|	
SITE NAME	Former AMP Building [also known as University City Apartments (current name)]
STREET ADDRESS	402-408 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	105737
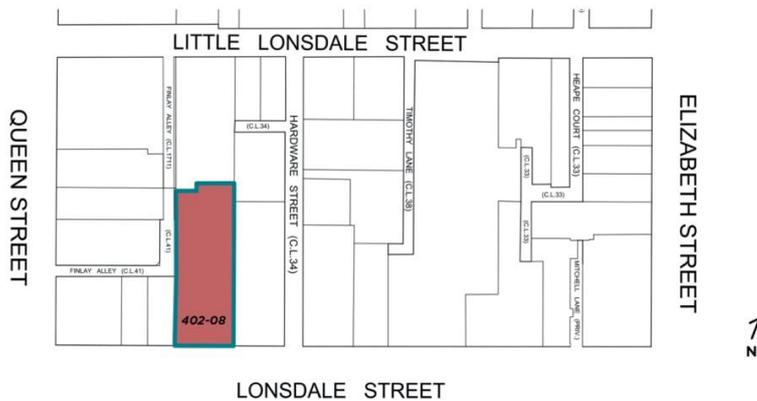
SURVEY DATE: October 2019		**SURVEY BY:** GJM Heritage	
HERITAGE INVENTORY	No	**EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY**	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	**PROPOSED CATEGORY**	Significant
		FORMER GRADE	Ungraded
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Bates Smart & McCutcheon	**BUILDER:**	Hansen & Yuncken
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	**DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:**	1956-1958

CONTEXT

THEMES

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

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Trade, Merchant
1920s	Office, Workshop, Merchant
1960s	Office, Retail

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Extent of overlay: To extent of property boundary

SUMMARY

The 12-storey office building at 402-408 Lonsdale Street was designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, under chief designer Hubert Branahan, with architects Jeffrey Howlett and Donald Bailey. The building was constructed as a speculative office building development for owners Australian Mutual Provident (AMP) Society Insurance Co, between 1956 and 1958.

CONTEXT

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

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

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

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

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

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

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

Business and finance in the postwar period

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

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

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

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

SITE HISTORY

The 12-storey office building at 402-408 Lonsdale Street was designed by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, under chief designer Hubert Branahan, with architects Jeffrey Howlett and Donald Bailey (Goad 2004:174). The building was constructed as a speculative development for owners Australian Mutual Provident (AMP) Society Insurance Co, between 1956 and 1958 (*Age*, 25 May 1956:10; *Cross-Section*, Jul 1956:3).

Bates Smart & McCutcheon called for tenders for the demolition of the earlier buildings on the site in April 1956 (*Argus*, 7 Apr 1956:21). The following month, in May 1956, the City of Melbourne received a building permit application for the new project (with an estimated total of £698,000) (BAI). The *Age* reported on the proposed building in May 1956, noting that the AMP Society's 12-storey building would be constructed of reinforced concrete on poured concrete piles, with a height of 40m (132 feet) and provision for parking on the lower and ground floors, while 'special imported double-glazed and sealed window panes' were to be used on the Lonsdale Street façade to reduce noise. The building was to contain 88,000 sq ft of office space, most of which would be available for rent (not occupied by

CONTEXT

AMP whose headquarters remained at 425 Collins Street) (*Age*, 25 May 1956:10; *Cross-Section*, Jul 1956:3).

The building was completed in 1958 by builders Hansen & Yuncken (Taylor & Stewart 2001:70; *Cross-Section,* Mar 1958). Goad (2004:174) notes that the building comprises a distinctive façade, maximizing floorspace while exploring ideas of surface modulation of the 'street wall'. Goad comments further on the project as follows:

> *While not a large or overly prestigious commission, what marked this thirteen-storey building was that it was one of the very few office blocks built in Melbourne during its office-building boom between 1955 and 1958 that was built strictly for investment purposes. The other anomaly was its façade. Unlike virtually all the other office-building commissions in the* [Bates Smart & McCutcheon] *office, its façade was not a glazed curtain wall.* Cross-Section [Mar 1958] *described the 'filing cabinet with open drawers' as having its design rationale derived from a minimum-finish maximum floor-space design, and from the fact that the 'open drawers' were in fact bay-windowed offices taking advantage of the building regulations that allowed limited projections over the street. This was indeed true but it also indicated a return in many respects to prewar notions of surface modulation in terms of city building design, and the notion of a 'street wall'.*

In 1960 the building was addressed as 406 Lonsdale Street, with various occupants to each of the floors (S&Mc). The building was subdivided into commercial units in 1995 and converted into residential units in 1998 (NTAV 2014:29).

Bates Smart & McCutcheon

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

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

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

Bates, Smart & McCutcheon continued to expand into the 1960s and 70s, with its design approach shifting from glazed curtain walls to facades of artificial stone or prefabricated concrete panels. Works in Melbourne during this period included AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, Bourke Street (1965-69) in association with US firm, Skidmore Owings and Merrill; the Guardian Building at 454-456

Collins Street (1960-61); the South British Insurance Company Ltd Building at 155-161 Queen Street (1961-62) and the Methodist Church Centre at 130-134 Little Collins Street (1966-67) with F C Armstrong.

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

Figure 1. An image of the newly completed building, published in March 1958 (*Cross-Section*, No. 65, March 1958).

CONTEXT

Figure 2. The newly completed building in 1958 (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H99.50/26).

Figure 3. A detail of the facade in 1958 (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H99.50/27).

Figure 4. Ground level of the building in 1958 and retail tenants (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H99.50/24).

Figure 5. The entrance foyer in 1958 (SLV, Wolfgang Sievers, photographer, Image H99.50/23).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former AMP Building at 402-408 Lonsdale Street is a 12-storey commercial building located on the north side of Lonsdale Street between Queen and Elizabeth streets. Constructed in 1956-58 to a design by architects Bates Smart & McCutcheon, the building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

Rectangular in overall form, the building has a large central light well, with linking section on the western boundary. The building is of reinforced concrete frame construction with brick infill to the side walls.

The main façade incorporates projecting window bays which are located on alternate floor levels, resulting in a complex, modulating surface which contrasts with the simplicity of the popular curtain wall of the period. Projecting window bays are staggered in a regular vertical pattern with broad central projecting bays alternating with pairs of narrow projecting bays at each alternate level. Behind the projecting bays, rendered spandrels and mullions divide the front façade into a vertical tripartite grid, broken only by the broad central projecting bays. The window framing has been altered, however some of the awning windows remain openable.

CONTEXT

At the ground level, shopfronts have been inserted flush with the original structure, largely obscuring the pier construction which was originally visible in front of recessed shopfronts. A recessed main entrance to the building remains at the west side.

INTEGRITY

The Former AMP Building at 402-408 Lonsdale Street, including the original form and much of the detailing, remains highly intact to its original construction in 1956-58. Works to the building, including the replacement of all window framing and glazing and the remodelling of previously recessed shopfronts to sit flush with the front façade, has altered the original design.

Overall however, the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone some alteration, this does not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey commercial building.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Former AMP Building at 402-408 Lonsdale Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of 1950s multi-storey office building design. The building's front façade, with rendered spandrels and rows of glazing with rendered mullions, which divide the entire façade into a grid-like pattern, can be clearly observed from Lonsdale Street. The front façade is not of typical curtain wall construction, and instead incorporates a regular pattern of projecting window bays which add to the grid-like appearance of the wall. Despite the redesign of the street-level façade and the altered glazing, the façade remains highly intact to its original design.

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

State-significant places

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

Locally-significant places

Precinct Heritage Overlay

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

CONTEXT

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

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

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

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

CONTEXT

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

Other Examples

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONTEXT

Analysis

As a fine and highly intact representative example of its type, the Former AMP Building at 402-408 Lonsdale Street clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey office buildings in the City of Melbourne. Similar to the small number of 1950s buildings presently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme – and a small number of other examples identified throughout the Hoddle Grid and listed above – the Former AMP Building clearly demonstrates this class of place.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	**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).

CONTEXT

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

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

OTHER

N/A

REFERENCES

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

Building Application Index (BAI) for the City of Melbourne.

City of Melbourne Libraries online Heritage Collection, reference no. as cited.

Cross-Section: No. 65, March 1958; No. 45, July 1956.

Goad, Philip, 'Moderate Modernism 1945-77' in Goad, Philip & Bates Smart (Firm) (2004), *Bates Smart : 150 years of Australian architecture*, Fishermans Bend [Vic], pp146-213.

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

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

Sands & McDougall Directory (S&Mc).

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

Taylor, Jennifer & Susan Stewart (2001), *Tall buildings : Australian business going up : 1945-1970*, Sydney [NSW].

The Age.

The Argus.

CONTEXT

PREVIOUS STUDIES

Central Activities District Conservation Study 1985	Ungraded
Central City Heritage Review 1993	Ungraded
Review of Heritage Overlay Listings in the CBD 2002	Ungraded
Central City Heritage Review 2011	Ungraded

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former AMP Building	**PS ref no:** HOXXXX
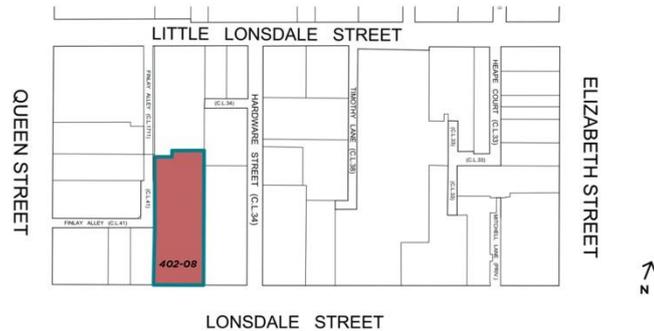
What is significant?

The Former AMP Building at 402-408 Lonsdale Street, a multi-storey office building constructed in 1956-58.

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

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

Later alterations made to the street level façade and window framing and glazing are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former AMP Building at 402-408 Lonsdale Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Constructed in 1956-58 to a design by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, the Former AMP Building has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and the prestige afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

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

CONTEXT

facade. The front façade of alternating rows of glazing and rendered spandrels, and vertical mullions which divide the facade into a grid-like pattern, and the use of materials metal window frames, demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style. The incorporation of a regular pattern of projecting window bays which add to the grid-like appearance of the façade is unusual and distinctive (Criterion D).

Primary source

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

CONTEXT