

Statement of Significance: RMIT Building 71, 33-89 Lygon Street, Carlton (November, 2021)

Heritage Place:	RMIT Building 71 (also known as 42 Cardigan Street, Carlton)	PS ref no:	HO1393
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What is significant?

The property at 33-89 Lygon Street (Building 71), Carlton, constructed in c.1938, is significant.

How is it significant?

The property at 33-89 Lygon Street (Building 71), Carlton, constructed in c.1938, is of local historical and aesthetic significance.

Why is it significant?

The property at 33-89 Lygon Street (Building 71), Carlton, a c.1938 three-storey former commercial/manufacturing building, is of historical significance (Criterion A). The building was designed by architects, Alder & Lacey, for textile manufacturers Davies Coop. It is associated with the historical interwar period, and pattern of development in Carlton whereby, particularly in the west and south-west of the suburb, nineteenth century buildings were being demolished and replaced with larger commercial and warehouse buildings. Davies Coop, in doubling the capacity of their spinning and weaving mills operation in Lygon Street, consolidated their landholdings to the west in the large block between Queensberry, Earl, Lygon and Cardigan streets; they also undertook an extensive building programme, which included the subject building. Of note, from the 1960s, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) began expanding north from its city campus and acquiring buildings in Carlton. RMIT eventually moved into the block developed by Davies Coop, and into some of the same buildings including the subject building, which was acquired by the Minister of Education in 1980.

The late interwar building at 33-89 Lygon Street (Building 71), Carlton is also of aesthetic significance (Criterion E). While other substantial interwar commercial/manufacturing buildings were built in Carlton, in comparative terms few share the same architectural distinction, in this case Moderne styling, and retain their overall original principal presentation. The other buildings are generally of utilitarian warehouse character, and/or have been substantially modified. The Moderne design of the subject building is reflected in the high and simply detailed parapet, horizontal bands of large regular steel-framed windows, and the formal entrance and stair bay to the south end of the façade with its

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strong vertical tower emphasis and fluting or ribbon detailing in sharp relief. The south bay also reinforces the asymmetrical façade composition, another Moderne approach. In contrast to the formality of the south end, the north end of the façade retains a double-height vehicle entrance bay with steel roller door, demonstrative of the other aspect of the original use of the building, which was part of Davies Coop's warehouse and manufacturing operations.

Primary source

Carlton Heritage Review (Lovell Chen, 2021)