

# Expert Witness Statement to Panel

Amendment C387 to the  
Melbourne Planning Scheme

56-64 Collins Street, Melbourne

Prepared under instruction from Minter Ellison  
August 2021

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## 1.0 Introduction

1. This statement of evidence has been prepared under instruction from Minter Ellison on behalf of the owner of the former Reserve Bank of Australia building at 56-64 Collins Street, Melbourne. It comments on the heritage considerations associated with Amendment C387 to the *Melbourne Planning Scheme* and in particular the proposal to introduce an individual Heritage Overlay control to the subject property.
2. This proposal arises from the recommendations of the *Hoddle Grid Heritage Review July 2020*. As a result of the recommendations of the Review, Amendment C387 proposes to apply the Heritage Overlay to 133 individual places, revise the boundary of four existing individual Heritage Overlays and apply the Heritage Overlay to five precincts including extending one precinct.
3. My instructions are to prepare an expert report considering the heritage significance of the subject property and the appropriateness of the proposed overlay.
4. This statement was prepared with assistance from Fiona Erskine of my office. The views expressed are my own.
5. It builds upon previous reports including an assessment of heritage impacts prepared by my office (dated August 2019) in relation to a proposal to demolish the subject building and construct a new building (for which a permit has issued, Permit No. PA1900656, dated 22 May 2020), and a second assessment of heritage impacts (dated 1 April 2021) in relation to an amended proposal for demolition and redevelopment that is presently under consideration.
6. I note that there is no private or business relationship between myself and the party(s) for whom this report is prepared other than that associated with the preparation of this statement and advice on heritage issues associated with both Amendment C387 and the proposal to redevelop the site.

## 2.0 Sources of Information

7. External inspections of the subject property have been conducted, as well as an internal inspection of the ground floor foyer area. A review of the documentation associated with Amendment C387 has been undertaken, including the exhibited *Hoddle Grid Heritage Review July 2020* (Context Pty Ltd & GJM Heritage) and the Summary of Submissions and Management Responses included at Attachment 2 to Agenda item 6.4 of the Future Melbourne Committee dated 18 May 2021. Reference is also made to previous heritage studies including:
  - *Central Activities District Conservation Study (1985)*.
  - *Central City Heritage Study Review (1993)*.
  - *Review of Heritage Overlay Listings in the CBD (2002)*.
  - *Central City Heritage Review (2011)*.
8. Other documents referred to include:
  - *Guide to Expert Evidence (April 2019)*.
  - *Victoria Planning Provisions Practice Note: Applying the Heritage Overlay (August 2018)*.
  - *The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines (3 December 2020)*.

- Jennifer Taylor, *Tall Buildings: Australian Business Going Up: 1945-1970* (2001).
- Philip Goad, *Melbourne Architecture* (2009).
- Robin Grow, *MELMO: Modernist Architecture in Melbourne* (2021).
- Heritage Alliance, *Survey of Post-war Built Heritage in Victoria* (2008).
- National Trust of Australia (Victoria), *Melbourne's Marvellous Modernism* (2014).

9. Sources of historical information are referenced where relevant.

### 3.0 Author Qualifications

10. A statement of my qualifications and experience with respect to urban conservation issues is appended to this report. Note that I have provided expert witness evidence on similar matters before the VCAT, Panels Victoria, the Heritage Council and the Building Appeals Board on numerous occasions in the past, and have been retained in such matters variously by municipal councils, owners, developers and objectors to planning proposals.

### 4.0 Declaration

11. I declare that I have made all the inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate, and that no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Panel.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bryce Raworth', with a stylized flourish at the end.

