-city residences. Edgar emphasised that, while other early apartments were aimed at city workers, 93-101 Spring Street was designed as a premium apartment building targeted at a higher income bracket (*Age* 17 February 1971:12).

Designed by architects Moore & Hammond, the 28-floor block comprised 19 residential floors, four levels of office spaces, a recreation floor, ground level retail floor and three levels of underground parking areas (Figure 1). According to the pre-development building catalogue provided by J V Edgar Pty Ltd, smaller sized duplexes were part of the original plan, but were not proceeded with (J V Edgar Pty Ltd c1969:5). The building opened in May 1971 (*Age* 24 April 1971:50).

The top five residential levels were reserved for penthouses apartments, with two apartments per floor on levels 20 to 23, and a single roof penthouse on level 24. The roof penthouse was to be developed and designed to the purchaser's own requirements (J V Edgar Pty Ltd c1969:6). The penthouse apartments, featuring more windows than typical units, were designed for panoramic views over the city.



Figure 1. The development plan for 93-101 Spring Street, with floor levels coloured over the elevation plan in different shades as per proposed uses (Source: J V Edgar Pty Ltd c1969:9).

From levels 12 to 19, two different types of apartments were planned, each on either the north or south side of the building, and centred on a service core of lifts and stairs. The floor plans of the apartments varied slightly to allow good views in all directions. Some differences applied in internal organisation: both A and B type of apartments had two bedrooms, one with an en-suite and the other with a dressing room; two bathrooms and a guest powder room; den; living room; dining room; kitchen; entrance hall; and a lobby and balcony facing Spring Street. The dining, living and hall areas were separated by slide screens for more internal flexibility (J V Edgar Pty Ltd c1969:4). These plans were able to be amended as per the buyer's requests.

Overlooking the city down Little Collins Street, the fifth-floor recreation space featured a heated swimming pool, a sauna, a Cabana reception area with a bar, entertaining facilities, and a gymnasium. There were also studio apartments and one-bed caretaker flats for in-house staff (J V Edgar Pty Ltd c1969:7).

On the ground floor, the entrance to the residences and underground car park were accessed from Spring Street, while the offices were accessed from an entrance on Little Collins Street. The offices and commercial spaces were numbered 1-15 Little Collins Street.

The offices on the first to fourth floors featured simple open workspaces measuring 73.6 by 129.8 feet, surrounding a central service core of lifts, stairs and toilets.

During the development phase, the property was known as '93-101 Spring Street'. The name Treasury Gate first appeared in the newspapers from the mid-1970s, and mostly referred to the office spaces (*Age* 11 December 1975:31).

Initially priced at \$100,000, some of the apartments remained unsold for years, and subsequently the selling price of the north-facing middle-level flats dropped to around \$70,000. However, the inner-city housing market rapidly grew during the following decades. In 1988, a typical fifteenth floor apartment was expected to yield a resale price nearing \$1 million, when a higher-quality apartment of a similar size in Toorak were being sold for around \$800,000 (*Age* 12 July 1988:21).

The building at 93-101 Spring Street was home to some prestigious individuals, including Robert Holmes a Court, Australia's first billionaire, who owned the roof penthouse; Sir Rupert and Lady Kathleen Clarke, who owned an apartment on the fifteenth floor; and Sir Ian and Lady Potter, who owned a double-size and extensively terraced apartment on the lower levels (*Age* 12 July 1988:21).

Moore & Hammond, architects

Within a few years after the establishment of his sole practice in the mid-1950s, David Moore (1928-1983) elevated one of his staff, Theodore Hammond (1929-2006), into partnership. Moore & Hammond remained in practice until 1974, when each of the two partners decided to pursue sole practice (Built Heritage n.d.).

Moore & Hammond became a limited liability company in 1967, and with its expertise in the design of high-rise apartment blocks, the practice became one of Melbourne's leading exponents of this typology. Moore & Hammond designed innumerable inner suburban examples, especially in Toorak and South Yarra. The 25-storey tower at 93-101 Spring Street completed in 1971 was one of the much-publicised projects of the partnership. The partnership dissolved a few years later in early 1974 (Built Heritage n.d.).

Moore remained in practice for another decade as the head of David Moore & Company, until his sudden death in 1983. Hammond Moore continued practice under his own name, later merging with another firm to become Theo Hammond & Partners, Grant Heath & Wood. Hammond died in 2006 (Built Heritage n.d.).

SITE DESCRIPTION

This 28-storey building was designed as a combined office and residential complex. Built in two parts, the lower section (podium) has six storeys and is built to property boundaries. It was designed to provide retail accommodation at ground level with office spaces above. The upper section is comprised of a 19-storey residential tower which is set back from both street frontages. Three levels of carparking are located below the street and a plant room remains on top of the building.

Constructed of a reinforced concrete frame, the building is distinctly modernist in its form and aesthetic, and suggestive of the brutalist style in its deliberate expression of concrete and brick.

At ground level, shop fronts are recessed behind a colonnade of squared concrete columns that are on the Little Collins Street elevation. Much of the glazing is original, with some minor modifications

evident. A glazed entry foyer for the upper level apartments fronts Spring Street. Tiled steps rise from the street to the enclosed entry porch. The distinctive wide timber handrail and ribbed metal cladding are intact. A cantilevered canopy extends over the footpath. Entry to the offices and the carpark are located on the Spring Street elevation.

Above ground level, the podium is characterised by regular vertical banding, formed of bands of brown face brickwork separated by bands of bronze aluminium framed windows set over concrete spandrels. The whole arrangement is carefully designed with brickwork set onto precast concrete ledges across the face.

A horizontal concrete band runs across the top of the podium level and functions as a balustrade to an open terrace and recreational level for the apartment tower.

The tower is characterised by horizontal bands of exposed concrete that face Spring Street and function as balustrades for the open balconies at both edges of the building. Through the centre of the building, the concrete bands are incorporated into an enclosed section for each apartment, projecting slightly below bronze aluminium window sections and brown brick pillars at each level.

On either side of the building, windows are incorporated into the brown brick façade on the upper levels. Windows correspond with the arrangement of penthouse apartments and penthouses at the top of the building, designed to provide panoramic views across the park and the city at these levels.

A squared brown brick plant room sits at the top of the building and is detailed with a simple relief brickwork pattern.

INTEGRITY

The building retains a high level of integrity. Alterations have occurred at the top penthouse apartment level where glazed panels have been inserted into the corner balcony sections. Some modifications have occurred to the shopfronts at ground level.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

There are no residential towers from the postwar period in central Melbourne on the Heritage Overlay for the City of Melbourne. A group of four residential towers is included in this study. All are relatively intact examples of a new building type that emerged in the late postwar period (late 1960s – early 1970s).

Other Post-War Modernist residential buildings in the Hoddle Grid

There are a small number of buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to Treasury Gate. These are detailed below.



Park Tower, 199-207 Spring Street (Kurt Popper, 1969)
(Interim HO1263)



Exhibition Towers, 287-293 Exhibition Street (Kenneth
McDonald & Associates, 1969-71)



- Apartment Building, 13-15 Collins Street (Kurt Popper, 1970) (Interim HO1265, & currently included as a Significant place in Collins East Precinct HO504)

Analysis

Like Treasury Gate, all three buildings were designed as modernist buildings with structural concrete frames supporting curtain walls of repetitive glazed elements and masonry spandrels. In each case, primary aesthetic interest is derived from the expression of structure and materials (brick, concrete, glass) and the arrangement of structural elements (windows, balconies). There is a consistency to the arrangement of levels between all four buildings with retail/commercial spaces provided at podium level.

Treasury Gate compares favourably with the other examples of residential apartment buildings. It is a highly intact example of the type demonstrating key characteristics including a modern form and

aesthetic, and provision of high-class residential accommodation in the city. The building has a number of notable features including the external detailing of the podium style base, the colonnade along Little Collins Street, the intact modernist entry foyer, and the finely detailed façade.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

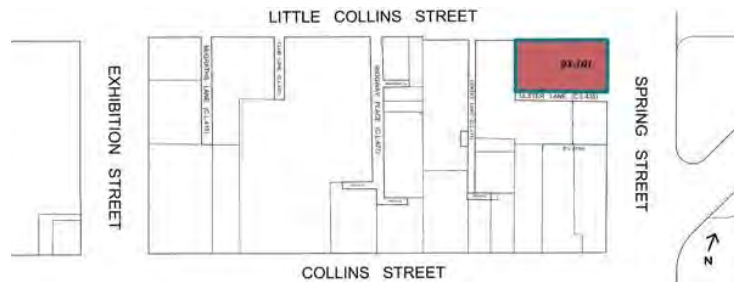
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Treasury Gate



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

Treasury Gate at 93-101 Spring Street, Melbourne, built in 1971 to a design by architectural firm Moore and Hamond Pty Ltd.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing; and
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations are not significant.

How it is significant?

Treasury Gate at 93-101 Spring Street, Melbourne is of local historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Treasury Gate is historically significant as one of the first wave of high-rise residential apartments constructed in the Melbourne CBD from the late 1960s, and before the introduction of a Victorian government policy in 1971 that directed where growth in Melbourne's housing supply could take place. (Criterion A)

Treasury Gate is a notable example of a new building typology that emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s – the modern high-rise residential apartment building. Treasury Gate is also notable for its mixed-use typology with offices, retail and residential situated at different levels in the same building. A podium built to the property boundaries at the lower levels also accommodates a colonnade with retail spaces at

ground level, six levels of offices above, and a recessed tower section with luxury residential living. 93-101 Spring Street is also notable for its high level of integrity. (Criterion D)

Treasury Gate is aesthetically significant for its demonstration of modernism in mixed use apartment design. A notable attribute is the generous distribution of space for ground floor retail behind a colonnade on Little Collins Street. Aesthetically 93-101 Spring Street is significant for its composition and articulation of the various functions of retail, office and residential within a unifying material palette of face brickwork and concrete. Intact architectural detail extends to the distinctive wide timber handrail, ribbed metal cladding, bronze-coloured aluminium glazing frames and a cantilevered canopy. (Criterion E)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Park Tower
STREET ADDRESS	199-207 Spring Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	108989



SURVEY DATE: November 2017		SURVEY BY: Context	
HERITAGE INVENTORY	N/A	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER GRADE	Ungraded
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Kurt Popper	BUILDER:	Notkin Constructions Pty Ltd
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1969

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall 1.10 Brutalism and brickwork
5 Living in the city centre	5.1 Housing and lodging

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Not able to be determined
1920s	Factories and workshops
1960s	Residential, car parks

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

Designed by émigré architect Kurt Popper in 1969, this modern residential apartment building is an early example of this building type that emerged in Melbourne in the late 1960s/early 1970s. It is distinctly modernist in form and aesthetic, with a curtain walled façade that features an abstract arrangement of brick spandrels and masonry balconies.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Overseas influences

America was the strongest overseas influence on the post-World War II architecture of Australian capitals. Australian architects often studied in American universities or visited the USA on study tours. American advances in the manufacturing of steel and concrete were also adopted in Australia. While

steel was the main material in North American skyscrapers, concrete was used more often in Australia, and often combined with high-strength steel (Marsden 2000:70-72).

Another influence on architectural design was émigré architects who arrived in Melbourne before and after World War II. The impact of postwar immigration on Australian cities can be described in three ways: the enlivening of city centres by the arrival of European and Asian immigrants into mainly Australian-born communities; the rapid increase in the size of capital cities; and the roles played by particular immigrant groups, especially in the fields of architecture, economics, politics and cultural activities (Marsden 2000:95-99). Architect Kurt Popper, who arrived in Melbourne from Vienna in 1940, developers Bruno and Rino Grollo (sons of an Italian immigrant), and Viennese immigrant Ted Lustig and his Israeli son-in-law Max Moar, have had a significant impact on Melbourne's city landscape through architecture and property development.

