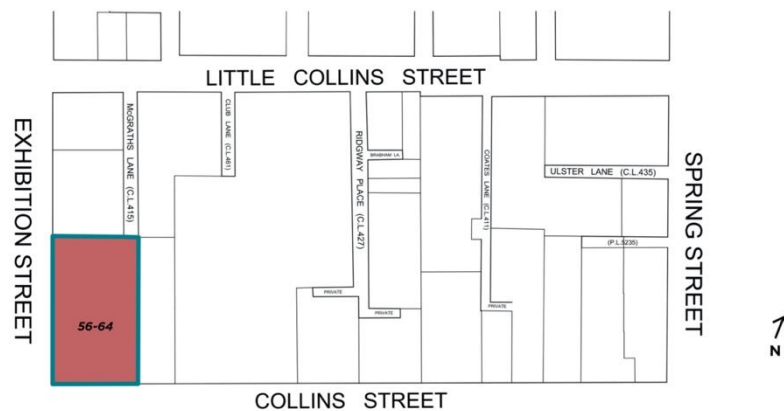


SITE NAME	Former Reserve Bank of Australia
STREET ADDRESS	56-64 Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	102164



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).

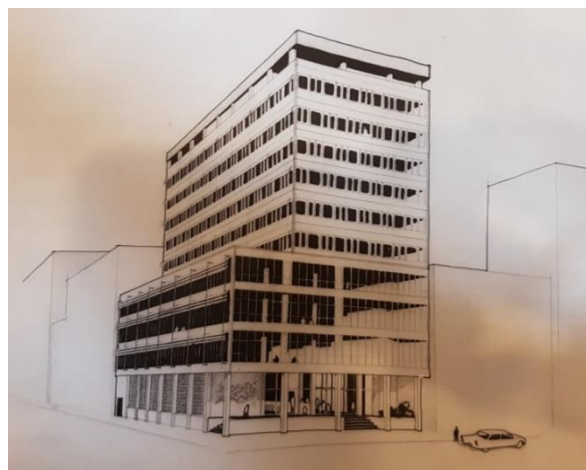


Figure 2. Preliminary exploratory design 'D' (Preliminary design 'D'; SLV, Lewis Papers).



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

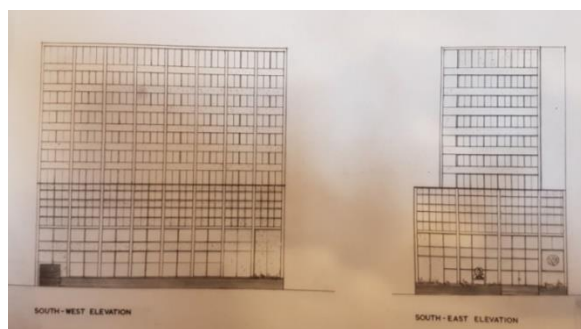


Figure 4. Preliminary exploratory design 'C' (Preliminary design 'C'; SLV, Lewis Papers).



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).

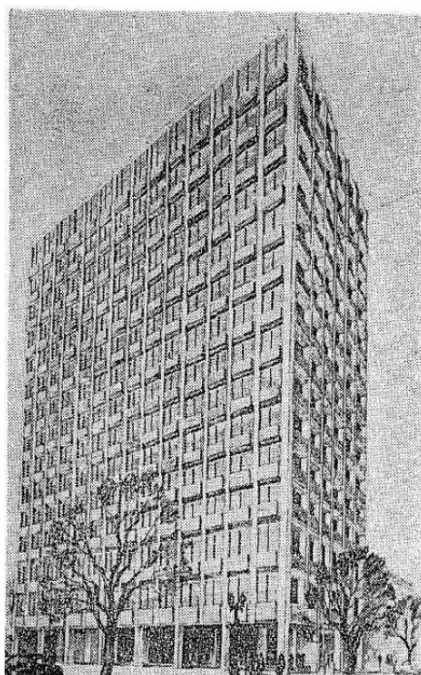


Figure 7. An illustration of the proposed 'new Reserve Bank of Australia building', published in the *Canberra Times* in February 1964.

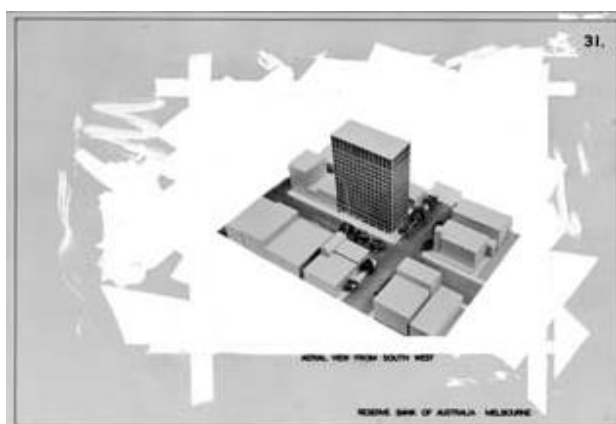


Figure 8. Model of the south and west elevations. Image dated 1957-1984; probably dates to c1964 (NAA, item B6295, 579/31).