BRYCE RAWORTH

## 5.0 Brief History and Description

12. Planning for a Melbourne branch of the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) commenced in 1959, the same year as the separate central banking institution was formally created by an Act of Parliament. The design panel for the new building was comprised of Prof. B Lewis of the University of Melbourne, Messrs C Osborne, R Ure and F Crocker of the Commonwealth Department of Works and C McGrouther, consultant to the Reserve Bank.<sup>1</sup>
13. The site for the new building, on the north-east corner of Collins and Exhibition streets, had been occupied by a number of nineteenth century structures. The Occidental Hotel, originally constructed in 1848 as the Duke of York Hotel, was demolished in 1958. Harvey House at 56-58 Collins Street and produce merchants Hurst and Green at 92 Exhibition Street were demolished once works commenced in February 1962.<sup>2</sup>
14. Tenders were invited for the first of two stages of construction in December 1961, with the contract awarded to E.A Watts Pty Ltd. The initial stage involved clearing the site and excavating to a depth of 50ft in order to create three basement floors to house the bank vaults. Structural works in unfinished steel and reinforced concrete up to and including the first floor level were completed by November 1963.<sup>3</sup>
15. Construction of the second stage, taking the building to its full height of 17 floors, commenced in January 1964 and was carried out by Civil and Civic Pty Ltd, a division of Lend Lease Corporation. Publicity copy prepared at the time of the building's completion in 1966 included the following in relation to the structural and decorative features:

*The external design of the new Melbourne building is characterised by the light and dark contrast of granite and marble facings and a butterfly type roof. The ground floor of the building consists of a concourse set back from the street alignment and features a large mural depicting the Eureka Stockade. Banking Chambers are located on two upper floors, the main Banking Chamber being on the first floor and Bonds and Stock on the second floor.*

*In construction of the building materials and equipment of Australian origin have been used extensively.*

*The marble and granite of the facades and the anodised aluminium window frames were selected not alone for their aesthetic value of colour and texture but also for their durability and ease of maintenance.*

*The marble came from the Wombeyan Caves district near Goulburn New South Wales and is known generally as "Wombeyan Grey" while Yarramundi granite also quarried in the Southern Tablelands of New South Wales was used to face the spandrel panels.*

*Wombeyan marble has also been used on the floors of both banking chambers and extensively in the main entrance foyer. Footscray basalt from Victoria is the special finish on feature walls in the Banking Chambers and South Australian Imperial Black granite has been used to pave the concourse and main entrance foyer...*

<sup>1</sup> Reserve Bank of Australia archive, file no. SRP-a-498.

<sup>2</sup> Reserve Bank of Australia archive, file no. SRP-a-498.

<sup>3</sup> Reserve Bank of Australia archive, file no. SRP-a-499.

16. Dr Herbert Coombs, first Governor of the newly created Reserve Bank, suggested Sidney Nolan be commissioned to create an artwork for the building in June 1962. The resultant mural depicting the Eureka Stockade was installed on the eastern wall of the ground floor entrance foyer. It was designed to be visible from both within the space and through the glazed wall facing Exhibition Street. The publicity copy from 1966 described it as follows:

*The Eureka Stockade mural which Sidney Nolan executed in jewellery enamel on copper has been used to further enhance the building. This work faces Exhibition Street at ground floor level and measures 66' long x 12' high in 66 panels – a total area of about 800 sq.ft. In its execution 2cwt. of transparent jewellery enamel was fired on to 11/2 tons of heavy gauge copper sheet.<sup>4</sup>*

17. The building opened in September 1966. The ground floor acted as a service area and lobby, while the basement levels housed the vaults for cash, gold and security holdings. Banking chambers were located on the first and second floors. The remaining floors housed other bank departments, board room and staff amenities as well as three floors for let on levels five to seven.
18. A proposal for refurbishment was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration in 1989. The associated report noted that the building '*Although structurally and externally sound and well located for its purpose, it is in need of substantial internal refurbishment to meet current standards for accommodation, amenity and operational efficiency*'. The ground floor lobby was identified as a feature that was likely to detract from the appeal of the office space available for lease within the building, with the report noting '*the Reserve Bank has been advised that the foyer should be upgraded to give the building a modern appearance and to make the building more attractive to prospective private tenants...By moving the glass out to the street frontage, the Reserve Bank believes it would then have additional space that could be used for displays, exhibits and for community use. It also believes it would give the building a much better appearance*'.<sup>5</sup>
19. Although the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee recommended that the RBA re-examine the need for the ground floor works to the facade, refurbishment proceeded. Other external works to the upper floor levels have also taken place. Today the western wall of the ground floor to Exhibition Street more closely aligns with the tower above, with the deep undercroft that was a feature of the design as built having been removed. The original slender marble clad columns at ground floor have been subsumed within heavy piers clad in dark granite facings with stainless steel details. Two new projecting stone cornices delineate the ground and first floors. The windows between the columns, as well as the curved aluminium framed glass wall to Collins Street, now feature horizontally oriented glazing bars. The marble facings to the vertical structural elements to the tower have been over-clad in segmented stainless steel, and the uppermost band of granite spandrel panels removed and replaced by a cornice at the summit of the structure.
20. The building continued to be occupied by the RBA until it was sold at the end of 2018, at which time the Nolan mural depicting the Eureka Stockade was relocated to the Australian National University.