Émigré architects were often educated in progressive institutions where modernism was more advanced than in Australia. Their expertise and modernist designs gained recognition and were translated into the local context. Many were also involved with teaching at architectural schools and influenced the next generation of architects (Lozanovska & McKnight 2015:352-353). Examples in the city centre include the apartment buildings, Park Tower, 199-207 Spring Street (1969) and 13-15 Collins Street (1970), both designed by Kurt Popper.

Housing and lodging

The provision of accommodation has always been a major function of Australian city centres, and has included the establishment of hotels, hostels, boarding houses and serviced apartments, as well as terraces, flats and medium-density housing. Since the 1950s, the market sought by inner-city developers has moved to an almost exclusively middle- to higher-income group. New forms of accommodation from the 1950s replaced older buildings with high-cost, high-rise buildings for a restricted range of users (Marsden 2000:53).

The postwar era saw the introduction of apartments and flats in the well-established inner suburbs of South Yarra and St Kilda, spreading to Caulfield, Malvern, Camberwell, Hawthorn and Prahran. Victoria's first block of 'own-your-own' or 'OYO' flats were built in Hawthorn in 1949 and the subsequent introduction of strata title legislation by architect and Lord Mayor Bernard Evans led to the proliferation of this housing type from the early 1950s (Heritage Alliance 2008:23).

The apartment boom reached the inner city in the late 1960s, facilitated by the *Conveyancing (Strata Titles) Act* of 1961. An Australian innovation, the legislation allowed each lot or apartment to have its own title deed (Stent 2018). Many émigré architects, who were experienced in higher density living in Europe, specialised in apartment design. Viennese-born architect Kurt Popper, for example, built two blocks of residential flats in central Melbourne – Park Tower, 199-207 Spring Street (1969) and 13-15 Collins Street (1970) (Heritage Alliance 2008:21).

Although marketed as a glamorous and convenient lifestyle, high-rise city apartment living was not popularly embraced. Exhibition Towers, an 11-storey residential building located at the north-west corner of Exhibition Street and Little Lonsdale Street, was designed and built as a residential and commercial building. Constructed in 1968-69 to a design by Kenneth McDonald & Associates, the building was an endeavour to provide 'OYO' flats in the city centre. 'High prices, high bills and Melbourne's conservative living style' contributed to difficulties in finding buyers for the units and the building was converted to the Courtesy Inn Motel in 1971 (*Age* 17 February 1971:3). It was also reported in 1971 that Park Tower was using its tenants' car spaces as a public car park and the flats

were being let on short-term leases. Similarly, the two-month-old 13-15 Collins Street apartments contemplated filling its lower four floors with shops, offices and medical practices (*Age* 17 February 1971:3, Figure 8).

In 1974, the MCC introduced a policy to encourage residents back to the city through the construction of a variety of residential typologies. However, because development was market driven, it was predominantly offices and retail spaces that were constructed in the city centre (Marsden 2000:54, 112).

SITE HISTORY

The site at 199-207 Spring Street was part of the Crown Allotment 10, Section 24, purchased by D Dunbar. In 1895, four shops were present on the site, numbered 199 to 207, and in 1942, the shops housed R B Hallett, builder (no. 199), E S Wilson, sign writer (no. 201), a Chinese laundry (no. 203) and G W Rowley Pty Ltd, wire workers (no. 205-207) (MMBW Detailed Plan no 1014; S&Mc 1942). Businesses were still trading in the above premises in early 1968 (*Age* 16 February 1968:20; 17 April 1967:19).

In January 1969, a plan for a new residential tower in Spring Street was publicised. With an estimated building cost of \$2.5 million, the project group Two-O-One Pty Ltd appointed European émigré architect Kurt Popper, who specialised in apartment designs, and Notkin Constructions Pty Ltd, builders, for the construction of a 20-storey apartment block named 'Park Tower'.

While Popper had designed the six-storey 'Crossley House' (1967), which is known as the first modern residential block in Melbourne, Park Tower, as Melbourne's first high-rise strata title property, was a pioneering work (*Age* 29 January 1969:24).

The building's central heating and cooling system was ground breaking. The Gas and Fuel Corporation of Victoria designed an experimental gas system for Park Tower, which was widely applied to commercial and industrial buildings (*Age* 29 January 1969:24). The new system involved the Corporation in installing a 6500 feet network of insulated pipes and ducts that were used for continuous water circulation controlled by roof units. Each apartment was individually billed according to the usage recorded on a linked meter, a common feature of 'own-your-own' flats already established in the inner suburbs (*Age* 29 January 1969:24; Heritage Alliance 2008:21).

The original building design of 199-207 Spring Street incorporated 76 strata title properties including six luxury penthouses, two- to three- bedroom units, and some one-bedroom suites. Two levels of car parking for more than 60 cars were provided in the basement, with access from Little Bourke Street. Popper, included communal features such as a garden plaza with a fountain and a guest lounge that could be booked for parties on the ground floor, a spiral staircase, and a laundry room. The residents were serviced by live-in caretakers and protected by an electronic security system (*Age* 29 January 1969:24; 25 March 1983:27).

Park Tower was set back 24 feet from the road, with the two lowest levels projecting in line with neighbouring buildings (Figure 1, Figure 2) (*Age* 29 January 1969:34). A restaurant, 'Nellies', was opened on the ground floor by February 1971 (*Age* 13 February 1971:10).



Figure 1. Architect's drawing published in the *Age* in 1969 (Source: *Age* 29 January 1969:24).



Figure 2. Park Tower soon after completion (Source: Edquist 2002: 19)

Completed in 1969, Park Tower was promoted as an inner city 'town house', an idea imported from overseas countries such as the United Kingdom, with the building described as an 'ideal central dwelling for people with homes in remote areas' (*Age* 19 June 1970:22). At the time of the property release, the selling agents, Jones, Lang, Wootton & Baillieu Allard Real Estate Pty Ltd, were highly optimistic about property sales. The Park Tower apartments, however, were slow to sell in the early years, with only 25 per cent of 76 units sold within the first 13 months of opening (*Age* 29 January 1969:24; 17 February 1971:12).

By the 1980s, however Park Tower's accommodation was considered fashionable. A typical apartment unit with views overlooking Treasury Gardens to the east and Gordon House to the west was priced at \$85,000 in 1983, and was selling for \$127,500 in 1991 (*Age* 25 March 1983:27; 6 July 1991:31).

Today, Park Tower continues to accommodate residents in 77 units. It also contains one business, one shop and two food and drink outlets (CoMMaps).

SITE DESCRIPTION

This 20-storey residential building has a two-storey base/podium built to the property boundary with a 16-storey tower set back from the street and two levels of basement carparking. The building is distinctively modernist in its form and aesthetic and is a representative example of a new building type - the modern residential tower building - that occurred in Melbourne in the late 1960s/early 1970s.

At ground level, the podium has glazed shop fronts and an (altered) cantilevered flat canopy that extends over the footpath. On the first floor, an outdoor terrace sits below a curved roofline with circular skylights, and was designed as a communal entertaining space for residents. Residential apartments are located in the tower section of the building.

The building is constructed with a concrete structural frame with curtain walls to the long edges. The front façade is divided into a grid pattern determined by the intersection of vertical and horizontal bays. Seven equal vertical bays are separated by structural elements clad in brown brick. Horizontal bays respond directly to the arrangement of floor plates. Regular panels of aluminium framed

windows, and masonry spandrels and balconies sit within the vertical bands. Open balconies are integrated into the façade and arranged in an abstract pattern for visual interest. This sophisticated composition is characteristic of the work of Kurt Popper.

The arrangement differs at the top three levels (which likely correspond with the penthouse apartments). Masonry spandrels run the full width of the building, with some sections glazed and others left open to form balconies. Alterations have occurred at this part of the building with some open balconies retrofitted with glazing.

The side walls of the building are clad in brown brick. The solid monumental appearance of the tall brick face is punctuated by a rendered panel down the centre of the wall. Small side windows for the building are incorporated into the rendered panel.

At the southern end of the podium, the brick edge wall extends vertically for one level and displays a metal art object.

INTEGRITY

The building retains a high level of integrity. The cantilevered flat canopy at ground level has been altered. At the top three levels, open balconies have now been enclosed with glazing.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

There are no residential towers from the post war period on the Heritage Overlay for the City of Melbourne. A group of four residential towers is included in this study. All are relatively intact examples of a new building type that emerged in the late post war period (late 1960s – early 1970s).

Other Post-War Modernist residential buildings in the Hoddle Grid

There are a small number of buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to Park Tower. These are detailed below.



Apartment Building, 13-15 Collins Street (Kurt Popper, 1970) (Interim HO1265, & currently included as a Significant place in Collins East Precinct HO504)



Exhibition Towers, 287-293 Exhibition Street (Kenneth McDonald & Associates, 1969-71)



- Treasury Gate, 93-101 Spring Street (Moore & Hammond, 1971) (Interim HO1262)

Analysis

Both 199-207 Spring Street (1969) and 13-15 Collins Street (1970) were designed by émigré architect Kurt Popper who was known for his apartment building designs.

Like Park Tower, all three buildings were designed as modernist buildings, with structural concrete frames supporting curtain walls of repetitive glazed elements and masonry spandrels. In each case, primary aesthetic interest is derived from the expression of structure and materials (brick, concrete, glass) and the arrangement of structural elements (windows, balconies). There is a consistency to the arrangement of levels between all four buildings with retail/commercial spaces provided at podium level and multiple floors of apartments in a tower arrangement. Both 93-101 Spring Street and 199-207 Spring Street have a common space for apartment residents located at a mid-level.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Study Review 1993** Ungraded

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Park Tower



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

Park Tower, 199-207 Spring Street, Melbourne, built in 1969 to a design by émigré architect Kurt Popper.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing; and
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations are not significant.

How it is significant?

Park Tower at 199-207 Spring Street is of local historic, representative, aesthetic and technical significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Park Tower is historically significant as one of the first wave of high-rise residential apartments constructed in the Melbourne CBD from the late 1960s, and before the introduction of a Victorian government policy in 1971 that directed where growth in Melbourne's housing supply could take place. (Criterion A)

Park Tower is a notable and early example of a new building typology that emerged in the CBD in the late 1960s and early 1970s – the modern high-rise residential apartment building. The building demonstrates key characters of the type. It was constructed as a modern curtain walled building, with a podium at the lower level accommodating communal, retail and commercial spaces, and luxury

residential apartments located in a recessed tower section. The distinctive modern character of the building and the deliberate promotion of it as a base for a glamorous modern lifestyle are characteristics of the type, which contributes to the understanding of Melbourne as a modern city in the postwar period. (Criterion D)

Park Tower is aesthetically significant for its demonstration of modernism in apartment design. Attributes of the apartment block include a generous distribution of space for ground floor retail and a first-floor communal terrace with a sweeping curved roofline, above which is the 16-storey apartment tower. Aesthetic value is demonstrated by the combination of concrete structural frame combined with curtain walling to the long facades, forming a grid pattern. Within this regular grid, an abstract composition is achieved by the positioning of the open balconies that are integrated into the façade and visually contrasting with the sheer vertical side walls of brick. (Criterion E)

Park Tower is significant for the innovative central gas heating and cooling system that was installed in the building. Designed by the Gas and Fuel Corporation of Victoria, Park Towers was the first application of the system which was expected to have widespread usage in commercial and industrial buildings. The centrally installed system featured a high air-volume, low noise level fan and heat exchanger, as well as thermostat controls for personal comfort and billing metres to allow for recording of energy usage in each apartment. (Criterion F)

