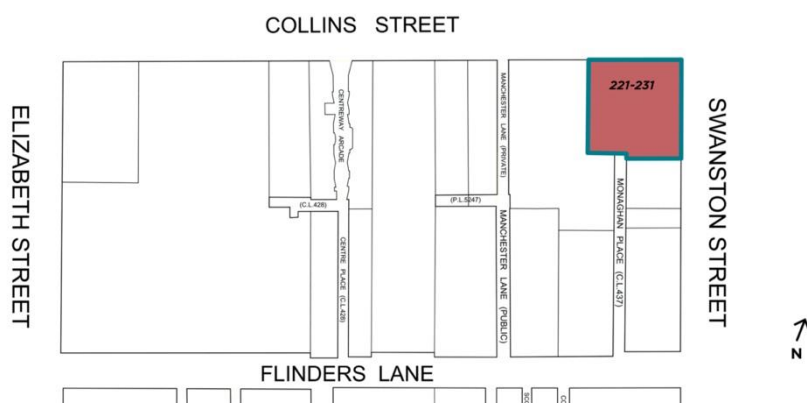


SITE NAME	Wales Corner
STREET ADDRESS	221-231 Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	102079



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).

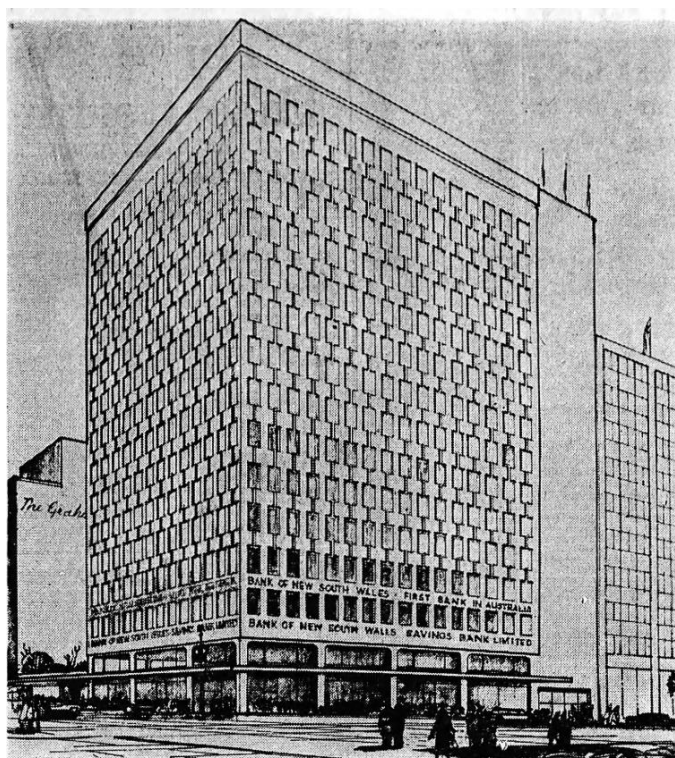


Figure 1. An earlier proposed design, published in July 1962 (Age, 18 Jul 1962:5).

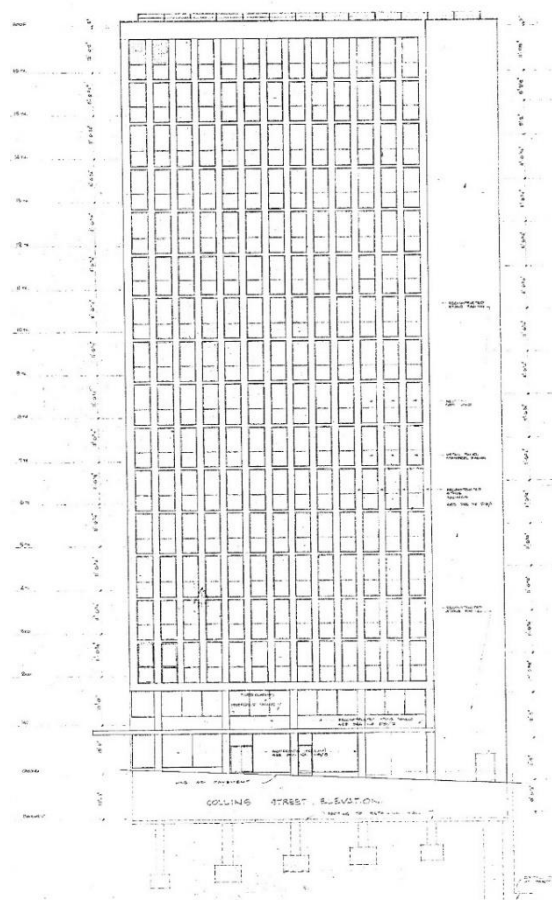


Figure 2. Northern elevation to Collins Street. Drawings by Stephenson & Turner, dated August 1964 (BAP).

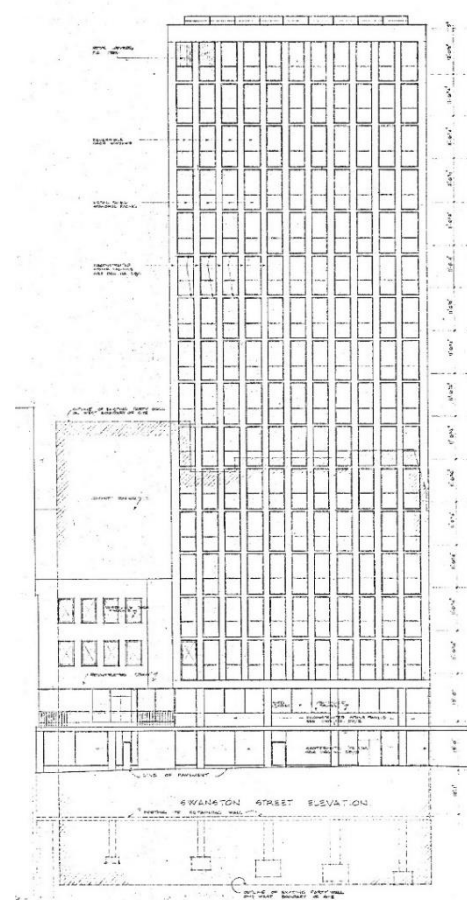


Figure 3. Eastern elevation to Swanston Street. Drawings by Stephenson & Turner, dated August 1964 (BAP).