<sup>4</sup> Reserve Bank of Australia archive, file no. SRP-a-498.

<sup>5</sup> Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, *Report relating to the Refurbishment of the Reserve Bank, 60 Collins Street, Melbourne (Twenty-sixth Report of 1989)*.



Figure 1 *Image showing the lower levels of the building, including the perimeter columns and undercroft concourse to the ground floor, in July 1966.  
Source: Reserve Bank of Australia Archive.*



Figure 2 *The concourse in August 1966.  
Source: Reserve Bank of Australia Archive.*





Figure 3

*The Reserve Bank of Australia in 1969. Note the pale marble cladding to vertical structural elements including the columns of the ground floor, and the dark granite to spandrels. Note also the recessed ground floor.  
Source: National Archives of Australia.*





Figure 4 *Eureka Stockade mural by Sidney Nolan, photographed by Wolfgang Sievers.  
Source: State Library of Victoria.*



Figure 5 *The mural as viewed through the concourse, c.1985.  
Source: Central Activities District Conservation Study.*



**Figure 6**      *The former Reserve Bank of Australia to the corner of Collins and Exhibition streets. The original pale marble of the ground floor columns that rose through the height of the building has been replaced or overclad with segmented steel cladding. A cornice at the summit of the building replaces the original spandrel panels and further changes the language of the building. At the ground floor, another cornice treatment establishes a visual break between the ground and first floors.*





Figure 7 Image showing the west elevation of the RBA building to Exhibition Street. The non-original segmented stainless steel cladding to the columns of the upper levels, granite clad piers and infill glazing of the ground floor level are apparent.



Figure 8 The non-original (wide) piers, cornices and curved glazed wall to Collins Street.

## 6.0 Heritage Status

21. The Reserve Bank of Australia building at 56-64 Collins Street was only graded 'D' in the 1985 *Central Activities District Conservation Study* (Butler) and then graded 'C' in the 1993 *Central City Heritage Study Review* (Raworth et al.). It is noted that the 1985 study was based upon a five level system (A,B,C,D and E), whereas the 1993 review adopted a three tier system of A, B, and C – with C being the lowest grading.
22. The building was not upgraded or identified as being of individual local significance worthy of a site-specific heritage control in either the 2002 *Review of Heritage Overlay listings in the CBD* or the 2011 *Central City Heritage Review*, two further studies cited in the *Hoddle Grid Heritage Review*.
23. As part of the *Heritage Policies Review 2016* the building was graded contributory within the Collins East Precinct (HO504). The statement of significance HO504 as included in the *Heritage Precincts Statements of Significance February 2020*, is as follows:

*Collins Street has often been identified as Melbourne's leading street. This is due, in part, to the pleasant amenity and distinctive character of its eastern end. Its relative elevation and proximity to the Government Reserve and points of access to the City provided for its development as an elite locale. Initially a prestige residential area, the Melbourne Club re-established itself here in 1857 and by the 1860s the medical profession had begun to congregate. By the turn of the century it was firmly established as a professional and artistic centre of Melbourne, with part of its fame due to its tree plantations in the French boulevard manner (hence the 'Paris end'), which date from 1875.*

*A number of significant buildings come together in this precinct to form a series of prominent streetscapes. These include, at the western end, the Town Hall, Athenaeum, and Assembly Hall through to the Scots and Independent Churches, with the Regent Theatre through to the redeveloped T&G building opposite. The eastern end includes the early 19th century residential and artists' studio buildings at the foot of No. One Collins, with the predominantly 20th century intact run to the north featuring Alcaston, Anzac Portland and Chanonry Houses, and Victor Horsley Chambers plus the nearby Melbourne Club.*