Park Tower is significant for its association with émigré architect Kurt Popper who brought European ideas about living in the city to the Melbourne CBD. Popper designed a number of residential apartment buildings in Melbourne including the six-storey 'Crossley House' (1967), which is known as the first modern residential block in Melbourne. (Criterion H)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

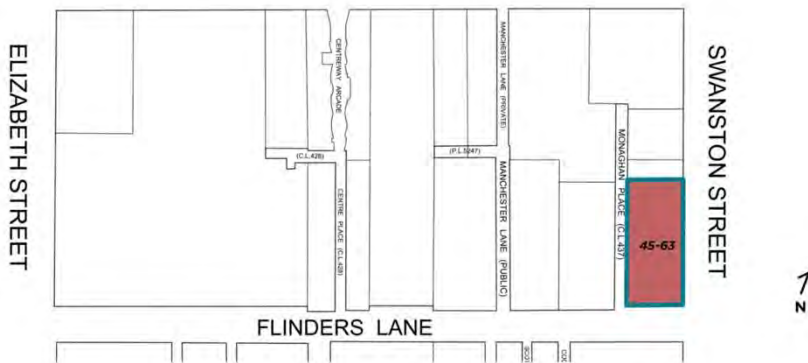
SITE NAME Former State Savings Bank of Victoria

STREET ADDRESS 45-63 Swanston Street, Melbourne

PROPERTY ID 109264



COLLINS STREET



SURVEY DATE: October 2019

SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage

HERITAGE INVENTORY No

EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY HO505

PLACE TYPE Individual Heritage Place

PROPOSED CATEGORY Significant

FORMER CATEGORY Non-contributory

DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST: Buchan, Laird & Buchan

BUILDER: Not known

DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: Postwar Period (1945-1975)

DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION: c1974

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Buiness and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Hotel, Workshop, Retail, Merchant
1920s	Bank, Retail, Café/Restaurant, Club, Hairdresser, Merchant, Office, Workshop, Library, Medical, Caretaker
1960s	Bank, Retail, Café/Restaurant, Club, Office, Workshop/Manufacturing, Caretaker, Storage

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The multi-storey corner office building 45-63 Swanston Street was designed by architects and engineers Buchan, Laird & Buchan for the State Savings Bank of Victoria, Victoria's first established bank. The building was constructed c1974.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The multi-storey corner office building 45-63 Swanston Street was designed by architects and engineers Buchan, Laird & Buchan for the State Savings Bank of Victoria, Victoria's first established bank.

The origins of the State Savings Bank of Victoria can be traced back to 1842 when it was founded in Melbourne as the Port Phillip Savings Bank under New South Wales' legislation. Branches of the Bank were subsequently established in other parts of the colony. Owned by the State of Victoria from 1852, from 1853 each bank branch was made a separate and independent institution with its own trustees and officers.

Between 1896 and 1912 the independent Savings Banks of Victoria merged to become a single institution, formalised by legislation in 1912. By 1929 deposits with the Bank accounted for almost two thirds of deposits across all banks in Victoria (Merrett 2008; Trove 2009).

The bank took a keen interest in social welfare and contributed to the construction of housing. In the 1920s the State Savings Bank created a housing estate in Port Melbourne, one of a number of initiatives to encourage home ownership in the early to mid-twentieth century. After World War Two the Bank began lending on overdraft to the co-operative housing societies. By June 1954 some 51 societies had received overdraft facilities from the State Savings Bank, amounting to £15.7 million. (Merrett 2008) The State Savings Bank was sold to the Commonwealth Bank in 1990 (Trove 2009).

The State Savings Bank had occupied a building on the corner of Flinders Lane, at 45-51 Swanston Street, from 1923 (*Argus*, 12 Dec 1923:18). In the early 1970s, architects and engineers Buchan, Laird & Buchan were engaged to prepare designs for a new building on the site.

Architectural drawings dated April 1971 show the Swanston Street and Flinders Lane elevations and the original design of the shopfronts, and the ground floor layout with the banking chamber and retail space (Figure 1 - Figure 3). The City of Melbourne received a building permit application for a '14 storey office building' in October 1971 (total estimated value of \$2,000,000).

Rate books indicate that 45-63 Swanston Street, owned by the State Savings Bank of Victoria, remained land in 1974, while a photograph dated 1975 and aerial photograph dated 1976 show the completed building (Figure 4 & Figure 5).

Buchan Laird & Buchan, architects

Laird & Buchan was founded in Geelong, Victoria, in 1890 by architect, Angus Laird. Following Laird's death in 1937, the practice became Buchan, Laird & Buchan, which was a partnership between Laird's son Ewen Laird, and father and son, Thomas Johnston Buchan and (Sir) John Buchan. One of the firm's early projects was the Pilkington's Glass Factory on Melbourne Road in Geelong (1936-37), which 'became an early icon of modernism in Australia' (Willis 2012:111).

Following World War II, John Buchan set up a Melbourne office in 1946. In the postwar period, the firm expanded, becoming involved in large-scale commercial and industrial projects including the Ford administration building, Broadmeadows (1964) and significant town planning and housing projects for the Housing Commission of Victoria. In the 1960s and 1970s, the firm gained particular prominence for its designs for office buildings. Notable works from this period include Shell House at the corner of William and Bourke streets (1960, since demolished; in collaboration with Skidmore Owings & Merrill); the former Stock Exchange House, Collins Street (1968), Nubrik House, 269-75 William Street (1972) and the State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street (c1974), all located in Melbourne.

The firm became Buchan, Laird & Bawden in 1982, and continues today as the Buchan Group, formed in 1990.

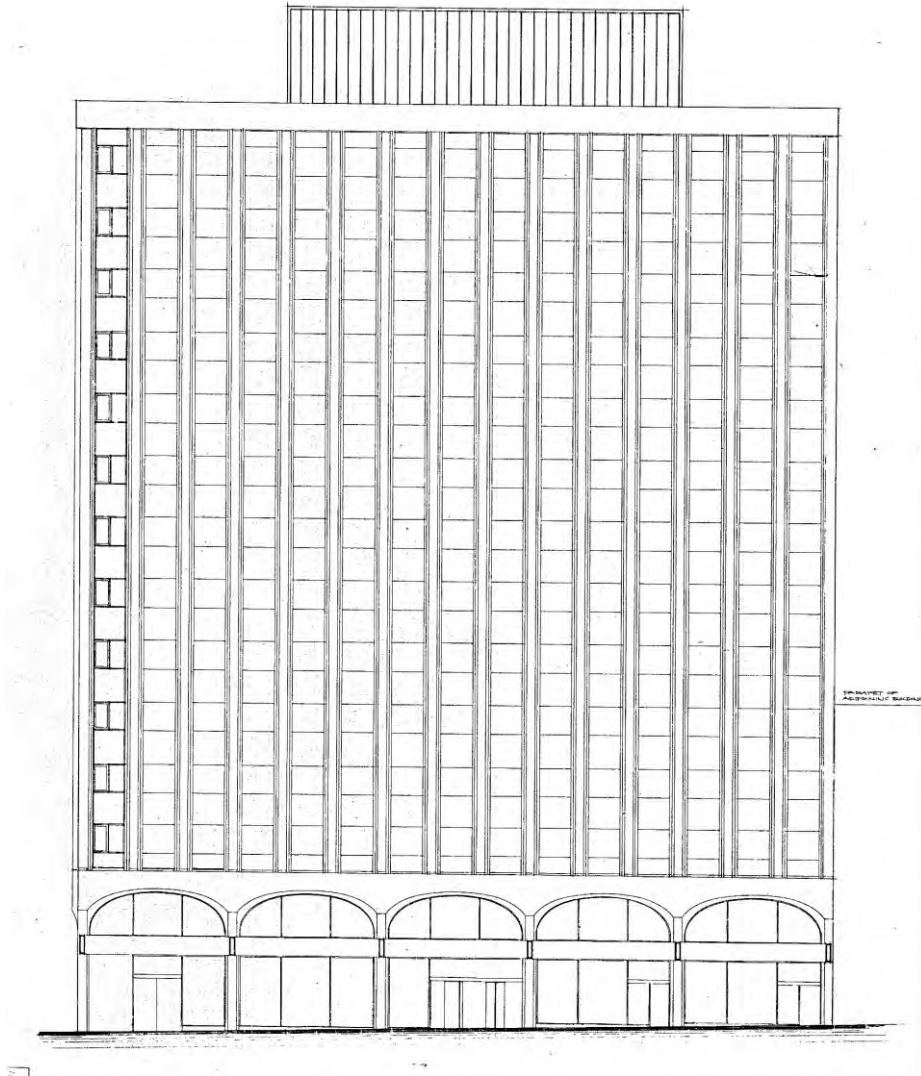


Figure 1. East elevation to Swanston Street. Drawing by Buchan, Laird & Buchan, dated April 1971 (BAP).

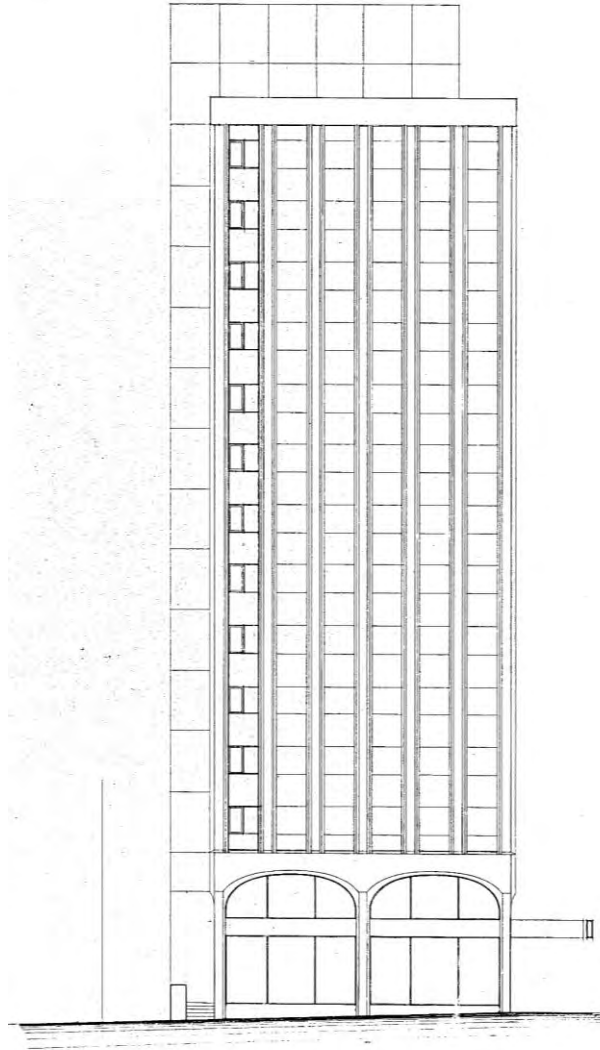


Figure 2. South elevation to Flinders Lane. Drawing by Buchan, Laird & Buchan, dated April 1971 (BAP).

