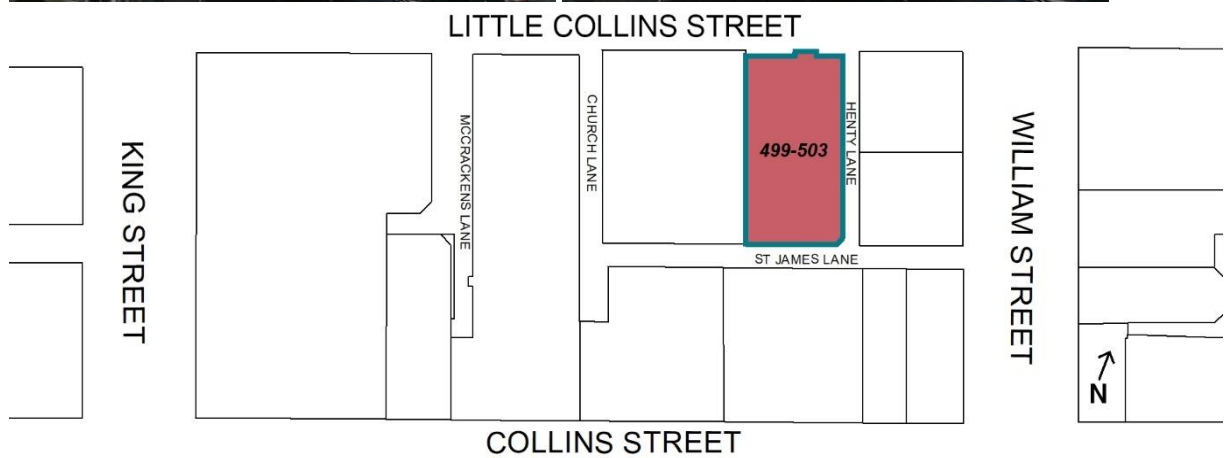
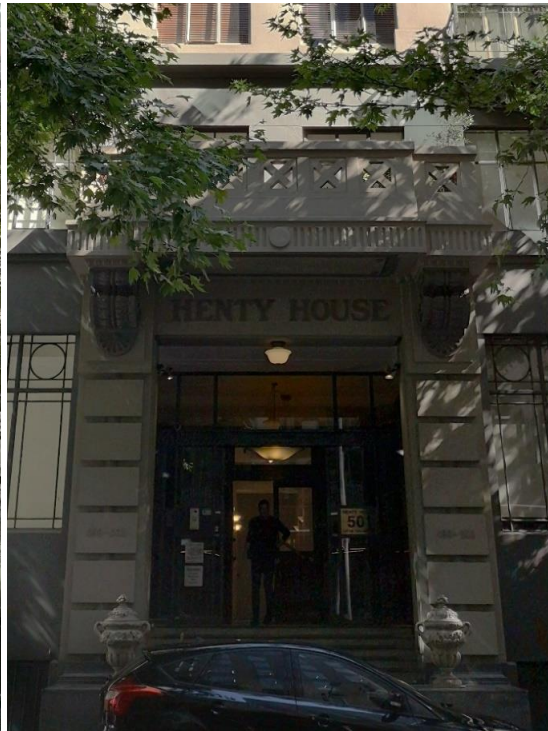


SITE NAME	Henty House
STREET ADDRESS	499-503 Little Collins Street Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	105939



SURVEY DATE: October 2018

SURVEY BY: Context

HERITAGE INVENTORY H7822-1693

EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY No

PLACE TYPE Individual Heritage Place

PROPOSED CATEGORY Significant

DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST: W & R Butler

FORMER GRADE C
BUILDER: Thompson & Chalmers

DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: Interwar Period (c1919-c1940)

DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION: 1924

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here.
HISTORIC THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
3 Shaping the urban landscape	3.2 Expressing an architectural style
5 Building a Commercial City	5.3 Developing a large, city-based economy