*At all times until the post 1939-45 war period, redevelopment took place in a quiet and restrained manner with an emphasis on dignity, harmony and compatibility with the intimate scale and pedestrian qualities of the street. These qualities are still embodied in significant remnant buildings and other artifacts, despite the intrusion of large developments. The qualities of the street are also embodied in the social functions of the buildings which include elite smaller scale residential, religious, social, quality retailing and professional activities.*

### *Key Attributes*

- *The buildings remaining from before the Second World War.*
- *The boulevard quality of this end of Collins Street with street tree plantations and street furniture.*
- *A consistent height, scale, character and appearance of the remaining 19th and early 20th century buildings.*
- *The historic garden of the Melbourne Club.*

24. The *Heritage Places Inventory February 2020 Part A* (Amended July 2020), an incorporated document to the *Melbourne Planning Scheme*, identifies the site at 56-64 Collins Street as Contributory to the Collins Street East Precinct. A contributory heritage place is defined at Clause 22.04 as follows:

*A contributory heritage place is important for its contribution to a heritage precinct. It is of historic, aesthetic, scientific, social or spiritual significance to the heritage precinct. A contributory heritage place may be valued by the community; a representative example of a place type, period or style;*

*and/or combines with other visually or stylistically related places to demonstrate the historic development of a heritage precinct. Contributory places are typically externally intact, but may have visible changes which do not detract from the contribution to the heritage precinct.*

25. The citation in the *Hoddle Grid Heritage Review* concludes that the subject building is of historical and representative significance at the local level. The statement of significance is reproduced as follows:

*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).*

## 7.0 Analysis

26. While the citation for 56-64 Collins Street contained within the *Hoddle Grid Heritage Review* concludes that the property is locally significant, I do not agree that the building warrants an individual Heritage Overlay control. This is due to the compromised intactness and integrity of the place and the level to which it meets the threshold for individual cultural heritage significance. Each of these issues is discussed in turn below.
27. Volume 1 of the *Hoddle Grid Heritage Review* outlines the approach taken in relation to benchmarking integrity, that is 'a method of comparison across many places to establish where a threshold for recommendation to the Heritage Overlay may be'. The benchmark indicators relied upon by the study for high rise buildings are reproduced below:

| At benchmark                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Above benchmark                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Below benchmark                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Original scale of building legible but may have one or two storeys added.</i></p> <p><i>Glazing or curtain wall may have been replaced but still reflects original characteristics.</i></p> <p><i>Ground floor changed.</i></p> <p><i>No balconies added</i></p> | <p><i>Original scale maintained - no upper floor additions.</i></p> <p><i>Original glazing pattern including early curtain wall glazing.</i></p> <p><i>Ground floor may be changed but not excessively.</i></p> <p><i>Wall surfaces of the original materials.</i></p> | <p><i>Original scale not legible.</i></p> <p><i>Curtain wall replaced, and glazing pattern considerably changed.</i></p> <p><i>Ground floor changed.</i></p> <p><i>Wall surfaces changed by recladding</i></p> <p><i>Balconies added.</i></p> |

28. The site description contained in the citation includes the following comments on the altered state of the ground floor: *'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'*. Changes to the ground floor that are not noted in the citation include the two new projecting stone cornices that delineate the ground and first floors, as well as the horizontally oriented windows that have been introduced between the granite panelled columns and curved aluminium framed glass wall to Collins Street.
29. More significantly, the citation does not recognise that all the vertical marble elements to the upper floors of the tower have been replaced or overclad with segmented stainless steel, and that the original spandrel panels at the summit of the building have been replaced with a cornice. The assertion of the citation that the former RBA 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'* is demonstrably incorrect.
30. In terms of the benchmark indicators above, the changes to the upper floors would fit the 'below benchmark' indicator of *'wall surfaces changed by recladding'*. The highly altered ground floor would also fit the 'below benchmark' indicator.
31. In response to a submission made on behalf of the owner in opposition to the Amendment, Council commented as follows in the Summary of Submissions and Management Responses included at Attachment 2 to Agenda item 6.4 of the Future Melbourne Committee dated 18 May 2021:

*Management agrees with GJM's response that [acknowledges] the exterior modifications mentioned in the submission including that 'the marble facings to the vertical structural elements were over-clad in segmented stainless steel, and the uppermost band of granite spandrel panels were removed', but is of the opinion that despite these modifications, the overall character, appearance and presentation of the buildings remains sufficiently intact to warrant inclusion in the Heritage Overlay. Despite the works in the 1990s that altered the original design of the ground floor, the original design intent remains evident and the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey office building remains.*

32. This Summary of Submissions and Management Responses also reveals that GJM, in advice to the building owner in May 2018, concluded that *'the 1990s additions and alterations particularly to the ground floor are of no heritage significance and detract from the presentation of the building.'* While GJM also stated that the building *'is likely to meet the local-level threshold for inclusion on the Heritage Overlay on a site-specific basis'*, it is unclear if the upper level changes were recognised at this time.
33. Extensive works to the exterior have resulted in the loss of critical aspects of the original character, materiality and detailing of the building. Publicity copy that was prepared at the time of the RBA's opening, as outlined at paragraph 15, highlights the importance that was placed on the high quality of the materiality in the design and construction of the building. The loss of the pale marble columns in particular has had a deleterious impact; the replacement segmented stainless steel is a generic rather than high quality material, which has greatly altered the original continuous vertical expression of structure that continued through the full height of the building. A cornice at the summit of the building replaces the original spandrel panels and further changes the language of the building.
34. At the ground floor, the cornice treatments establish a distinct visual break between the ground and first floors. These, together with the wide granite clad piers, give the lower level a heavy enclosed character that is greatly at odds with the light and open feel that the recessed concourse and slender marble columns provided the lower level originally.
35. The extent of change that has occurred to the building is such that the integrity of the place has been adversely impacted. The cumulative effect is that the original crisp International style character of the building has been overwritten with a modest but appreciable Postmodern decorative scheme.
36. In terms of the criteria used in the study to assess the significance of the place, this follows the accepted methodology as outlined in *Victoria Planning Provisions Practice Note: Applying the Heritage Overlay* (August 2018). The citation concludes that the subject building is of historical (Criterion A) and representative (Criterion D) significance.
37. In order to meet the threshold for application of the Heritage Overlay, one or more of these criteria should be met to a degree that is better than many or most other examples at a local level, or to a degree that is comparable to other examples that are subject to the Heritage Overlay. The *Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines*, although written to assist in the assessment of places of State level significance, provides guidance that can be readily adapted for the local context.
38. The basic test for satisfying Criterion A is *'The place/object has a CLEAR ASSOCIATION with an event, phase, period, process, function, movement, custom or way of life in [Melbourne's] cultural history'* and that *'The association of the place/object to the event, phase, etc IS EVIDENT in the physical fabric of the place/object and/or in documentary resources or oral history'*.
39. The citation identifies three post war themes and four dominant sub-themes associated with the subject building as follows:



| Postwar Themes                                   | Dominant Sub-themes                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Shaping the urban landscape                    | 1.8 Expressing an architectural style<br>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                                             |

40. That the subject building is associated with these themes in a general sense is not disputed. The statement of significance, however, appears to focus on only the sub-themes of 'Expressing an architectural style' and 'Beyond the curtain wall' in stating the building's significance: *'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 significance of the building in relation to the sub-themes of 'Commonwealth Government' and 'Business and finance' is not explicated.
41. The test for Criterion A also asks that 'The place/object allows the clear association with the event, phase etc. of historical importance to be UNDERSTOOD BETTER THAN MOST OTHER PLACES OR OBJECTS IN [Melbourne] WITH SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME ASSOCIATION.' While the former Reserve Bank of Australia is an example of a postwar office tower used for Commonwealth mandated financial and office purposes, the citation does not make clear how this building enables a better understanding of Melbourne's postwar multi-storey commercial buildings, operations of the Commonwealth government or business and finance than other similar examples.
42. Comparative analysis is a method that can be used to investigate similar places. Planning Practice Note 1 states *'To apply a threshold, some comparative analysis will be required to substantiate the significance of each place. The comparative analysis should draw on other similar places within the study area, including those previously included in a heritage register or overlay.'* The comparative analysis provided in the citation focusses on buildings that were constructed during the same period and that display similar characteristics in terms of their built form. As such they generally comprise commercial office towers, some of which were constructed for financial institutions. Notable exceptions include the former Hoyts Cinema Centre and the Victorian Government Offices constructed 1967-68.
43. Of the comparative examples cited, five are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (including the aforementioned cinema and government offices). Four are included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the *Melbourne Planning Scheme*, one on an individual basis, one as a contributory place in a precinct and two as non-contributory places in a precinct (although currently recommended for individual Heritage Overlay controls). The only individually listed place (HO1213), the Scottish Amicable Building