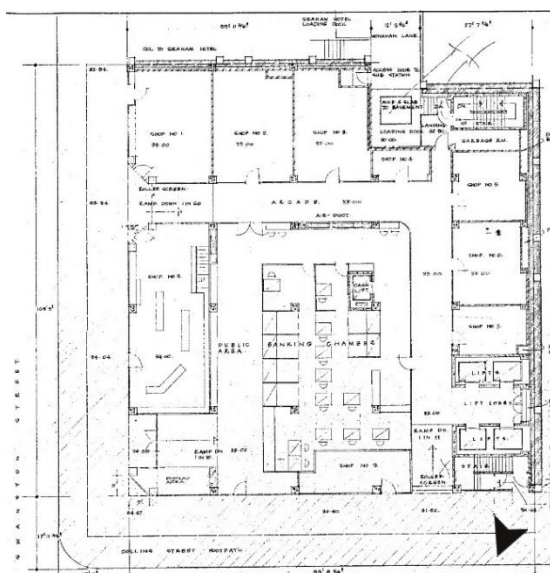


Figure 4. Ground floor plan showing the banking chambers, arcade and retail spaces. Drawings by Stephenson & Turner, dated October 1962 (BAP).

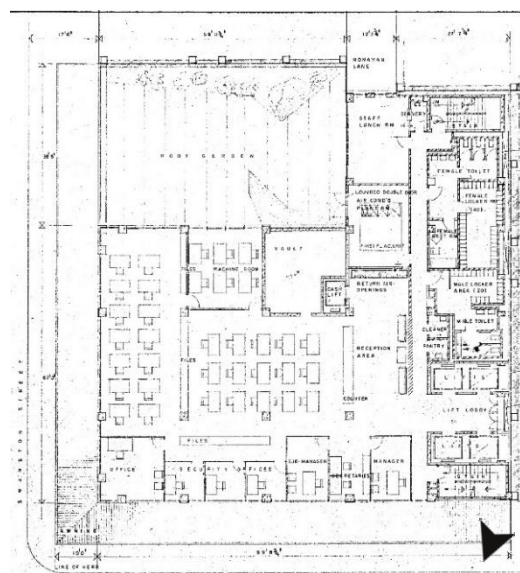


Figure 5. First floor plan showing the bank offices and rooftop garden. Drawings by Stephenson & Turner, dated August 1962 (BAP).



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:

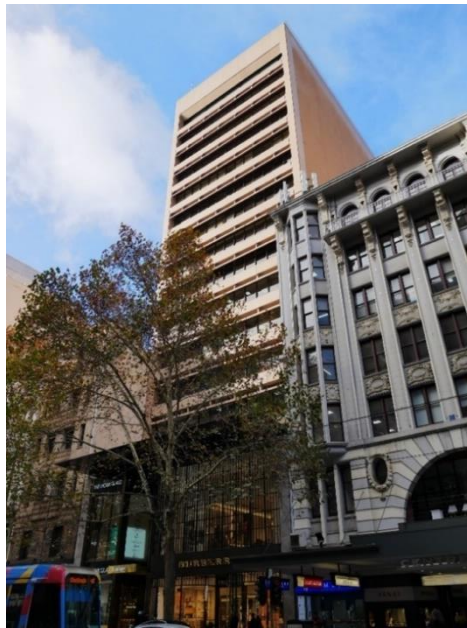
Precinct Heritage Overlay



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)



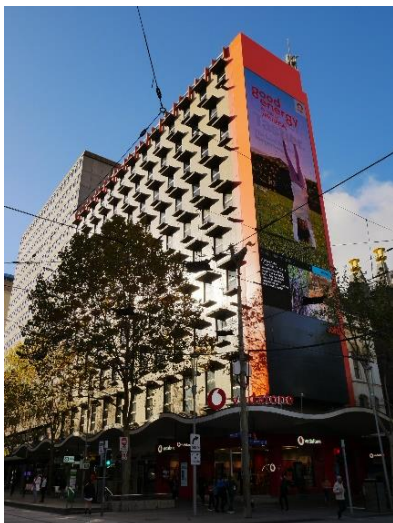
Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



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 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)



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

✓	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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Building Application Plans (BAP), City of Melbourne.

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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**

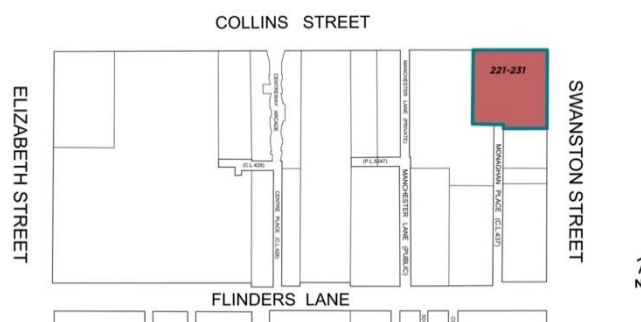
Ungraded

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)