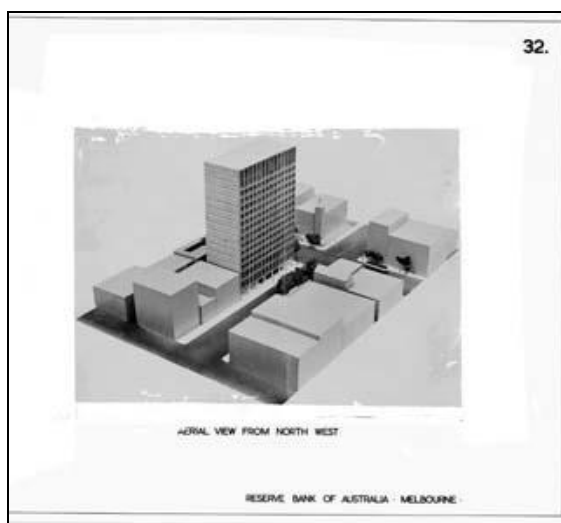


Figure 9. Model of the north and west elevations. Image dated 1957-1984; probably dates to c1964 (NAA, item B6295, 579/32).



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

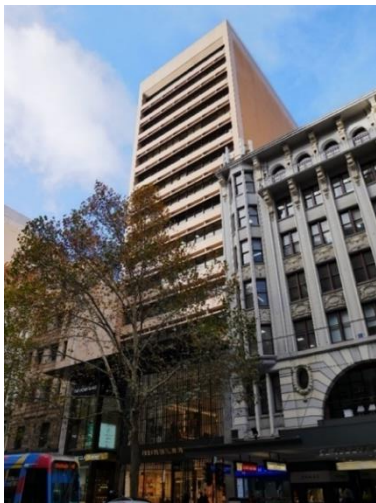
A small number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings in the Hoddle Grid within the City of Melbourne have been assessed as being of State-level significance and are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). These include:

- 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, 19741-73 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)



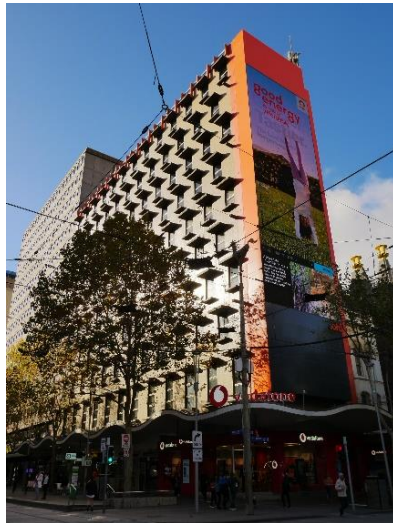
Former South British Insurance Company Ltd Building, 155-161 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961-62)



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 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 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

✓	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, City of Melbourne.

Butler, Graeme (1985), *Central Activities District Conservation Study*.

Butler, Graeme (2011), *Central City Heritage Review*.

Building Ideas (CSR Ltd. Building Materials Division), March 1965, pp 3-17.

Canberra Times.

City of Melbourne Interactive Maps (CoMMaps), Planning Applications, <<http://maps.melbourne.vic.gov.au/>>, accessed February-March 2019.

Goad, Philip (1999), *Melbourne Architecture*, Sydney.

Goad, Philip, 'Brian Lewis', in Philip Goad & Julie Willis (2011), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Port Melbourne.

Landata Victoria, Certificates of Title, as cited.

Lewis, Miles, 'Curtain Wall' in Philip Goad & Julie Willis (2011), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Port Melbourne.

National Archives of Australia (NAA), images as cited.

National Trust of Australia (Victoria) (2014), *Melbourne's Marvellous Modernism, a comparative analysis of Post-War Modern Architecture in Melbourne's CBD 1955-75*.

Notable Building citation, 'Melville House, 52-54 Collins Street', accessed via Heritage Victoria Hermes database. No date to citation.

Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia (PCA), Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public works, *Report relating to the Refurbishment of the Reserve Bank, 60 Collins Street, Melbourne (Twenty-sixth Report of 1989)*.

Reserve Bank of Australia Museum (RBAM), 'The Centenary of Sir Sidney Nolan's Birth, 22 April 2017', <<https://museum.rba.gov.au/exhibitions/sidney-nolan/>>, accessed 14 February 2019. Sidney Nolan letter to HC Coombs, dated 15 October 1962, RBA D14/157972.

Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA), Victoria, '20th Century Buildings Register'.

State Library of Victoria:

Australian Manuscripts Collection, 'Brian Bannatyne Lewis, Papers, 1941-1970', MS 9244, Box 5 Bar code M11250, File No. 34 'Reserve Bank proposed new building, 1959 – 1961'.

Picture Collection, images as cited.

Taylor, Jennifer (1994), 'Post World War II Multistoried Office Buildings in Australia (1945-1967)', Essay for Australian Heritage Commission.

Victorian Heritage Database (VHD):

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

Local citation for 'Nolan Eureka Mural, Reserve Bank 56 - 64 Collins Street, Melbourne, Melbourne City'.

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

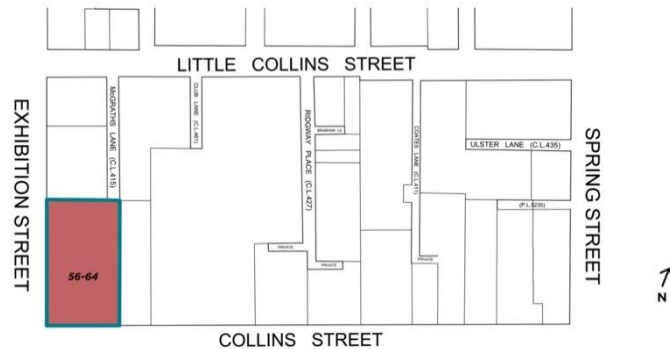
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011**

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)