(Yuncken Freeman, 1966), had until its recent demolition a much higher level of intactness to its original form as built when compared with the subject building, with only a street level canopy added.<sup>6</sup>

44. A further 30 1960s and 1970s office buildings are listed, most of which are also proposed for heritage overlay controls under Amendment C387. Given that the significance of these places has not been tested at Panel, they are not useful comparators for the threshold for individual Heritage Overlay.
45. In relation to Criterion D, the basic test for determining if significance is met at a local level is 'The place/object is a *NOTABLE EXAMPLE* of the class in [Melbourne] (refer to Reference Tool D).' Reference Tool D defines a 'notable example' of a class as follows:
  - A fine example – the place/object displays a large number or range of characteristics that is typical of the class; the place/object displays characteristics that are of a higher quality or historical relevance than are typical of places/objects in the class; or the place/object displays the principal characteristics of the class in a way that allows the class to be easily understood/appreciated.
  - A highly intact example – the place/object displays characteristics of the class that remain mostly unchanged from the historically important period of development or use of the place/object.
  - An influential example – the place/object contains physical characteristics of design, technology or materials that were copied in subsequent places/objects of the class (direct physical influence), or other places/objects were created, altered or used in response to the characteristics of this place/object.
  - A pivotal example - the place/object encapsulates a key evolutionary stage in the development of the class
46. The statement of significance is identifying the place with the first two of these four categories of notable buildings when it states that '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).'
47. As discussed above, the intactness of the place is compromised such that the marble cladding is no longer evident. This, together with the changes to the ground floor and summit have changed the overall presentation of the building such that it cannot be described as a 'highly intact example' of the postwar Modernist style.
48. In terms of being a 'fine example', the former Reserve Bank building does not display characteristics of a higher quality or greater range than is typical for postwar modernist office buildings. The principal characteristics of the building as described in the *Hoddle Grid Heritage Review*, including 'the cuboid form, with facades displaying a regular grid composed of horizontal bands of glazing with dark spandrels and contrasting vertical columns', are standard for multi-storey buildings of the era. Moreover, the

<sup>6</sup> Guildford and Hardware Laneways Heritage Study 2017: Statements of Significance, November 2018 (Amended July 2020).

postwar Modernist character of the building is not easily understood or appreciated due to its compromised intactness.