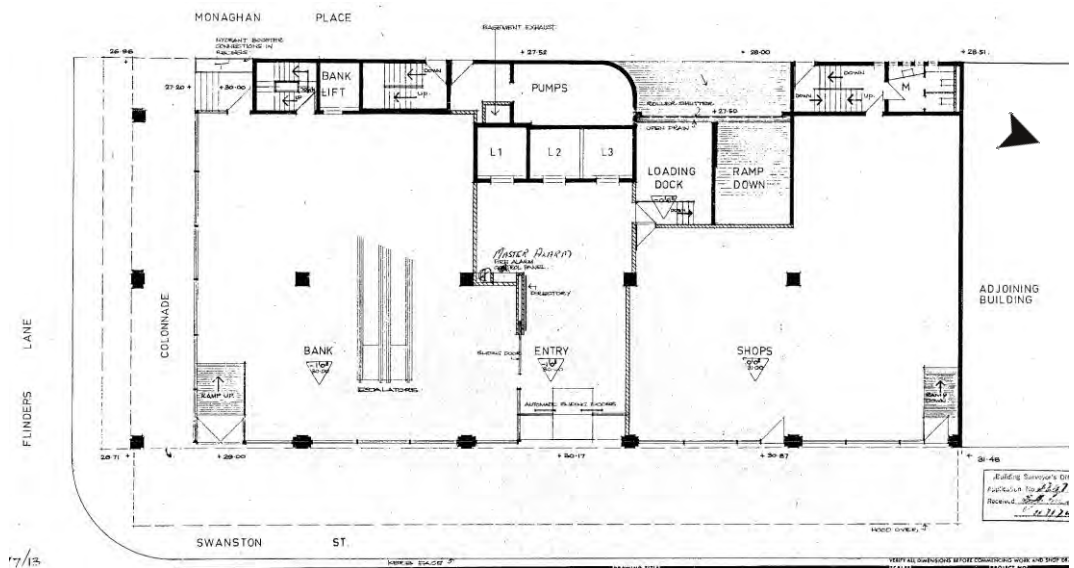


Figure 3. Ground floor plan. Drawing by Buchan, Laird & Buchan, dated April 1971 (BAP).



Figure 4. The newly completed State Savings Bank in 1975 (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H2004.49/65).



Figure 5. Detail of a 1976 aerial, showing the present State Savings Bank (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H2003.100/977).



Figure 6. The building prior to recent alterations to the ground and first floors (no date) (CoMMaps)

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street is a 13-storey commercial building located on the north-west corner of Swanston Street and Flinders Lane. The building has main frontages to both Swanston Street and Flinders Lane and a secondary frontage to Monaghan Lane, which forms the western boundary of the site and provides access to a basement carpark. Constructed in c1974 to a design by Buchan Laird & Buchan, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

The rectangular building is of reinforced concrete column and slab construction and sits on a double-height, rendered podium base. The upper walls of the main east and south facades are grid-like with a dominant vertical accent created by precast concrete structural mullions which rise from the podium base to a plain crowning parapet. These mullions are formed from stacked angled elements with curved inner faces which frame recessed rows of paired aluminium framed windows and glass spandrels.

The double-storey rendered concrete podium base is highly distinctive with an arcaded colonnade of segmental arches to Swanston Street and Flinders Lane. Coved in profile and glazed, the arches rise above a cantilevered awning to Swanston Street and fascia to Flinders Lane. These are broad elements that mask the first-floor concrete building slab and provide a strong horizontality to the base of the building. In a similar manner, a plain parapet fascia provides a strong horizontal capping to the vertical mullions of the facades.

At street level a deep awning cantilevers over the footpath in Swanston Street and the line of this continues as a fascia to the Flinders Lane façade. This fascia has been recently reclad and shopfronts have been extended to the building line in Flinders Lane. The Swanston Street awning has

been modified to enable open café use at first floor level and a simple bracketed canopy inserted above.

INTEGRITY

The Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building above street level, remains highly intact to its original c1974 construction. Works to the building at street level have had minimal impact on the overall intactness of the place.

Overall, the building retains a very high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone some alterations at street level, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey commercial building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Former State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of 1960s to mid 1970s multi-storey commercial building design. The building's two grid-like walls, with the dominant verticality of precast concrete structural mullions dividing rows of aluminium-framed glazing and glass spandrels, and the highly distinctive arcaded podium base, can be clearly observed from Swanston Street and Flinders Lane. Despite some modifications made to the building at street level, the upper facades of the Former State Savings Bank of Victoria remain highly intact to their original design.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the Former State Savings Bank of Victoria building. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

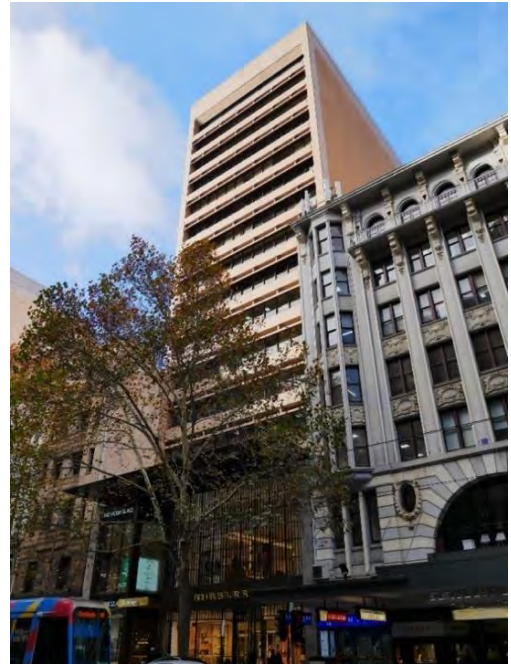
- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay

Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1974-73) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



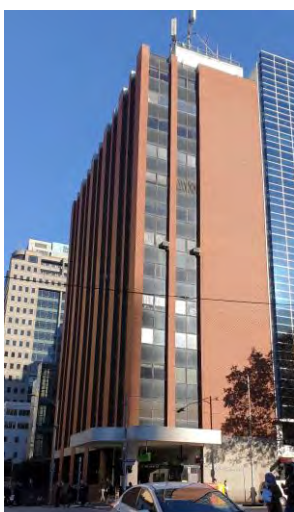
Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building, 359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)

Analysis

As a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building, the Former State Savings Bank of Victoria building at 45-63 Swanston Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey commercial buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne. Similar to a number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings listed above, the subject building clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*

Building Application Index (BAI), City of Melbourne.

Building Application Plans (BAP), City of Melbourne.

City of Melbourne Maps (CoMMaps), Site Photos.

City of Melbourne Rate Books (RB), Batman Ward, VPRS 5708, P9, Vol 150 (1974), entry 122.

Museum Victoria Collections, Item numbers and photographers as cited.

Sands & McDougall Directories (S&Mc).

State Library of Victoria (SLV), picture collection, images and photographers as cited.

The Argus.

Willis, Julie (2012), 'Buchan, Laird & Buchan' in Philip Goad & Julie Willis's (Eds.) (2012), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Port Melbourne.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

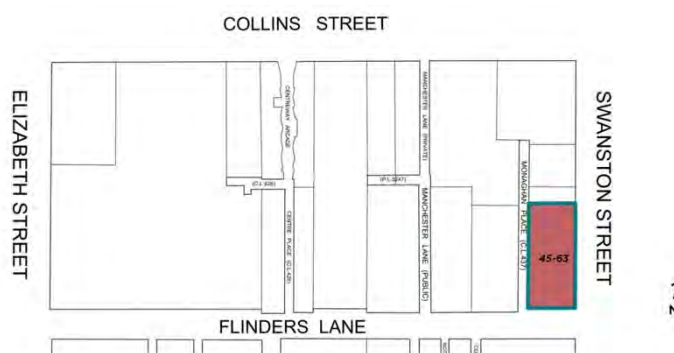
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former State Savings Bank of Victoria



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, a multi-storey commercial building constructed in c1974.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations made to the lower levels of the building are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed c1974, to a design by Buchan, Laird & Buchan, the Former State Savings Bank of Victoria has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and the prestige afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

The Former State Savings Bank of Victoria is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building. The building strongly reflects the style which was popular in the 1960s to the mid 1970s, particularly in central Melbourne. Constructed as a 13-storey structure, the

Former State Savings Bank of Victoria clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a postwar commercial building, including a heavy arcaded podium base and two grid-like walls with vertical accent, formed from dominant precast concrete structural mullions which divide rows of glazing and glass spandrels, as well as the use of materials such as precast concrete panels, aluminium window frames and opaque glass. These demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style (Criterion D).

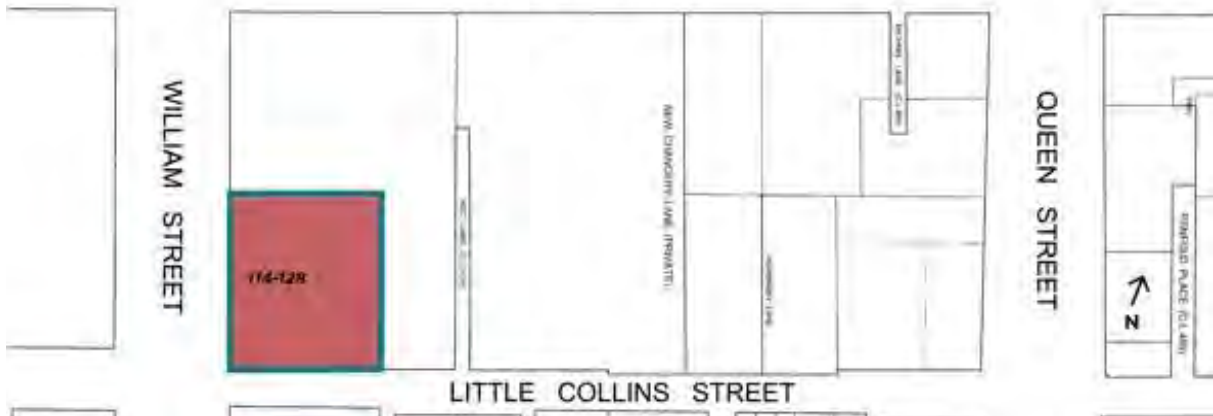
Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Former Dillingham Estates House
STREET ADDRESS	114-128 William Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	110147



BOURKE STREET



SURVEY DATE: May 2017		SURVEY BY: Context	
HERITAGE INVENTORY	NA	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	Yes – interim controls HO1180
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Yuncken Freeman	FORMER GRADE	B
		BUILDER:	Not known
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1965)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1975-76

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Four buildings including the Legal Club Hotel and the Union Buildings
1920s	As above
1960s	As above

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

The former Dillingham Estates House is a highly significant example of a late modern office tower and of the work of highly influential modernist architects Yuncken Freeman who played a major role in re-shaping the city in the 1960s and 70s.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding,

screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

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SITE HISTORY

The site on which the Dillingham Estates House is located was amalgamated from four land parcels which were occupied by buildings throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century. Buildings on the site included the Legal Club Hotel and the Union Buildings (MMBW map).

Dillingham Corporation of Australia Ltd. was a group of companies involved in building construction, engineering, dredging, ship building, mining, real estate, property development, earth moving, road building, quarrying and cattle stations. This building and the neighbouring BHP House were products of the 1960s and 1970s mineral and energy boom of the time.

New office buildings in the 'glass box' tradition continued to appear in the city well into the 1970s, typified by Dillingham Estates House at 114-128 William Street completed in 1976. As with the visually similar and highly significant Eagle Star Insurance Co. Ltd. building (1971) in Bourke Street, Yuncken Freeman Architects Pty Ltd were the designers of 114-128 William Street. The partner in charge was Barry Patten and the design architect, Llew Morgan. The building, titled then as

Dillingham Estates House, was photographed near completion in 1975 by the eminent photographer, Wolfgang Sievers.

Yuncken Freeman, architect

In the 1960s Melbourne based Yuncken Freeman was one of the largest architectural practices in Australia, with a reputation for modernism, high quality design and meticulous detailing. The firm originated in 1933 when Otto Abrecht Yuncken (1903-1951) and brothers John (1898-1962) and Tom Freeman (1904-1971) set up practice. In the 1930s the firm's work concentrated on hospital design and high-quality residential work. The commercial and corporate side of the business was built by Barry Patten (1927-2003) and John Gates (1924-1996) when they joined the firm as partners in 1951. Yuncken Freeman was the most successful and prolific architects during the 1960s and 70s, designing many award-winning office buildings in the city. These included Eagle House 473 Bourke Street, in 1971, (VHR1807, HO901) and the BHP tower, 130-148 William Street (VHR1699, HO767) and the Royal Insurance building at 430-442 Collins Street (1965). Yuncken Freeman had an unequalled national reputation for superb architectural detailing and classically simple forms that had prevailed over the architecture of their contemporaries in Melbourne and Sydney. The firm continued until the late 1980s, completing work for Melbourne University, amongst many large institutional and corporate clients (Goad & Willis eds., 2012:781-2).



Figure 1. Estates House in 1976. (Source: Sievers 1976, SLV H99.50/129 [copyright](#)).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The former Dillingham Estates House is set within a paved and landscaped plaza that is shared with its neighbour, BHP House. A six-level parking block to the east is in a related minimalist style while a ramp leads to basement parking under the building itself.

The former Dillingham Estates House has a central service core, thereby maximising the extent of full height glass windows on all four façades. This placement allowed full expression of the commercial glass box, however, unlike its 1950s predecessors (such as 100 Collins Street), the structure is not revealed except as implied by the modular aluminium panels. The aluminium and glass surfaces, appear visually as one gleaming plane. There is no reference to a traditional window as a framed wall opening except for the chair rail. The façade presents the impression of a structural grid rather than the transparent façade of the 1950s that reveals the structure behind.

Unlike the naturally ventilated early 1950s glass boxes, the former Dillingham Estates House employs a service chamber above the ceiling housing air-conditioning ducts. This chamber is reflected on the external elevation as horizontal bands of aluminium. Fire separation was also achieved in a novel manner allowing a greater area of glazing.

Although the former Dillingham Estates House is superficially like Eagle House at 473 Bourke Street (VHR H1807, HO901), it also has the advantage of a free-standing site that displays fully the glass and aluminium skin wrapped on a simple rectangular shaft.

INTEGRITY

The former Dillingham Estates House is largely intact and is a fine example from a distinct and valuable body of work within the postwar commercial architectural idiom. The ground floor interior has changed with minor external additions and corporate signage.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The former Dillingham Estates House belongs to a group of 1960s-70s office towers and is part of a substantial body of work undertaken by Yuncken Freeman. Their contribution to the design of commercial office buildings in Melbourne is unparalleled as they continued to define and re-define the way in which office buildings were formed and the expression of their facades. This has been recognised by numerous architectural awards won by the practice.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the former Dillingham Estates House. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)

- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO: Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turn 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1974-73) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street
(Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



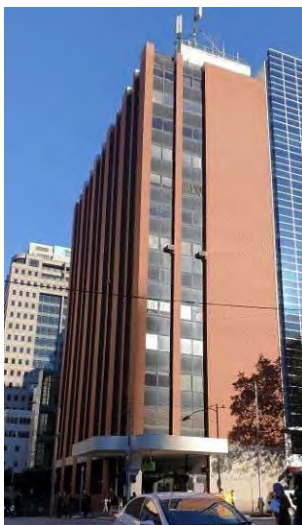
Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre
McIntyre & Partners, 1972-72)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street
(Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building,
359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon,
c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan
Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen Street
(Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

The former Dillingham Estates House is comparable with the earlier Eagle House and BHP House. These two buildings show a culmination of architectural design work by Yuncken Freeman from their early curtain wall buildings like Norwich Union Insurance building and the concrete frames of the Royal Insurance Building and 1 Macarthur Place. BHP House stands alone amongst postwar office towers for its innovative use of steel technology externally expressed. Eagle House and the former Dillingham Estates House display a highly refined glass and aluminium curtain wall

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

✓

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

✓

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*

Clinch, R J 2012, 'The places we keep: the heritage studies of Victoria and outcomes for urban planners', PhD thesis, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, The University of Melbourne.

Goad, P & Willis, J (eds.) 2012, *An Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press

Marsden, Susan 2000, *Urban Heritage: the rise and postwar development of Australia's capital city centres*, Australian Council of National Trusts and Australian Heritage Commission, Canberra.

National Trust of Australia Victoria (NTAV) 2014, *Melbourne's Marvellous Modernism*, National Trust (Victoria), Melbourne.

Sievers, Wolfgang 1967, 'Estates House, 120 William Street, Melbourne and surrounds', State Library of Victoria: Wolfgang Sievers collection, accessed online June 2019.

Storey, Rohan 2008, 'Skyscrapers', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, <http://www.emelbourne.net.au>, accessed 12 April 2018.

The following sources and data were used for this assessment (Graeme Butler, 2011). Note that the citation prepared in 2011 did not provide in text referencing.

General sources

The following data was typically drawn from:

Historic Buildings Preservation Council reports on the Melbourne Central Business District from the 1970s

Melbourne City Council on-line i-Heritage database;

Mahlstedt fire insurance map series held in the State Library of Victoria collection and Melbourne University Archives;

Daily newspaper reports such as 'The Argus';

Australian Architecture Index (AAI), prepared by Professor Miles Lewis and others;

Melbourne City Council building application drawings and files held at Melbourne City Council and the Victorian Public Records Office.

Keith and John Reid, CBD Study Area 7 Historic Buildings Preservation Council, 1976: page 139;

Twentieth Century Architecture Register of Royal Australian Institute of Architects:

MCC Building Permit Applications: March 1973, 43622 \$6,700,000 24 storey office building (followed by many fit-out applications) 1990, 68563 refurbish ground level

State Library of Victoria

'Business Who's Who of Australia' 1974: 229

Victorian Heritage Register:

Barry Patten

Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA): Mining Booms and the Australian Economy

Other sources

Goad, P & Willis, J., 2012, *The Encyclopaedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press

Taylor, J `Australian Architecture since 1960': 22

National Trust of Victoria, Australia, 2014, Melbourne's Marvellous Modernism, A Comparative Analysis of Post-War Modern Architecture in Melbourne's CBD, 1955 -1975

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** C

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** C

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** C

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** B

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Dillingham Estates House



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The former Dillingham Estates House, later Estates House, at 114-128 William Street, Melbourne, completed in 1976 and designed by Yuncken Freeman.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing; and
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations, particularly at street level, are not significant.

How it is significant?

The former Dillingham Estates House at 114-128 William Street is of historical, representative, aesthetic and technical significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The former Dillingham Estates House is historically significant for its association with the financial investment driven by the mineral and energy boom that fuelled office building in the city. It also demonstrates the lessening of the importance of British and American capital in favour of large Australian companies during the 1970s. (Criterion A)

The former Dillingham Estates House is a significant example of a late Post-War Modernist office tower and of the work of influential modernist architects Yuncken Freeman who played a significant role in re-shaping the city from the 1960s and 70s. Yuncken Freeman had an unequalled national reputation for superb architectural detailing and classically simple forms. The building is also part of a highly significant

office group located around the corner of William and Bourke Streets and including BHP House and Eagle House, that was the precursor to the former Dillingham Estates House. (Criterion D)

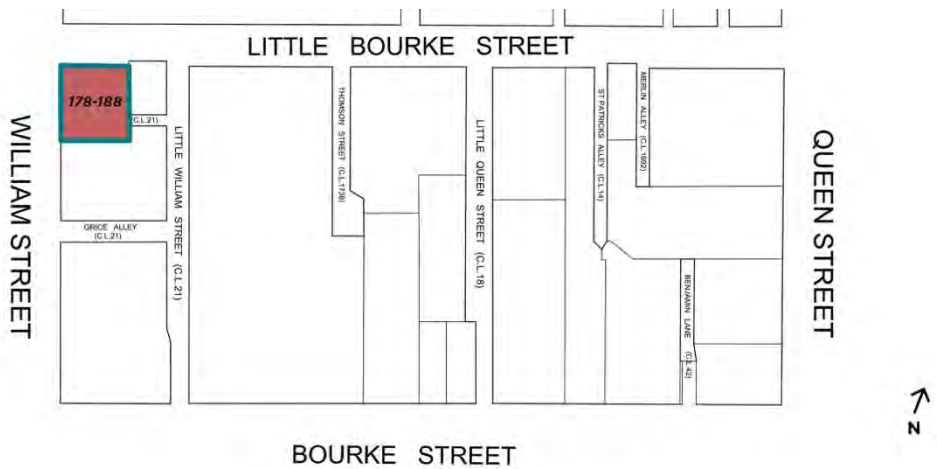
The former Dillingham Estates House is aesthetically significant for its clarity of architectural expression and the sophistication of its curtain wall with windows set in aluminium clad panels on a strict module. (Criterion E)

The former Dillingham Estates House is technically significant for its design that achieved floor to ceiling glazing and fire separation between floors, as well as the central service core that allowed the cladding of the building to be expressed on all four sides. (Criterion F)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Office Building [also known as Prudential Building and Douglas Menzies Chambers (current name)]
STREET ADDRESS	178-188 William Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	110144



SURVEY DATE: October 2019		SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage	
HERITAGE INVENTORY	No	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	McIntyre McIntyre & Partners	FORMER GRADE	D
BUILDER:	Not known	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1972-1973
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)		

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Merchant, Hotel
1920s	Merchant, Hotel
1960s	Office, Hotel

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The multi-storey office building at 178-188 William Street was designed by architects McIntyre McIntyre & Partners for owners Costain Australia Ltd, an infrastructure and mining company, in what appears to have been a speculative development venture. Construction was completed in 1973. The building was sold to the Prudential Assurance Company Ltd soon after completion of construction (in 1974). The building has been regularly occupied by solicitors and barristers since 1974 and is today known as the Douglas Menzies Chambers.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The multi-storey office building at 178-188 William Street was designed by architects McIntyre McIntyre & Partners for owners Costain Australia Ltd, a multi-national infrastructure and mining company. Construction was completed in 1973 (McIntyre; BAF; CoMMaps). The City of Melbourne received a building permit application for the building in June 1972, with an estimated project cost of \$1,038,000. The site was formerly occupied by the Four Courts Hotel and Oswald Burt & Co's building (BAI; BAF).

Architectural drawings dated 1972 show the principle elevations and ground floor plan (Figure 1 - Figure 3). Annotations to the architectural drawings indicate that the north and west elevations were constructed of precast concrete units, with aluminum-framed windows (BAP).

Price & Chamberlin, solicitors and barristers, occupied part of the building in 1974 until at least the early 1980s (Age, 23 Dec 1974:15; 2 Nov 1981:2; S&Mc). In September 1974, Costain sold the property to The Prudential Assurance Company Ltd (LV:V9056/F780). The building may have been called the Prudential Building during this period (Butler 1985:24).

In 1996, the building was launched as the Douglas Menzies Chambers, owned by Barristers' Chambers Limited who purchased the property in 1992 (BCL; LV:V9056/F780). The chambers were named after Sir Douglas Menzies (1907-1974), Australian High Court Justice.

McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, architects

McIntyre McIntyre & Partners was established in 1962 as McIntyre, McIntyre & Associates following the merger of Peter and Dione McIntyre's architectural practice with that of Peter's father, Robert A McIntyre. From 1967 to 1972, the firm practiced as McIntyre, McIntyre & Partners, before changing to its current iteration, McIntyre Partnership. The amalgamation was a commercial move to gain larger commissions.

Prior to this, Peter and Dione's work involved small-scale domestic projects. Peter's work in particular focused on the interplay of function and structure, where he experimented with cantilevered and tensile structures, and the Ctesiphon arch. He gained public recognition with the commission for the Melbourne Olympic Swimming Stadium (1952-6) in collaboration with architects, Kevin Borland and John & Phyllis Murphy, and engineer Bill Irwin.