LAND USE

HISTORIC LAND USE	
Archaeological block no: 42	Inventory no: 693
Character of Occupation: Commercial, Religious	
Land sale details not provided.	
1855 Kearney	Part of 'St James', includes part of church site
1866 Cox	
1977 Dove	
1880 Panorama	Church shown
1888 Mahlstedt	As above
1905/6 Mahlstedt	As above
THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Religious
1920s	Offices
1960s	Offices

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

Henty House, 499-503 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, is a substantial eight-storey plus basement interwar Commercial Palazzo building. It was built in 1924 for James Henty & Co, importers and exporters. It was designed by architects Walter and Richard Butler and constructed in 1924 by contractors Thompson & Chalmers with joinery by James Moore & Sons. It provided office space for a variety of tenants, before it was acquired by the Federal Government for use as Civil Aviation Department offices. The building was converted into apartments in 1996.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Building a commercial city

Developing a large, city-based economy

Even before the early 1850s, Melbourne had established the foundational infrastructure for international trade and commerce, including retail markets, shipping agents, and industry and finance houses - the beginnings of an entrepreneurial global city (Context 2012:2). From the beginning, merchants formed one of the principal groups in Melbourne. The Yarra River and the docks west of Swanston Street were in essence the 'lifeline' of the city. Port facilities, mercantile offices and large warehouses were built in this area to serve shipping interests (Context 2012:39-40).

As Paul De Serville writes, merchants played an important role in the early Melbourne economy: they 'consigned wool to London, made [credit] advances to squatters and usually imported goods for their clients and other colonists to buy'. However after the economic depression of the 1890s, most mercantile houses in Melbourne closed (De Serville 2008). As Melbourne developed through the nineteenth century, so did her manufacturing industry, much of which was established in close proximity to existing warehouses and stores.

After the end of World War One in 1918, Melbourne, like other Australian cities, experienced an economic boom. In the first decades of the twentieth century, the last residents moved out of Melbourne city to the new suburbs, with the booming retail and manufacturing sectors rapidly taking up city properties. By 1921, 38 per cent of Melbourne's workers were employed in industry and the growth of manufacturing stimulated urban growth. By the end of the 1920s, Melbourne's population had reached one million people (Marsden 2000:29-30). Workshops, offices and small factories increasingly took over the city centre.

From the 1920s, multi-level office buildings were constructed in the city, some designed by architects, to meet the continued demand for office space by the growing service sectors associated with the retail and manufacturing boom.

Development in the city slowed with the widespread economic depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s. Because of a lack of finance over this period, instead of new construction, some city buildings were substantially remodelled to create new office, commercial and industrial spaces, and also for use by government.

Shaping the urban landscape

Expressing an architectural style

The interwar period brought with it a jump in tall building construction in the central city, made possible by the use of structural steel and reinforced concrete framing. In response, a height limit was imposed by the Melbourne City Council in 1916, dictated by the limitations on fire-fighting at that time. A maximum height of 40 metres (132 feet) was dictated for steel and concrete buildings, a limit that was not broken until the 1950s. Architects experimented with a range of styles to express the increased height in buildings.

Some styles adapted the classical styles from earlier periods. Commercial buildings in the 1920s were mainly of the Commercial Palazzo style, as exemplified by Harry Norris's Nicholas Building in Swanston Street (1925). The style was an early attempt at creating a style suitable for the tall

building. It was divided into a base, shaft and cornice, much like a Renaissance palazzo. The scale, however, was greatly enlarged, with the shaft stretching up to 10 storeys.

Other styles were more closely associated with the modern movement and expressed a more dynamic and streamlined aesthetic. Emphasis was placed on the horizontal or vertical composition of a building to accentuate certain qualities of the building. In styles such as the Commercial Gothic style and the Jazz Moderne, vertical fins and ribs were used accentuated the increased height of buildings. Landmark examples include, respectively, Marcus Barlow's Manchester Unity Building (1929-32) and the Tompkins Bros' Myer Emporium in Bourke Street (1933). (Context 2012:19-20). The Moderne style typically expressed the horizontal plane with continuous bands of steel framed windows and masonry spandrels running across the full width of a façade, and often returning around a curved corner. A landmark example is Harry A Norris' Mitchell House at 352-362 Lonsdale Street (1937).

SITE HISTORY

Henty House at 499-503 Little Collins Street, Melbourne is built on the original site of the St James Cathedral, which was relocated to the corner of Batman and King streets, West Melbourne, in 1914 (Butler 2018:49). The site was originally a Crown grant, with the foundation stone for the church laid by Charles La Trobe in 1839. St James maintained cathedral status for the Diocese of Melbourne until the larger St Pauls Cathedral, on the corner of Swanston and Flinders streets, was opened in early 1891. After this, St James reverted to being a parish church, and congregation numbers dwindled in the following years. St James occupied valuable land, and narrowly escaped demolition before it was moved to its present site (Butler 2018:73). After the relocation of the old cathedral structure, the Church sold the land on which the cathedral had stood, as well as other buildings occupying the land on the original Crown grant (Age 29 May 1923:10).

Henty House was constructed by contractors Thomson and Chalmers with joinery by James Moore & Sons in 1924 for the company of James Henty & Co, who had purchased the land by the time plans were drawn in 1923 (see Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3) (PROV VPRS 11201/P1, Unit 60).

The Henty family, Thomas, his wife Frances Elizabeth Hopkins, and children James, Charles Shum, William, Edward, Stephen George, John, Francis, and Jane, were notable for being the first European family to take up (unauthorised) land at Portland in the Port Phillip District of the colony of New South Wales in 1834, after having initially settled in Tasmania. The family grew prosperous, and members held significant positions within the early settler societies of Tasmania and Victoria, including positions within parliament (Bassett 1966).

James Henty (son of Thomas Henty) and his wife Charlotte, née Carter, and sons, Henry, Herbert and Thomas, established James Henty & Co, shippers to England of wool, wheat, whale oil and other merchandise, in Launceston c1833. After bankruptcy in 1846, James Henty returned to England. Arriving back in Victoria in 1851, James re-established James Henty & Co in Little Collins Street where his sons, Herbert and Henry, joined him as partners in 1856. James was elected in 1853 to represent Portland in the old Legislative Council, and from 1856 held a place in the Upper House until his death. A commissioner of the State Savings Bank, he became chairman in 1859; an early director of Victoria's first railway, he was later its chairman. He died in Melbourne in 1882 (Bassett 1966).

After a general decline in trade, most mercantile houses in Melbourne closed their doors in the 1890s. In 1891 the businesses of F Parbury and Co, London, and James Henty and Co, Melbourne, were

amalgamated. James Henty & Co, exists today as Parbury, Henty, Langdon (De Serville 2008; *Courier-Mail* 18 November 1933:7).

Henty House was notable at the time for the adoption of a number of innovative architectural features, including taking advantage of Melbourne city's new height regulations of 40 metres (132 feet). It exceeded the maximum height for buildings abutting the 'little' streets, such as Little Collins Street (being defined as three times the 10 metre (33-foot) width of the street by setting the top storey back from the front face of the building.

Henty House was described by a newspaper article of the time:

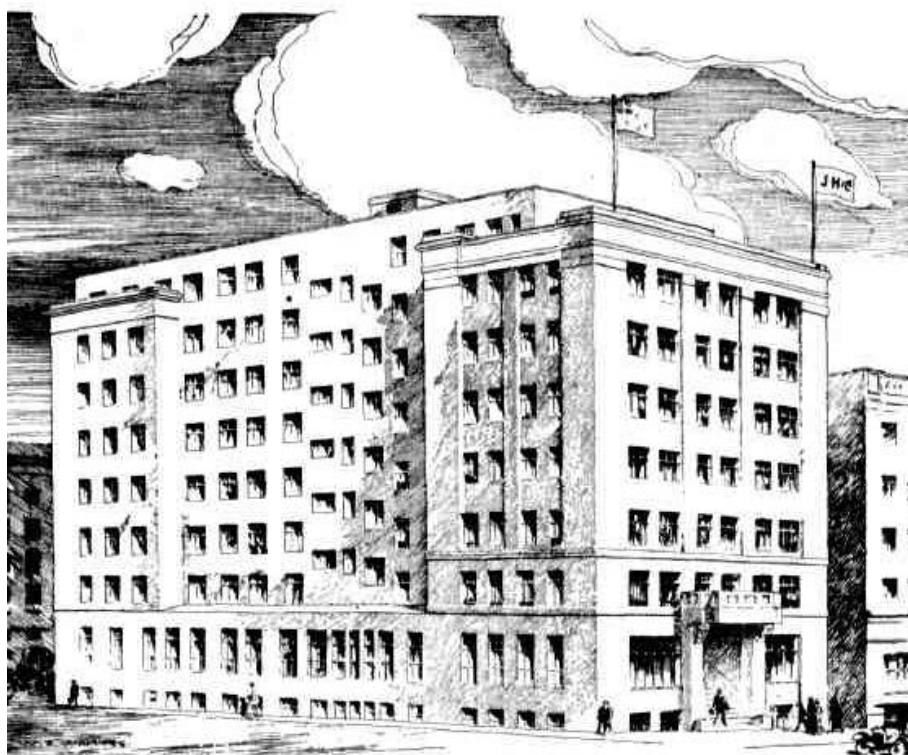
Henty House...is one of the largest structures now under way in the city. A feature of the plan is the setting back of the top story some distance from the street alignment. This has been done to prevent too much shade being cast on the street below, and is in compliance with a recent ruling under the city building regulations. This is the first occasion that this method of securing an additional story in a narrow street has been put into practice.

The building is of reinforced concrete, nine stories in height...It is to be let for offices, the basement only being partly given up to stores, Messrs James Henty and Co occupying the whole ground floor [as offices]... it is understood that more than half of the offices are already let, although the top floor is not yet completed...

*This is the first building in Little Collins Street, nine stories in height, which has been obtained under the new regulations, by setting the top story back from the front face of the building. The building has also been set back a distance of eight feet from the building line of Little Collins Street in order to make a better entrance and to improve the general appearance of the street in front of the building. The base of the building fronting Little Collins Street is polished Harcourt granite...externally the building is being finished in cement stucco of yellowish colour. The main entrance is being finished in granite and Sandusky white cement (*Herald* 2 April 1924:11).*

Original staircases were floored with marble, as were the walls. The building was also notable for having a Waygood Otis lift (*Herald* 2 April 1924:11).

CONCRETE BUILDING, LITTLE COLLINS STREET



Upper Story Set Back for Extra Height

Figure 1. Henty House as depicted in a newspaper article in 1924. (Source: *Herald* 2 April 1924:11).

In 1928, letting agents Baillieu Allard Pty Ltd rented offices to a number of tenants including the West End Branch of the Bank of New South Wales, lawyers (presumably because of the building's proximity to the legal precinct), and architects H Vivian Taylor, Soilleux and Overend (S&Mc 1928). By 1930, space in Henty House had been leased as head offices to a plethora of businesses, reflecting the diversity of service sectors located in the city at the time. Offices in Henty House in that year were leased to merchants, importers, wool brokers, manufacturing agents, solicitors, accountants, finance agents, engineers, architects, commercial artists and engineers (S&Mc 1930).

In 1947, the Federal government compulsorily acquired Henty House for use as Civil Aviation Department offices (*Argus* 30 September 1947:7). By the end of World War One, the Commonwealth Government had begun to regard civil aviation as increasingly important. In 1920 the Air Navigation Act was passed. In 1938 the Department of Civil Aviation was established. Policy, planning, finance and development of civil aviation was controlled by the department's head office in Melbourne, with 'outstation' staff supervising air radio, flight control and maintenance. The Department of Civil Aviation was reorganised in 1945 to meet the demands imposed by the expansion of civil aviation and new postwar and international conditions (NAA). The Department of Civil Aviation moved into Henty House in 1947, initially sharing the building with other private businesses including Parbury, Henty & Co Pty Ltd (incorporating Henty & Co). By 1960, the Department of Civil Aviation was listed as the sole occupant of the building (S&Mc 1950, 1960 & 1965).

The building was converted into apartments in 1996. This conversion included the introduction of balconies to the front façade. Changes were also made to the windows and entrance doors on the

ground floor, the latter notably changed to modern glass doors, replacing the timber doors with fan lighting as indicated in the architect's elevations as seen in Figure 3.



Figure 2. Henty House in c1930s. (Source: Kauffman c1915-1935, SLV)

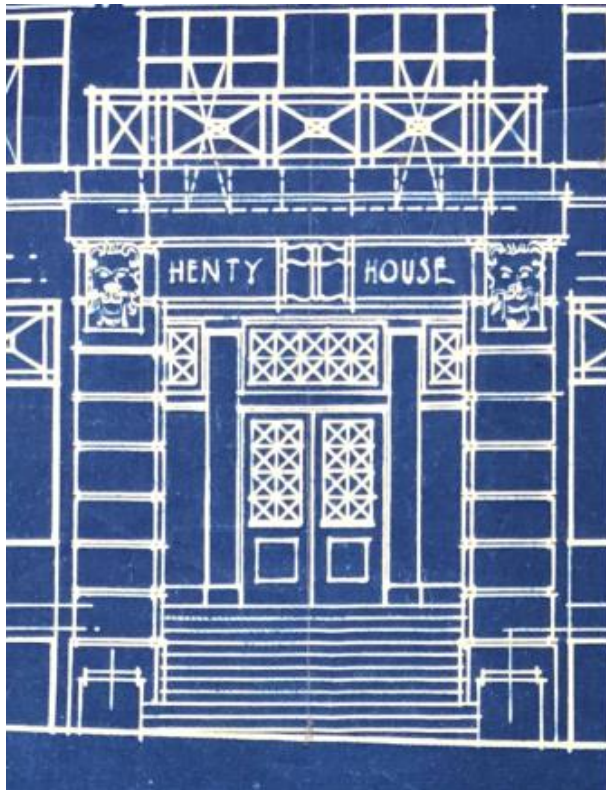


Figure 3. Original designs for front doors on principal facade. (Source: PROV VPRS 11200/P1, Unit 520)

W & R Butler, architects

The firm of W & R Butler originated from the partnership of influential Anglo-Australian Arts and Crafts architect Walter Butler, and his nephew (Austin) Richard Butler. Walter Butler migrated to Australia from England in 1888. In England, Butler had been a colleague and close friend of important figures within the Arts and Crafts movement. Following a series of partnerships in Melbourne, Butler and his nephew joined in partnership for almost two decades between 1919 and 1938. The firm designed a diverse range of both public and private buildings, however were primarily known for their residential work, with notable examples such as 'Eulinya' in Toorak (Dernelly 2012).

SITE DESCRIPTION

Henty House at 499-503 Little Collins Street, Melbourne is a substantial eight-storey plus basement interwar Commercial Palazzo building constructed of reinforced concrete in 1924. Located on the southern side of the street it is positioned between William Street and King Street. The building occupies the entire narrow block and is bound by Henty Lane to its east, St James Lane to its south and an unnamed lane to its west. The building was refurbished, subdivided and converted to apartments in 1996.

Whilst the building has been refurbished and converted to apartments the primary Little Collins Street elevation retains many of the key characteristics of the interwar Commercial Palazzo style and still maintains its original proportions and configuration. Due to the 40 metre (132 foot) height restriction in place at the time of construction the Little Collins Street elevation is seven storeys high with an eighth level recessed behind.

The ground floor and mezzanine above are expressed as a base to the building, and are partially clad in a veneer of stone (Harcourt granite). The ground floor has large openings with original decorative multipane steel framed windows to the Little Collins street façade. Two simple rectangular projecting spandrels separate the base at first and second floor levels from the floors above. Heavily rusticated engaged columns flank the recessed entry to the building with a balcony above sitting on large console scrolls. Modern automated glass doors have been installed at the entry however the marble cladding to the walls and floor of the lobby, as well as bronze signage 'Henty House' and the glazed timber entry door ensemble appear to be original.

Above the two base levels, the facade originally had three equal vertical bays created by a pair of simple unadorned pilasters, with each bay comprising a pair of square windows per floor. The two outer pairs of windows at each upper level were combined and cantilevered steel framed balconies were inserted as part of the conversion of the building into apartments, while the central bay windows were retained. The facade is of smooth painted render, which is probably over non-loadbearing brickwork, and terminates at a simple coved cornice. Simple incised lines mark the sill and head line of each window and is an original detail of the building. The building edges are marked by shallow rusticated columns which are a later addition.

The side and rear elevations are simple in design, with the first floor spandrel and roof cornice the only aspects of embellishment to relieve the smooth painted render walls, other than a regular pattern of cantilevered balconies added in 1996, replacing original windows. However, many of the original steel-framed windows appear to have been retained, some of which include unusually tall opening sashes.

INTEGRITY

The building is relatively intact with some changes visible to original or early fabric. The building retains its original built form, fenestrations, parapet and rusticated engaged columns with balcony above at the entry. It also retains its original decorative multipane windows at street level to the Little Collins Street façade and the original glazed timber entry door ensembles with hardware. Several original steel framed windows are also extant. Alterations and additions include the consolidation of window openings and addition of balconies to the front and side elevations, rustication to the building edges and automated entry doors at street level. Overall the building is of moderate to high integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Structural steel and reinforced concrete framing became a popular building method in interwar Melbourne, inspired by Chicagoan architecture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Departing from load-bearing brick walls, many 1920s examples employed these new building materials allowing for larger more prominent windows whilst also facilitating increased building heights. Most of the buildings were designed in the interwar Commercial Palazzo or Chicagoesque styles, both of which derived from the rebuilding of the core area of Chicago after the 1871 fire. Although they were characterised by an expressed structural system of concrete columns and floor plates, these examples typically included elements of classical detailing (albeit restrained) in the form of a rusticated base, expressed pilasters, projecting cornices and decorative mouldings.

Taking advantage of the new 40 metre (132 foot) height restriction (30 metre or 99 foot for 'little' streets), many 1920s examples adopted architecture styles with the emphasis on vertical façade elements to emphasise the tall height of buildings. During the earlier phase of this interwar period, the more imposing commercial buildings were usually designed in the Commercial Palazzo style, where the upper façade is clearly distinguished from the solid base level in terms of appearance and/or use.

The following examples are comparable with 499-503 Little Collins Street, being of a similar use, scale, style and/or construction date. The images and descriptions are provided by CoM Maps unless stated otherwise.

Former Union Bank, 351-357 Elizabeth Street, 1926-1927 (HO1019)

A five-storey rendered brick bank building. Designed by Butler & Martin in the Commercial Palazzo style and built for the Union Bank by Thompson & Chalmers in 1928.



Figure 4. 351-357 Elizabeth Street, built in 1926-28.

Former Kelvin Hall, 53-55 Exhibition Street, 1927 (HO1027)

Formerly known as Kelvin Hall. A seven-storey cement rendered brick office building. Designed by Godfrey & Spowers in the Commercial Palazzo style and built for The Allied Societies Trust Limited in 1927. This entity was an amalgam of various professional societies such as surveyors, engineers and architects and it was these bodies that first tenanted the building. In 1968 the auditorium was converted into a theatre and became known as the Playbox. In 1984 the auditorium was destroyed by fire. The property was subdivided in 1990.



Figure 5. 53-55 Exhibition Street, built in 1927.

Former Victorian Cricket Association Building, 1-9 Exhibition Street, 1925 (HO1035)

The former Victorian Cricket Association Building. An eight-storey brick former office building with a mezzanine. Designed by H Croxton Davey in the Commercial Renaissance Palazzo style and built in 1925. Refurbished, subdivided and converted to ground level retail and upper level residential units in 1993.



Figure 6. 1-9 Exhibition Street, built in 1925.

388-390 Bourke Street, 1930 (HO1206)

Nine storey brick office building with ground level retail. Designed by AA Fritsch in the Neo-Greco style and built in 1930.



Figure 7. 388-390 Bourke Street, built in 1930.

Francis House, 107 Collins Street, 1927 (HO573)

Francis House is a six-storey reinforced concrete office building with a basement. Designed by William Arthur Mordey Blackett and William Blackett Forster in the Neo Renaissance style. Built by Scott & Sorrell and completed in 1927. Noted for being the inaugural winner of the RVIA award for street architecture in 1929.



Figure 8. 107 Collins Street, 1927.

Collins Gate, 377-379 Little Collins Street, 1924 (Recommended as significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review)

377-379 Little Collins Street was originally constructed in 1925 as a four-storey interwar commercial corner building with elements of the Chicagoesque style, with some aspects of the Georgian Revival

style. It exhibits the pilasters and spandrels, large windows, strong base and cornice of the former style but is somewhat eclectic in its overall use of a range of stylistic devices.



Figure 9. Collins Gate, 377 Little Collins Street, 1924

Henty House at 499-503 Little Collins Street, Melbourne is a substantial eight-storey plus basement interwar Commercial Palazzo building constructed of reinforced concrete in 1924. It is comparable with a number of other HO listed places within central Melbourne being of a similar scale, style and construction date. These examples all combine elements of classical detailing (albeit restrained) in the form of a prominent base (frequently rusticated), expressed pilasters, projecting cornices and decorative mouldings.

The former Kelvin Hall at 53-55 Exhibition Street is particularly comparable.. Both sites demonstrate characteristics of the Commercial Palazzo style, the buildings are of a similar scale and share many characteristics, including a façade divided into equal bays by projecting pilasters terminating at a cornice and punctuated by multipane steel frame windows. Both buildings are quite restrained in their use of applied ornamentation or exotic materials such as glazed terracotta faience, although the former Kelvin Hall does feature a decorative moulding below the cornice at each end of the building. However, Henty House retains its elaborate entry porch and lobby, which is a notable feature from street level and evidence of its importance as the headquarters of the influential James Henty & Co.

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 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

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Sands & McDougall, *Melbourne and Suburban Directories* (S&Mc), as cited.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985**D

**Central City Heritage
Study 1993**C

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002**Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011**Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Henty House



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

Henty House at 499-503 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, an eight-storey Commercial Palazzo building built in 1923 to a design by W & R Butler.

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

- The original built form and scale;
- The external configuration of Little Collins Street facade demonstrating aspects of the interwar Commercial Palazzo style and wall surfaces of painted cement render;
- The original multipane and other steel framed windows;
- The rusticated engaged columns with a balcony above sitting on large console scrolls flanking the recessed entry to the building; and
- The original or early details in the lobby including the marble cladding, glazed timber entry door ensembles with hardware, letterboxes and lift surround.

Later alterations, including balconies added to the Little Collins Street elevation, are not significant.

How it is significant?

Henty House at 499-503 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, is of local historic and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Henty House at 499-503 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, built in 1924, is historically significant for the evidence it provides of Melbourne's post-World War One demand for office space from service sectors related to the 1920s' growth of manufacturing and retail development . During the economic boom of the

1920s, an increasing number of commercial enterprises constructed architect designed multi-storey premises in the city. Henty House is historically significant for being the first multi (nine) storey building in Little Collins Street, obtained under the 1916 height regulations by setting the top storey back from the front facade of the building. It is historically significant as one of only a few merchant houses constructed in the city at the time. (Criterion A)

Henty House at 499-503 Little Collins Street is significant as a largely intact example of interwar commercial development in central Melbourne, utilising the interwar Commercial Palazzo style that (along with the Chicagoesque style) characterised the early phase of this wave of development. It demonstrates key characteristics of the style, such as a strong vertical emphasis resulting from the projecting pilasters dividing the façade into three vertical bays sitting above a strong base separated from the upper levels by a pair of simple spandrels and finishing with a modest but interesting coved cornice. While overall, the principal elevation is quite understated in the degree to which it demonstrates the key characteristics of the style its elaborate entry porch and lobby provide evidence of its importance as the headquarters of the influential James Henty & Co. Significant fabric includes the rusticated engaged columns supporting a balcony above sitting on large console scrolls, flanking the recessed entry to the building with its use of quality materials including marble cladding, glazed timber entry door ensembles with hardware, letterboxes and lift surround. (Criterion D)

Primary source

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