49. The statement of significance does not make claims in relation to the building being an influential or pivotal example of its class. This is borne out when its reception by the architectural profession and broader community is considered. The building does not appear to have been recognised for its design in relevant sources including *Tall Buildings: Australian Business Going Up: 1945-1970*, by Jennifer Taylor, *Melbourne Architecture* by Philip Goad, and the 2008 *Survey of Post-war Built Heritage in Victoria* by Heritage Alliance.
50. The building is mentioned as '*an important building at the eastern end of Collins Street*' in the recent publication *MELMO: Modernist Architecture in Melbourne* (pp 143-144), however the description largely focusses on the Eureka Stockade mural, noting the irony of commemorating an insurrection in the respectable institution of the Bank. The description of the building encompasses its original condition only, and does not reference the changes that have been made that affect almost all aspects of the building that are described, including the mural. The caption to the photograph provided of a top corner of the building (p 145) does not acknowledge that the visible cladding materials are different to those discussed in the text and are not original.
51. The mural is also mentioned in the significance ascribed to the building in a brief statement in the National Trust's document *Melbourne's Marvellous Modernism*. This document also notes the '*Extensive use of marble with an elaborate design of surfaces*', although, like the mural, this material is no longer in evidence.
52. The inclusion of the former RBA in the Heritage Overlay as an individual place would represent an 'upgrade' in terms of the gradings identified by the previous heritage studies. As noted at paragraph 21, the building was graded D in the 1985 *Central Activities District Conservation Study* using a gradings system of A-F. The building identification form checked the box marked '*elaborate design of surfaces*' and listed the notable features as '*extensive use of marble*' and '*mural, grd level – Sydney (sic) Nolan, "Eureka Stockade"*'. These features have been removed or altered. Other comments made include '*represents type/era only*'.
53. It is acknowledged that the scope of the 1985 Study restricted 'comprehensive assessment' of buildings to those more than 25 years old (ie pre 1960 places), excepting award winning buildings. As such, although the 1985 Study is not a comprehensive survey of postwar buildings, it did recognise that they had the potential for heritage significance. Eagle House (1970-71), AMP Building/St James Building (1965-69), Royal Insurance Building (1962-9165) the Young Women's Christian Association (1973-1975) are examples of A graded postwar places identified by the Study.
54. The 1993 *Central City Heritage Review* identified the former RBA as a C graded place, however this is in the context of a three tier grading system in which C was the lowest grading. Grade C buildings were defined as '*of cultural significance for their representation of different phases of development in the central city. Buildings with a C grading make a contribution to the cultural value of the streetscape or precinct within which they are located*'. This definition is indicative of a place that has contributory value if located within a precinct, rather than a place of individual significance. The grading was made prior to the substantive changes to the exterior of the building.

55. The grading in the 1993 Review does not indicate that there was little recognition of postwar architecture at the time. Rather, the 1993 Review emphasised *‘the critical appreciation of postwar building stock dating between 1956 and 1974, which had not been formally assessed as part of the 1985 study’*.<sup>7</sup> Modernist buildings of the postwar era identified in the Review included the former BHP Building 140 William Street (1972), the Total Carpark, 170-190 Russell Street (1964-65), the Hoyts Cinema Complex, 134-144 Bourke Street (1966-69), Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (1970-71), Coates Building, 18-22 Collins Street (1957-59) Royal Insurance Group Building, 430 Collins Street (1962-65) and Gilbert Court, 100-104 Collins Street (1955).
56. The proposed inclusion of the former RBA in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay as an individual place means that the building should conform with the definition of a ‘significant’ graded building. The current definition for a significant heritage place at Clause 22.04 is as follows:
- A significant heritage place is individually important at state or local level, and a heritage place in its own right. It is of historic, aesthetic, scientific, social or spiritual significance to the municipality. A significant heritage place may be highly valued by the community; is typically externally intact; and/or has notable features associated with the place type, use, period, method of construction, siting or setting. When located in a heritage precinct a significant heritage place can make an important contribution to the precinct.*
57. The information presented in the citation for the place does not substantiate the identification of the place as individually significant. As the place does not meet the thresholds for significance in terms of Criteria A and D, it is not *‘individually important at...local level’*. It has been demonstrated that the former RBA is not *‘externally intact’* and that the remaining fabric does not constitute features that are *‘notable’*, elevating it above comparable structures.
58. In conclusion, the former Reserve Bank of Australia at 56-64 Collins Street is not of a level of historical or representative significance such that would warrant the introduction of an individual Heritage Overlay control as proposed by Amendment C387 to the *Melbourne Planning Scheme*.

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<sup>7</sup> Central City Heritage Review, p.11.

# Bryce Raworth

CONSERVATION | HERITAGE

## BRYCE RAWORTH

M. ARCH., B. A. (HONS), ICCROM (ARCH)

Bryce Raworth has worked with issues relating to heritage and conservation since the mid-1980s, and has specialised in this area since establishing his own consultant practice in 1991. **Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd, Conservation • Heritage**, provides a range of heritage services, including the assessment of the significance of particular sites, preparation of conservation analyses and management plans, design and/or restoration advice for interventions into significant buildings, and detailed advice regarding the resolution of technical problems relating to deteriorating or damaged building fabric.

From 2004-2011 Raworth was a member of the Official Establishments Trust, which advises on the conservation and improvement of Admiralty House and Kirribilli House in Sydney and Government House and The Lodge in Canberra. As a member of the former Historic Buildings Council in Victoria, sitting on the Council's permit, planning and community relations committees, Raworth has been involved with the registration and permit processes for many registered historic buildings. In 1996 he was appointed an alternate member of the new Heritage Council, the successor the Historic Buildings Council, and in 1998 was made a full member.