Following the McIntyre merger, the new firm designed a significant number of hotels and hospitality ventures (inherited from McIntyre Snr's practice), as well as skiing and alpine architecture. In central Melbourne, the firm completed the innovative Kings Parkade car park in Little Collins Street (1966), and commercial office buildings such as at 170 William Street (1968), 150 Lonsdale Street (1969), 178-188 William Street (1972-73) and Australia Pacific House at 136-144 Exhibition Street (1975-78). Other notable work included the adaptive reuse and conversion of the early twentieth century Henry Jones Jam Factory in Prahran into an up-market shopping centre (1974) and the design for Melbourne's Parliament Station (1973-82).

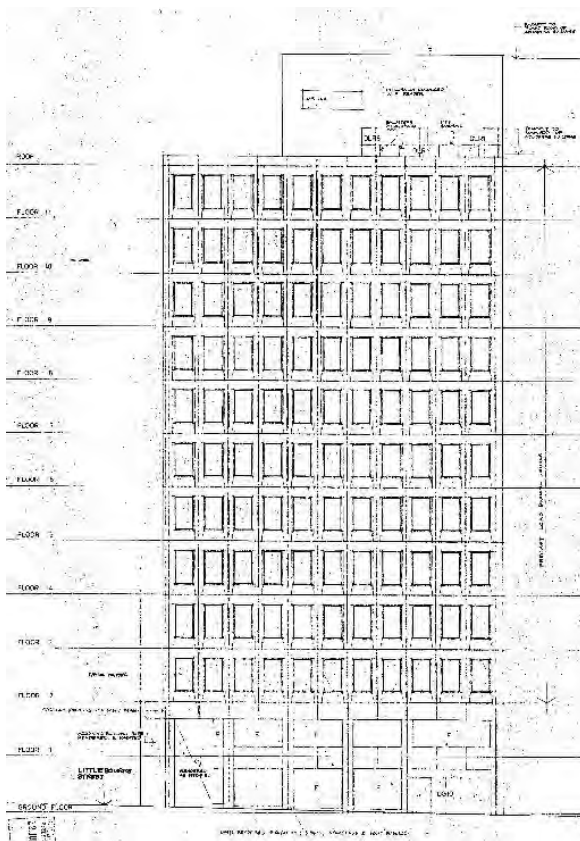


Figure 1. Architectural drawing of the west elevation, dated 1972 (BAP).

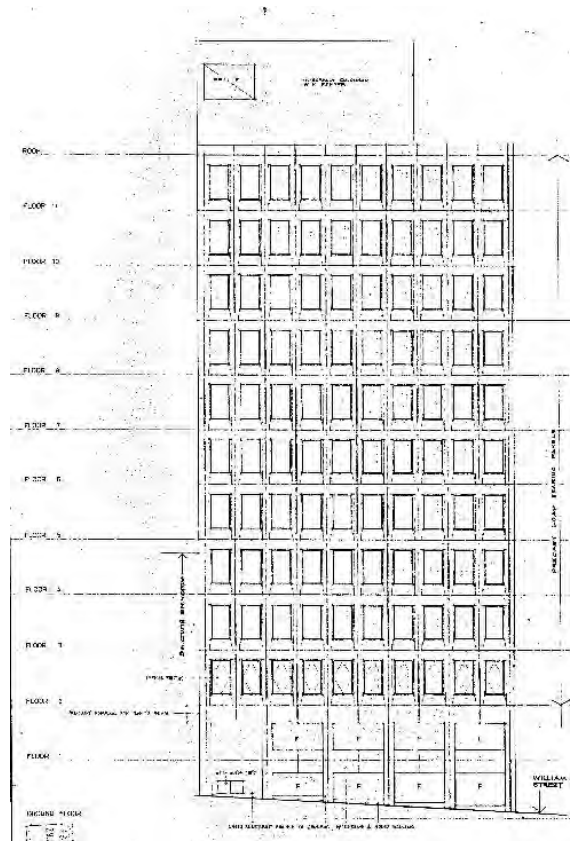


Figure 2. North elevation, drawing dated 1972 (BAP).

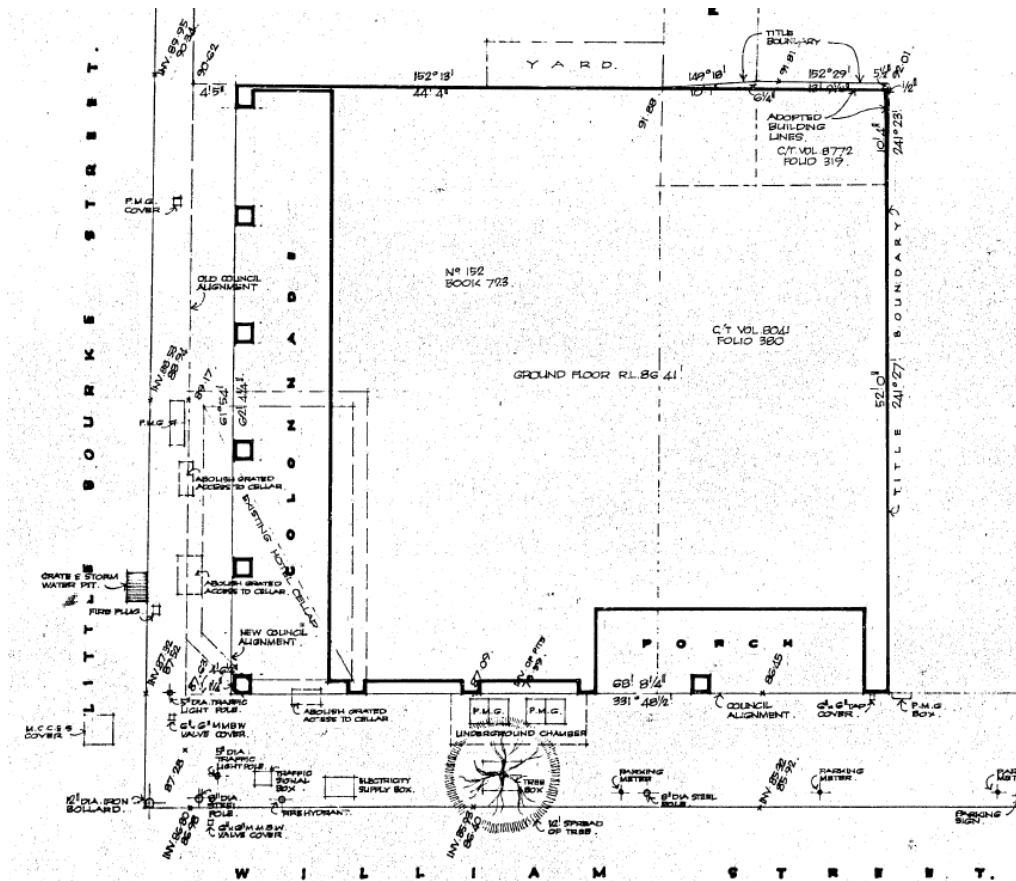


Figure 3. Site plan and ground floor plan, dated 1972 (BAP).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The office building at 178-188 William Street is an 11-storey commercial building located at the north-west corner of William Street and Little Bourke Street, with frontages to both streets. Constructed in 1972-73 to a design by architects McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

Square in plan, the building is of reinforced concrete column and slab construction with hollow blockwork infill panels to the secondary south and east facades. A coloured cement render has been applied to these secondary facades. The main north and west facades are formed from precast concrete loadbearing panels, which support the concrete floor slabs from the first floor upwards. The precast panels, with sloped sills, provide a simple frame to fixed aluminium-framed windows and together these units form a highly repetitive grid-like pattern across the main facades. A plain concrete parapet crowns the building.

At street level, the north façade of the building is recessed to a depth of two bays behind a simple, double height colonnade formed from plain tall piers placed below each alternate precast panel. To the west, a southern entrance porch is similarly recessed but to a single height, with a row of office spaces across the upper level.

INTEGRITY

The office building at 178-188 William Street, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building, remains very highly intact to its original 1972-73 construction.

Overall, the building retains a very high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. The building has undergone minimal external change and can be clearly understood and appreciated as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey office building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The office building at 178-188 William Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of 1960s to mid-1970s multi-storey building design. The building's two grid-like facades, formed from repetitive loadbearing precast concrete units with distinctive sloped sills that frame individual aluminium-framed windows across both prominent facades, can be clearly observed from William Street. The structure, including the form at street level, remains highly intact to its original design.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the office building at 178-188 William Street. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1974-73 included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



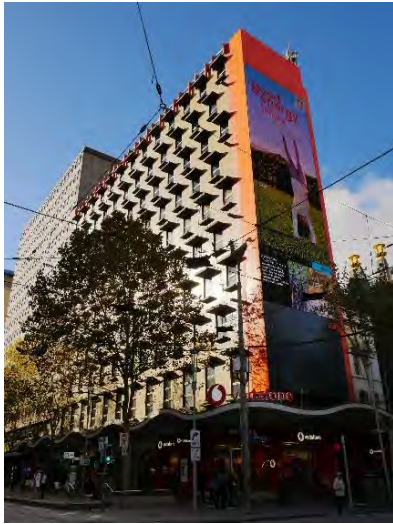
Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street
(Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



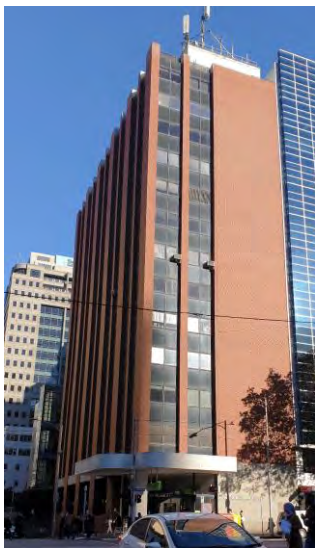
Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William Street
(Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (Perrot
Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building,
359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon,
c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan Laird &
Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen
Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

As a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building, the building at 178-188 William Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey commercial buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne. Similar to a number of 1960s to mid-1970s buildings listed above, the subject building clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4)	No
INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*

Barristers' Chambers Limited (BCL), 'Douglas Menzies Chambers', <<https://www.bcl.net.au/chamber/douglas-menzies-chambers/>>, accessed 3 July 2019.

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Building Application Plans (BAP), City of Melbourne.

Butler, Graeme (1985), *Melbourne Central Activities District Conservation Study, Building Schedule*.

City of Melbourne Maps (CoMMaps), Site Details.

Goad, Philip (2012), 'McIntyre, Peter & Dione' in Philip Goad & Julie Willis's (Eds.) (2012), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Port Melbourne.

Goad, Philip (2012), 'McIntyre Partnership' in Philip Goad & Julie Willis's (Eds.) (2012), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Port Melbourne.

Landata Victoria (LV), Certificates of Title, as cited.

McIntyre Partnership, 'About', <<https://mcintyrepartnership.com/about-1>>, accessed 2 July 2019.

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The Age.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** D

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

**Review of Heritage
Overlay Listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

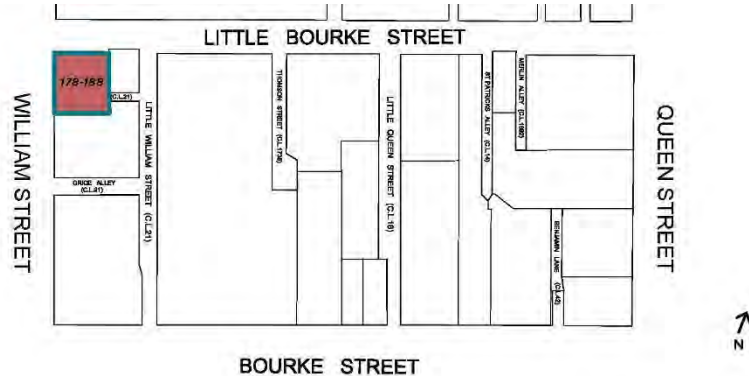
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Office Building

PS ref no:

HOXXXX



What is significant?

The office building at 178-188 William Street, a multi-storey office building constructed in 1972-73.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The building's very high level of integrity to its original design.

How it is significant?

The office building at 178-188 William Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed in 1972-73 to a design by McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, the office building at 178-188 William Street has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and the prestige afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

The office building at 178-188 William Street is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building. The building strongly reflects the style which was popular in the 1960s to the mid 1970s, particularly in central Melbourne. The 11-storey building clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a later postwar structure, including two grid-like walls of repetitive loadbearing precast concrete units, with distinctive sloped sills, which frame individual windows, as well as the use of materials such as precast concrete panels. These demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War

Modernist style. The building remains very highly intact to clearly demonstrates the principle characteristics of a Post-War Modernist commercial high-rise building (Criterion D).

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

SITE NAME	Nubrik House
STREET ADDRESS	269-275 William Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	110107



LA TROBE STREET



SURVEY DATE: May 2019

SURVEY BY: Context

HERITAGE INVENTORY	N/A	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Buchan, Laird & Buchan	FORMER GRADE	Ungraded
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	BUILDER:	A V Jennings Industries Australia Ltd
		DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1972

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
POST WAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style
	1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
	1.10 Brutalism and brickwork
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Residential
1920s	Residential, Manufacturing
1960s	Offices

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

Nubrik House, 269-275 William Street, was built in 1972 as a 13-storey office building. It opened in 1972 as the national headquarters for Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd. The building was named after the company's main brand, Nubrik. Brick & Pipe Industries occupied the first and second floors of the building until c1993, with other businesses occupying the offices on the remaining floors. A roof top apartment was added in 1997 making the building 14 storeys.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Brutalism and brickwork

Brutalism was another architectural style that emerged in commercial building design in Australia as early as 1959, when Harry Seidler used off-form concrete for an eight-storey office block in Ultimo, NSW. That same year, Melbourne architect Kevin Knight (from the office of Oakley & Parkes)

prepared plans for the International Order of Oddfellows (IOOF) Building at 380 Russell Street, Melbourne that broke new ground with its banded façade of reinforced concrete spandrels.

Based on the work of modern architecture pioneer Le Corbusier, and largely inspired by his design for the *Unité d'Habitation* in Marseilles (1952), this architectural style became widely accepted internationally. Brutalism incorporated ideas of integrity in expression of materials (especially off-form concrete), structure and function, and often gave rise to dramatic sculptural forms (VHD Hoyts Cinema Centre).

Brutalism became more widespread in central Melbourne in the 1970s. The Mid City Centre at 194-200 Bourke Street (Bogle & Banfield, 1969-70), is a notable example, with its façade of chamfered concrete volumes.

During the 1960s and 70s, face brickwork also made a return with the Houston Building at 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kollé & Associates, 1964-65), the State Savings Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton & Lobb, 1967-68) and the 13-storey Nubrik House at 269-275 William Street by architects Buchan, Laird & Buchan (1972) (NTAV 2014:22).

Business and finance in the postwar period

The postwar period was one of fluctuating fortunes in the business and finance sectors. In the main however, economic confidence and financial deregulation came together to create a period of growth that would radically change the appearance of central Melbourne.

Speculative investment in Melbourne increased after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947, which resulted in a dramatic increase in new company registrations (Marsden 2000:44-45). Subsequently, during the 1950s, a number of national and international companies sought to assert a physical presence in the country, constructing corporate buildings in the city centre. In Melbourne, up to the mid-1960s, investment was predominantly driven by British and American companies, government bodies, large Australian corporations such as AMP and BHP, and property developers, including Lend Lease (formerly Civil and Civic) and L J Hooker Ltd. Later in the 1960s, it was also driven by private developers such as Grollo and Lustig & Moar (Marsden 2000:46-47).

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17). Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

The period between 1961 and 1963 was one of business recession, while the years between 1967 and 1969 was a time of growth due to two mineral booms. From 1967 to 1971 the construction of new office space in the city centre more than doubled that of the previous five years (City of Melbourne Strategy Plan 1974 in Clinch 2012:66-67). The property boom ended during the economic crash of the early 1970s and the 1974 oil crisis when many British institutions that had founded the commercial property industry left Australia. Government bodies and banks subsequently took over much of the building construction in the city centre (Marsden 2000:48).

SITE HISTORY

The subject site at 269-275 William Street is part of Crown Allotment 10, Section 31, purchased by J Whitehill Stevens in 1939 (CoMMaps).

In 1856, the site was used as a garden. By the 1890s, the site was occupied by a two-storey residence and its yard. The Victorian period residence remained through to the late 1960s, and was used as a boarding house, a hostel and then as the Queen Victoria Hospital's nurses' home (MMBW Detail Plan no 736, 1895; Mahlstedt Map section 2, no 2a, 1910 & 1923; S&Mc 1896, 1926, 1942, 1955 & 1960; Halla 1967). By 1923, a portion of the subject land adjoining Alsop Lane had been developed with a two-storey warehouse with a frontage to Little Lonsdale Street. Known as 440-442 Little Lonsdale Street, the warehouse was occupied from the 1920s to the 1960s by various manufacturing businesses including a motor garage, an electrical instrument maker, an artificial flower manufacturer, printers and a typewriter setter (S&Mc 1926, 1955 & 1965).

In May 1971 the subject site was acquired by Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd, Victoria's biggest brick manufacturer at the time (*Age* 2 May 1970:17; *Age* 9 May 1970:20). Named after the company's main brand, Nubrik, Nubrik House was constructed at 269-275 William Street as the new national headquarters for Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd in 1971-72 to a design by Buchan, Laird & Buchan. The builder was A V Jennings Industries Australia Ltd, and the engineering consultants were Lovell, Smith & Crisp (Buchan, Laird & Buchan 1971; *Age* 6 November 1972:24). Nubrik House officially opened on 18 December 1972 (*Age* 18 December 1972:13).

Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd was formed in July 1964 after Brick Industries Ltd (established in July 1959), changed the company name (delisted n.d.). By the early 1970s, Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd was one of Australia's biggest brick manufacturers (*Age* 24 July 1974:20). In October 1989, Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd was taken over by Arnsberg Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of the Goldberg Group, and was again sold to Pioneer International in 1990 (delisted n.d.; *Age* 18 April 1990:23; *Age* 26 February 1992:19). All divisions were merged into Pioneer Building Products by 1996, which was taken over by Brickworks Ltd in 2001. The Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd main brand, 'Nubrik', survives as a brand of Austral Bricks within the Brickworks Building Products Group (Austral Bricks 2019). Its main brick pit and factory was situated in Craigieburn Road, Wollert (some 25 kilometres north of Melbourne's CBD) (Bricks in Victoria 2013).

The 13-storey brick and concrete building featured a face brick exterior to all three exposed elevations, using bricks made by the company to showcase its products. Although the National Trust states that Nubrik House was Australia's tallest building of loadbearing brick construction at that time, and that the use of loadbearing brick was uncommon in the construction of the mid- to high-rise buildings in central Melbourne in the postwar period, further research reveals that the brick pier was a non-structural veneer (NT 2014:38, 52) (see Figure 1). According to the building plans, each unit of the brick piers is a combination of structural (internal) and non-structural (external) parts. Supporting the floor-by-floor load between two floor slabs, each internal brick pier interlinked with the external non-loadbearing brick veneer, which was supported on shelf angles tied to the floor slabs. (see Figure 2 and Figure 1). Internally, reinforced concrete columns and beams were adopted to support the load (Buchan, Laird & Buchan 1971). More than 500,000 bricks were used in the construction of the subject building (*Age* 18 December 1972:13).

The internal masonry structures in the foyer and the office spaces on all levels above were exposed face brick, featuring bricks of varying colours and textures. The foyer was paved with brown tiles with

an antique finish. All bricks and tiles used were the company's own products (Age 18 December 1972:13).

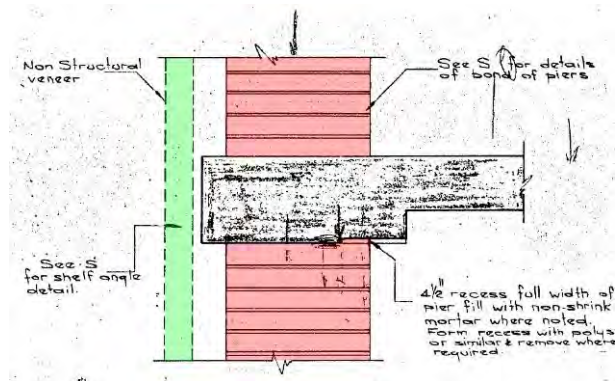


Figure 1. A vertical section showing the arrangement of the masonry and reinforced concrete slab. Shaded in red indicates the loadbearing masonry and in green indicates non-loadbearing brick veneer. The writings on the left-hand side note: 'non-structural veneer' and 'see [section] for shelf angle detail'. (Source: Buchan, Laird & Buchan 1971 [copyright](#))

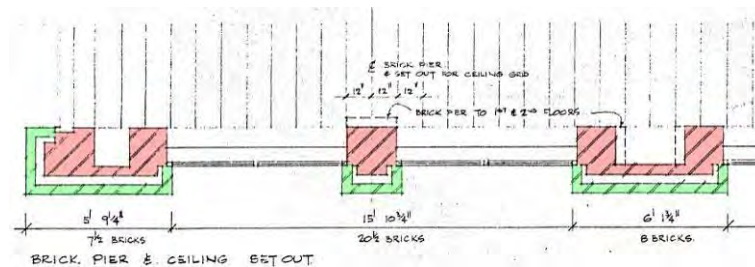


Figure 2. A horizontal section showing the pier types B (left), A (middle) and C (right). Shaded in red indicates the loadbearing masonry and in green indicates non-loadbearing brick veneer. (Source: Buchan, Laird & Buchan 1971 [copyright](#))



Figure 3. A 1972 advertisement showing the newly erected Nubrik House viewed from the southwest (left) and another 1972 photograph showing the view from southeast (right). (Source: Age 6 November 1972:24; Age 18 December 1972:13)

On the ground floor at street level, an open public area was provided near the corner of William and Little Lonsdale streets. Provided as a thoroughfare or a shortcut, it was required by a special condition to the planning permit granted by the Melbourne City Council under the *Town and Country Planning Act* 1961 (Vic). In 1974, a case was held at the Supreme Court of Victoria, when Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd sought to remove the condition so that the thoroughfare could be permanently enclosed to give entry only to users of the building. The firm claimed that the paved area was misused by drunks, derelicts and 'undesirables'. The Court, however, concluded that the use of that land was to remain dedicated to the public without compensation, and that the area could be closed to public only outside normal office hours (Morris 1975:120-122). Part of the original open area remained as a corner splay, with the lobby becoming an enclosed space, installed with automatic glazed sliding doors, and open to public during business hours.

Following the acquisition of Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd by Pioneer International in 1990, Nubrik House was sold in 1993, at which time it is believed the company vacated the building. The building was subdivided into strata titles and offered for purchase in 1994 (CT:V10215 F757-F770).

During the 1990s, the building was tenanted by various real estate agents and solicitors (*Age* 17 January 1994:20; *Age* 25 February 1995:91; *Age* 8 September 1997:24; *Age* 28 May 1998:36). A roof top apartment was added in 1997 making the building 14 storeys. The building was refurbished in 2013 (CoMMaps).

The 14-storey building with a basement currently contains one residential property, 39 businesses and ground level retails (CoMMaps).

Buchan, Laird & Buchan, architect

Buchan, Laird & Buchan designed Nubrik House, adopting extensive use of brick for the façade and interior elements, as well as incorporating structural brick piers in conjunction with the reinforced concrete structure, to promote the products of Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd.

Laird & Buchan was founded in Geelong, Victoria, in 1890 by Angus Laird. It became Buchan, Laird & Buchan in 1937 after Laird's death, becoming a partnership between Laird's son Ewen Laird, and father and son, Thomas Johnston (Tom) Buchan and (Sir) John Buchan. One of the firm's early projects, the Pilkington's Glass Factory, Melbourne Road, Geelong (1936-37), became an early icon of modernism in Australia (Willis 2012:111).

After World War Two, John Buchan set up the Melbourne office in 1946. In the postwar period, the firm expanded, becoming involved in large-scale commercial and industrial projects including the Ford administration building, Broadmeadows (1964) and significant town planning and housing projects for the Housing Commission of Victoria. In the 1960s and 1970s, the firm gained particular prominence for its designs for office buildings. Notable works from this period include Shell House, William and Bourke streets (1960, since demolished); and the former Stock Exchange House, Collins Street (1968) (Willis 2012:111).

The firm became Buchan, Laird & Bowden in 1982, and today continues as the Buchan Group, formed in 1990. The practice currently operates offices in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Perth, London, Shanghai, Dubai, Auckland and Christchurch (Willis 2012:111).

A V Jennings Industries Australia Ltd, builder

Sir Albert Victor Jennings was an early pioneer in Australia of the pre-construction sale of house and land packages. An estate agent turned house builder during the 1930s depression, with architectural student, Ed Gurney, and builder Billy Vine, he formed the A V Jennings' Construction Co (Garden 2017). Jennings started with single houses in the Melbourne suburb of Glenhuntly in 1932, then from 1933 began building the housing groups and estates with which his name is most associated (Garden 2012:366).

With the banning of construction of private houses during World War Two, the A V Jennings Construction Co undertook government construction including, from 1942, military camps around Victoria. After the war, the company built thousands of houses and undertook other works in Victoria, Tasmania and Canberra for both the state and federal governments. The company's work for the Victorian Housing Commission in 1944-49 transformed the firm into a large-scale construction enterprise (Garden 2012:366). In 1950 A V Jennings Industries (Australia) Ltd was formed as a public company with Albert Victor Jennings as its chairman and managing director (Garden 2017). The construction of private housing gathered pace in the 1950s and became the firm's principal activity. (Garden 2017).

In the 1960s, the company's notable building projects, apart from housing, include the Wrest Point Casino, Tasmania (1969-73) and the Adelaide Festival Theatre, South Australia (1970-73) (Garden 2012:366). The company portfolio grew to encompass ventures related to its core home and general construction businesses, including finance, transport, and caravans (Garden 2017). The company continues today as A V Jennings Ltd.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Designed by Buchan, Laird & Buchan and constructed in 1971-72, Nubrik House at 269-275 William Street is a 14-storey (originally 13-storey) commercial building that demonstrates aspects of the Post-War Modernist style. Located on the northwest corner of William Street and Little Lonsdale Street, the building also has a rear (western) frontage to Alsop Lane.

The principal facades to both Little Lonsdale Street and William Street consist of vertical panels of brickwork that vary in width, between which are vertical bands of aluminium framed glass, with opaque panels alternating with clear glazed windows at each floor level. Whilst the brick piers appear to be loadbearing, they are a non-structural veneer, concealing an interior structure that is an unusual composite of a reinforced concrete column and slab frame supported on its perimeter by sections of loadbearing brickwork.

The Little Lonsdale Street façade of the building is divided into five vertical modules divided by wide brick piers, with each module in turn divided into two vertical glazed panels by narrow brick piers. The southern half of the William Street façade comprises a single vertical module divided into two vertical glazed panels by narrow brick piers, as for the Little Lonsdale Street façade. The northern half of the facade comprises a sheer wall of face brickwork. The windows sashes are fixed, with some fitted with wall hung air conditioning units. The building has no formal termination at the top level which is typical of the style. The vertical panels of brickwork extend above the roof line and appear to have undergone some repair work, possibly during the 1997 construction to add the penthouse apartment.

At street level the wall has been rendered. The southern end, above street level, is divided into two modules divided by a narrow brick pier and inset with the glazed curtain wall system

At street level along Little Lonsdale Street, a solid brick base follows the fall of the site above which are four large fixed aluminium framed windows. Above each window a deep unpainted concrete lintel supports the narrow brick piers above. On William Street, the sheer wall of face brickwork extends to the street level, but has been rendered and painted.

The corner of the building above street level has a projecting cantilevered awning with a double curve (this appears to be a later addition), and a recessed entry of contemporary aluminium framed glazing. The base of the corner pier of brickwork has also been rendered and painted.

Facing Alsop Lane, the northern half of the facade comprises a sheer wall of brickwork with small louvres at some floor levels for ventilation. The southern half comprises a single vertical module divided into two vertical glazed panels by narrow brick piers supported on a deep unpainted concrete lintel, as for the Little Lonsdale Street façade. At the laneway level, a recessed roller shutter door sits below three large fixed panels of glass.

INTEGRITY

Nubrik House is highly intact with very few changes visible to original or early fabric. The building retains its original scale, form and configuration, including a strong vertical emphasis resulting from the alternating pattern of wide brick piers separated by vertical panels of glazing, unrelieved by any horizontal connectivity other than the deep reinforced concrete beams at the first-floor level. Alterations include the addition of a corner awning, replacement of the original recessed entry with contemporary glazing, the additional penthouse level, and the rendering and painting of the base of the corner pier and northern section of wall along William Street. Overall the building has very high integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

During the early 1950s, following the end of the World War Two, building activities in central Melbourne slowly revived. The Post-War Modernist style, which was accompanied by the development of the curtain wall, became popular and was the preferred style for the new wave of early high-rise commercial buildings. During the late 1960s and beyond, the style developed with a more eclectic use of materials and forms, combining expansive glazed panels with solid masonry sections to achieve a less repetitive, more distinctive and robust aesthetic.

The following examples are comparable with Nubrik House, being of a similar use, scale, style and/or construction date.

State-significant places

A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



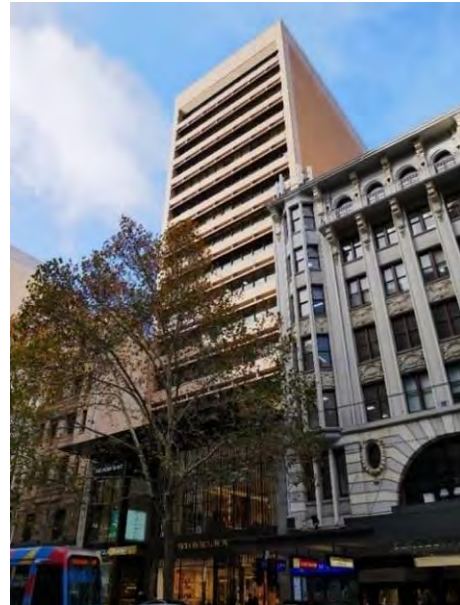
Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Wales Corner, 221-231 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1964-66) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Swanston Street) Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 19741-73 included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson & Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street
(Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William
Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street (Perrot
Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building,
359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon,
c1972-75)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre
& Partners, 1972-73)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen
Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street (Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, c1970-1973)



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

Analysis

Built in 1971, Nubrik House at 269-275 William Street is a highly intact example of a Post-War Modernist building, that combines expansive glazed panels with solid masonry sections to achieve a less repetitive, more distinctive and robust aesthetic. While the adopted structural masonry was designed to be exposed in the interior, the exterior design of Nubrik House consciously emphasised the unconventional use of high vertical panels of brickwork to give the appearance of supporting the building, although the external brickwork was actually supported by the internal reinforced concrete frame. In this respect the building differs from many of its contemporaries that also utilised brickwork as their primary façade material. In the other examples brick is used as a nonloadbearing infill or as cladding materials where the primary structure (usually reinforced concrete) is deliberately expressed or through the spandrels.

While the primary uses differ, Nubrik House is also comparable to the residential towers Treasury Gate at 93-101 Spring Street (Interim HO1262 – recommended as individually significant in the

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review), which also features high vertical panels of brickwork that appear to be the primary structural basis of the building, especially on the podium element which is similarly separated by vertical bands of aluminium framed glass alternating with lightweight opaque panels at each floor level. The building is also somewhat comparable with , 447-453 Lonsdale Street (recommended as individually significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review), which also used brick as non-loadbearing infill but where the primary reinforced concrete structure is clearly expressed.

The subject building is distinguished by its design that consciously utilised bricks, the main product of the company, to promote this material, and in a way that visually suggests it is fulfilling a structural role.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓

CRITERION A

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

✓

CRITERION D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

✓

CRITERION E

Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

CRITERION F

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

CRITERION G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

CRITERION H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** Ungraded

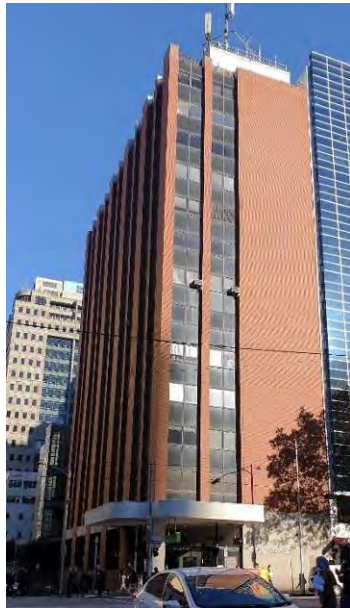
**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Nubrik House

PS ref no: HOXXXX

**What is significant?**

Nubrik House at 269-275 William Street, Melbourne, completed in 1972 to a design by Buchan, Laird & Buchan, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- Original building form and scale;
- Original configuration of vertical panels of brickwork separating vertical bands of aluminium framed glass, with opaque panels alternating with clear glazed windows at each floor level, offset by sheer walls of face brickwork to the William Street and Alsop Lane facades; and
- Original aluminium framed windows.

Later alterations, particularly at street level, are not significant.

How it is significant?

Nubrik House at 269-275 William Street is of historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Nubrik House, designed by Buchan, Laird & Buchan and constructed by A V Jennings Industries Australia Ltd, is historically significant for the evidence it provides of Melbourne's postwar development and rapid growth of corporate architecture of the 1950s-70s. Its development reflected the expansion of large national and international companies opting for construction and naming rights of new city office buildings as a form of promotion and fund investment. Nubrik House was constructed as the national headquarters for Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd, Victoria's biggest brick makers, and one of Australia's

largest brick manufacturers. The building was named after the company's main brand, Nubrik. The building is distinguished by the extensive and prominent use of brick in the building's construction to promote the products of the building's original owner, Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd. (Criterion A)

Nubrik House is significant as a highly intact example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building constructed during the postwar period that utilised a reinforced concrete frame. This framing allowed for a variety of design approaches to the non-loadbearing façades. During the late 1960s and beyond, the style developed with a more eclectic use of materials and forms, combining glazed panels with solid sections to achieve a less repetitive, more distinctive and robust aesthetic. The principal façades of Nubrik House to both Little Lonsdale Street and William Street are demonstrative of this tendency, combining glazed panels with solid masonry sections. (Criterion D)

Nubrik House is of aesthetic significance for its distinctive design that adopted robust brick piers as one of the main design elements. While the structural masonry was used internally and designed to be exposed in the interior, the exterior design of Nubrik House consciously emphasised the unconventional use of high vertical panels of brickwork to give the appearance of supporting the building, although the external brickwork was actually supported by the internal reinforced concrete frame. While the brick piers appear to be loadbearing, they are a non-structural veneer, concealing an interior structure that is an unusual composite of a reinforced concrete column and slab frame supported on its perimeter by sections of loadbearing brickwork. Designed by Buchan, Laird & Buchan for Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd, Victoria's biggest brick manufacturer at the time, the subject building is distinguished by its design solution that consciously utilised bricks, the main product of the company, to promote this material, and in a way that visually suggests it is fulfilling a structural role. (Criterion E)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)