At present he provides regular advice to architects and private owners on technical, architectural and planning issues relative to the conservation and adaptation of historic buildings, and is occasionally called upon to provide expert advice before the VCAT. He is currently the conservation consultant for the cities of Kingston and Stonnington and conservation consultant to the Melbourne Heritage Restoration Fund.

With respect to historic precincts, the company has provided detailed advice towards the resolution of heritage issues along the Upfield railway line. The company is currently contributing to redevelopment plans for the former Coburg Prisons Complex (comprising Pentridge Prison and the Metropolitan Prison) and the former Albion Explosives Factory, Maribyrnong. In 1993 Bryce Raworth led a consultant team which reviewed the City of Melbourne's conservation data and controls for the CBD, and in 1997 **Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd** revised the former City of South Melbourne Conservation Study with respect to the area within the present City of Melbourne. The firm is currently completing documentation for significant heritage places and areas in the City of Stonnington.

In recent years **Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd** has also provided documentation and advice during construction on the restoration of a number of key registered and heritage overlay buildings, including the Ebenezer Mission church and outbuildings, Antwerp; the former MMTB Building, Bourke Street West, Melbourne; the former Martin & Pleasance Building, 178 Collins Street, Melbourne; the former Uniting Church, Howe Crescent, South Melbourne; Heide I & II, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Bulleen; Melbourne Grammar School, South Yarra; various guard towers and other buildings, Pentridge Prison, Coburg; and Coriylue Homestead, Curlewis.

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|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Professional Status:     | Conservation Consultant and Architectural Historian                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Current Positions:       | Conservation consultant to the cities of Kingston, Frankston and Stonnington                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Organisation Membership: | Australian Institute of Architects                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Professional Experience: | <p>independent practice as conservation consultant and architectural historian from January 1991 (ongoing). Services include: identification and assessment of the significance of sites and complexes; preparation of guidelines regarding the safeguarding of significant sites; provision of technical, design and planning advice to architects, owners and government on issues relating to the conservation of sites of cultural significance; expert witness advice on conservation issues before the VCAT;</p> <p>member, Historic Buildings Council (architectural historian's chair) 1993-1996; member, Heritage Council (architect's chair) 1998-2002;</p> <p>conservation consultant to the cities of Brighton, Northcote and Sandringham (1989 only), Essendon, Hawthorn and Kew (1989-1994), Melbourne (1992-2009) and Prahran (1992-1994)</p> <p>established the Metropolitan Heritage Advisory Service on behalf of the Ministry for Planning &amp; Environment - this service was offered to the cities of Brighton, Essendon, Hawthorn, Kew, Northcote and Sandringham in 1989-90</p> |
| Studies:                 | <p>Certificate of Architectural Conservation, ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and the Restoration of Cultural Property at Rome), 1994</p> <p>Master of Architecture by thesis, University of Melbourne, 1993 (thesis: A Question of Style: Domestic Architecture in Melbourne, 1919-1942)</p> <p>B. Architecture (First Class Honours), University of Melbourne, 1986</p> <p>B. Arts (Second Class Honours, Division A), University of Melbourne, 1986</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Committee Membership:    | <p>Twentieth Century Buildings Committee, National Trust of Australia (Victoria), 1990-1994 (Chairman 1992-1993)</p> <p>RAIA Jury, Conservation Category, 1995, 1996, 1998 and 2001 Awards (Chairman 1996 &amp; 1998)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Awarded:                 | <p>Henry and Rachel Ackman Travelling Scholarship in Architecture, 1987-88</p> <p>JG Knight Award, conservation of Heide 1, Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Victorian Chapter, 2003</p> <p>Lachlan Macquarie Award for heritage (commendation), conservation of Heide 1, Royal Australian Institute of Architects National Award program, 2003</p> <p>Award for Heritage Architecture, conservation of Coriyule Homestead, Australian Institute of Architects, Victorian Chapter, 2015</p> <p>Award for Heritage Architecture, conservation of Coriyule Homestead, Australian Institute of Architects, National Awards, 2015</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |