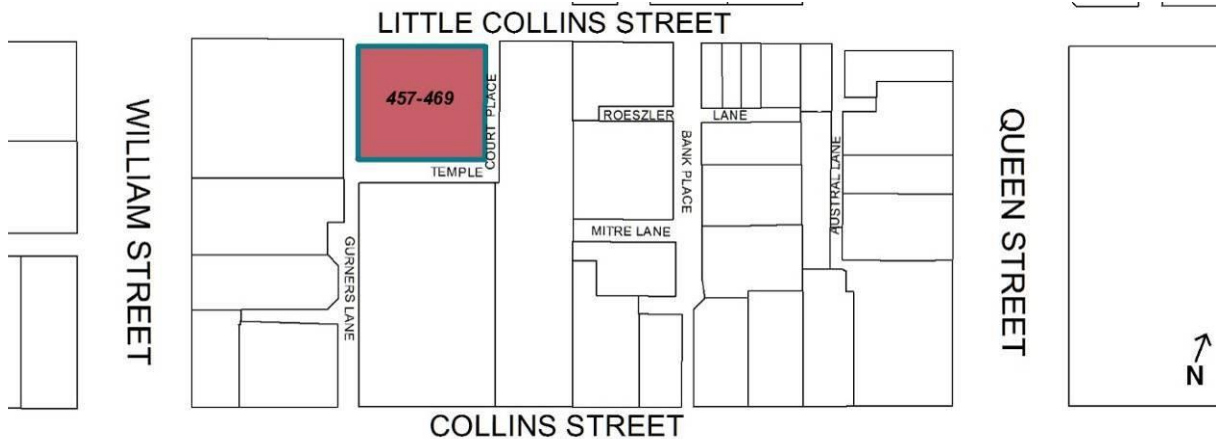
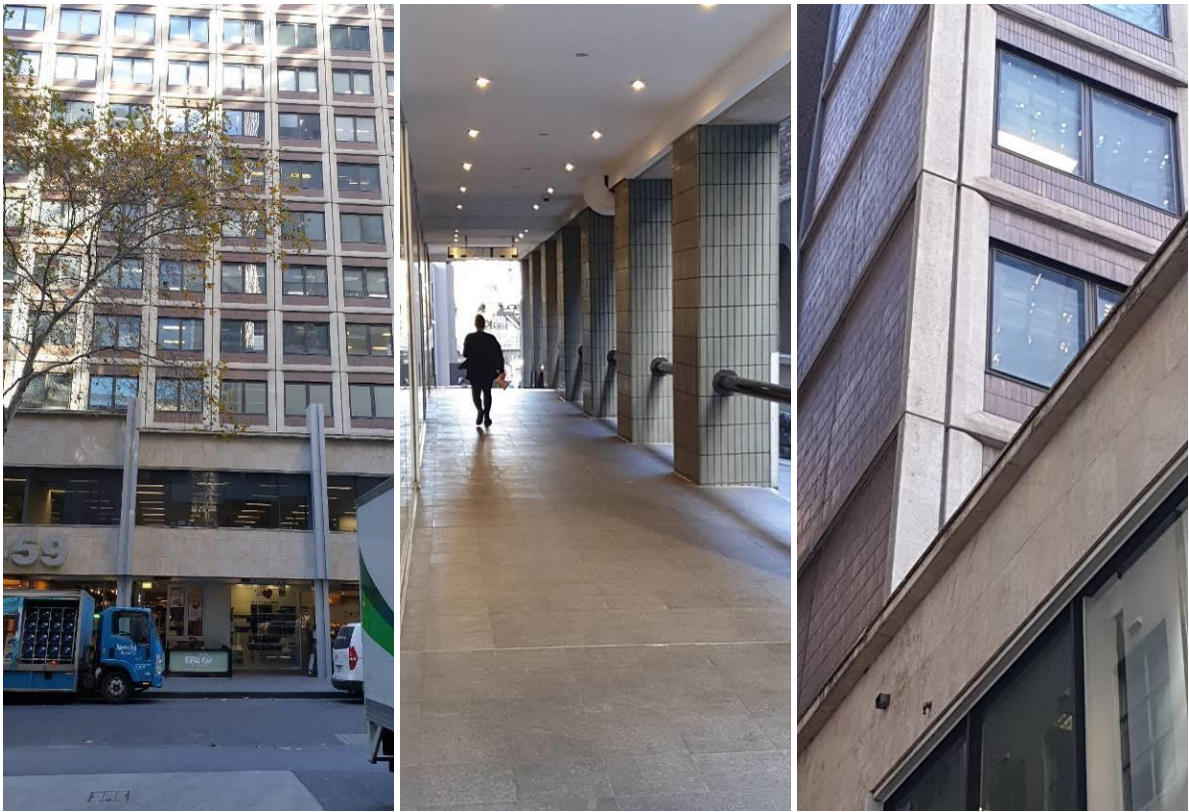


SITE NAME	Cowan House
STREET ADDRESS	457-469 Little Collins Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	105938



SURVEY DATE: May 2019

SURVEY BY: Context

HERITAGE INVENTORY N/A

EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY No

PLACE TYPE Individual Heritage Place

PROPOSED CATEGORY Significant

FORMER GRADE Ungraded

DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST: E and G Kolle & Associates

BUILDER: K G Hooker

DEVELOPMENT PERIOD : Postwar Period (1945-1975)

DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION: 1969

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, 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
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Offices
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

Cowan House, at 457-469 Little Collins Street, is an 18 storey postwar office building designed by E and G Kolle & Associates, architects and engineers. Opened in 1969 for Capital Counties (Australia) Pty Ltd, it was occupied by that company until c1973. Initially named the Capital and Counties building, from 1974 it *was known as Cowan House* after its ground floor occupants, Cowan J Assets Pty Ltd, investment consultants who occupied the building from 1970-73. It is used mainly as office space today.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

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

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

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

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

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

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

Beyond the curtain wall

The dominant glass box design of the late 1950s was challenged in the 1960s as the shortcomings of the fully glazed curtain wall became apparent – in particular its poor thermal performance – and new technologies became available. Advances in concrete technology, including the development of precast concrete, impacted greatly on both the appearance and structure of the commercial tower form from the 1960s onwards.

By the mid-1960s, architects were experimenting with a range of solid cladding materials for tower buildings including precast concrete, stone, reconstituted stone, tile and brick, as well as various metals for cladding, screening and detailing. A number of buildings continued to adopt true curtain wall construction; however, a different aesthetic was created by the use of solid external cladding in place of the typically glazed spandrels of the 1950s. This aesthetic is evident in a number of existing buildings in the city centre including the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street (1960-61), with its stone-faced precast concrete panelled facades.

Concrete advances saw an increase in the use of reinforced column and slab construction in 1960s multi-storey building design, however concrete-encased steelwork also continued to be used. Some buildings incorporated structural elements in their main facades (for example load-bearing precast concrete panels or structural mullions) so were therefore not of true curtain wall construction. The structural nature of these facades was not necessarily apparent to the observer and the buildings continued to display the well-established repetitive characteristics of the true curtain wall façade, such as at Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street, designed by Peddle Thorp & Walker in association with Meldrum & Partners (c1968-70).

A broad range of design approaches became apparent in multi-storey commercial buildings of the 1960s and early 1970s. The horizontality of curtain walling was often balanced by the addition of vertical elements such as façade columns, strips or fins, which introduced textural patterns and visual strength to the facades of a number of buildings. Other multi-storey towers clearly expressed their structure externally with grid-like facades which clearly reflected the internal trabeated structural system. Sun screening provided additional patterning to facades, either as a repetitive decorative motif across the façade, as an expression of the window frames (such as at Royal Mail House, 253-267 Bourke Street designed by D Graeme Lumsden, 1961-63), in the form of balconies (as at the Melbourne Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney building, 251-257 Collins Street, 1971-73), or occasionally as an entire screen attached to the exterior face of the building.

Buildings also varied with towers set within plazas or on dominant podiums. The State Savings Bank of Victoria at 45-63 Swanston Street, designed by Buchan Laird & Buchan (c1974), is one example of a building constructed with a dominant podium. Buildings were sometimes set back from the street line behind public plazas – a strategy adopted to gain council approval for additional building height and evident in the Bates Smart McCutcheon designed Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building at 359-373 Collins Street (c1972-1975) – while others were built within larger plaza spaces, such as the AMP Tower & St James Building Complex (1965-69), designed by US-based firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM).

Business and finance in the postwar period

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

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

The construction of large bank buildings was also prolific during the postwar period with the passing of the Banking Act 1947, which led to an increase in the number of bank branches established in Victoria. One of the most significant changes in banking in Australia at this time was the creation of the new Reserve Bank of Australia in 1959, which replaced the central bank known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Heritage Alliance 2008:17).

Bank buildings constructed in the central city during this period included the State Savings Bank of Victoria at 233-243 Queen Street (1967-68), the Bank of Adelaide Building at 265-269 Collins Street (1959-60) and the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building at 251-257 Collins Street (1971-73).

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

SITE HISTORY

The subject land was first purchased by G Smith and G Robson in 1837 as part of Crown Allotments 2 and 3 of Block 14 respectively ('Plan of Melbourne' 1838; DCLSV 1839).

Before Cowan House was constructed, an assemblage of buildings occupied the subject land between Gurners Lane and Temple Court Place, with three buildings fronting Little Collins Street and several smaller structures built on the rear half of the allotment (Mahlstedt Map no 14, 1888; Mahlstedt Map Section 1 no 17, 1925). The buildings were addressed as numbers 455 to 469 Little Collins Street between 1900 and 1965 (S&Mc 1900, 1965).

Brougham Chambers, a three-storey office building, existed on the corner of Little Collins Street and Gurners Lane from c1900 to 1965 (S&Mc 1900, 1965). The Chambers were let to several professional tenants during this time, typically to individuals engaged in the legal profession, consistent with the use of many of the office buildings in the area.

Capital & Counties (Australia) Pty Ltd acquired the subject site in 1965 (CT:V8912 F035). In 1967 a building permit was filed by the company for the erection of a new building at 457-469 Little Collins Street to the value of \$1.8 million, and in 1968 a tender was advertised for the construction of a multi-level office building on the site (Age 10 February 1968:81). It opened on 9 June 1969 (Age 13 June 1969:12).

Capital & Counties (Australia) Pty Ltd was a Melbourne-based subsidiary of Counties Properties Company Ltd, an English real estate investment company and developer with a portfolio of prestigious properties across the United Kingdom, Europe and America (Age 27 April 1971:16). The subject building was the company's first venture into Melbourne city development (Age 20 July 1968:4). Within three and a half years of its establishment in Melbourne, the company had invested in the erection of six major office buildings – four in Melbourne and two in Sydney – with a total value of between \$80 and \$90 million (Age 27 April 1971:16). In Melbourne, this included Marland House (also designed by E & G Kolle) and Dalgety House, both in Bourke Street and both built concurrently with the subject building (Age 6 June 1968:7; Age 27 April 1971:16).

K G Hooker, builders, constructed the building to the design of architects E & G Kolle & Associates (Age 10 February 1968:81; Age 2 April 1969:24). The building was constructed of reinforced concrete columns, beams, floors and roof with a colonnade on the northern and eastern elevations (see Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3). The structure was built using 'waffle' formwork flooring slabs, a new technique at the time, noted for its weight-saving efficiency (Age 2 April 1969:24). Capital & Counties (Australia) Pty Ltd and the building's architects, E & G Kolle & Associates, were both occupants of the new building along with Harston Partridge & Co Pty Ltd, law stationers, and Weigall & Crowther solicitors, who had both occupied an earlier building on the subject site (Age 13 June 1969:12; Age 7 March 1970:90; S&Mc 1974).

Notable long-term tenants on the site included: Harston Partridge & Co Pty Ltd printers and law stationers at 455-457 Little Collins Street from c1925 and in the subject building until at least 1983; and Weigall & Crowther, solicitors, at 459-463 Little Collins Street from c1915 to 1965, who were also tenants in the subject building until c1987 (S&Mc 1915, 1925, 1965; Age 27 June 1970:60; Age 7 July 1983:20; Age 27 May 1987:80).

The subject building at 457-469 Little Collins Street was known as the Capital and Counties building until 1973, after which it appears in the Sands & McDougall directory as Cowan House (S&Mc 1974). The building took the name of its ground floor occupants, Cowan J Assets Pty Ltd investment consultants, who were listed as the tenants there in 1970 but had vacated the premises by 1974 (Age 20 July 1968:4; S&Mc 1970, 1974).

James Wright Cowan was an economist and investment counsellor, director of James Cowan Associates Pty Ltd and senior partner in several investment firms associated with the Cowan Group (Sydney Morning Herald 2 March 1967:8; Canberra Times 21 April 1991:29; Age 25 February 1970:13). The Cowan Group encompassed several brokering and investment corporations active in the 1960s and 1970s in Melbourne and Sydney (Sydney Morning Herald 5 March 1964:14; Sydney Morning Herald 6 March 1971:35; Age 3 September 1970:15; Sydney Morning Herald 10 January 1968:14). In 1971, Functional Holdings Ltd put in a bid for the takeover of the Cowan Group (Holdings) Ltd (Sydney Morning Herald 17 March 1971:21). Investors Diversified Benefits Pty Ltd, distributors for James Cowan Investment Services, operated on the eighth floor of the subject building in 1970 (Age 14 November 1970:100).

BP Australia Nominees Propriety Ltd acquired ownership of the building in 1978 (CT:V8912 F035).

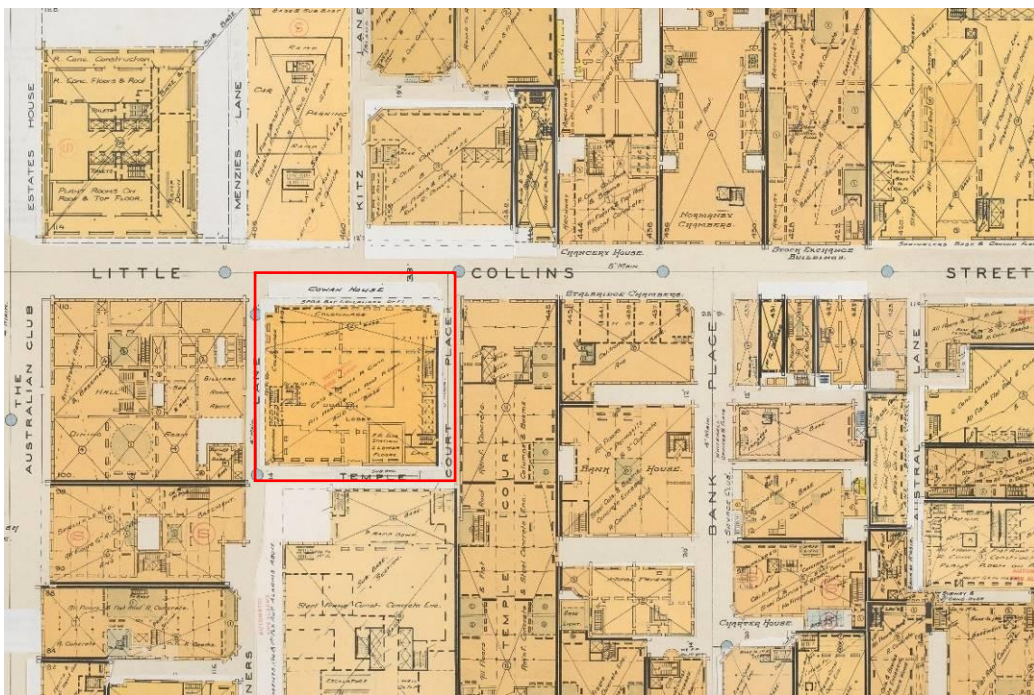


Figure 1. Extract from plan showing subject building outlined in red. (Source: Mahlstedt 1948, SLV)



Figure 2. Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street, Melbourne (Sievers 1970, SLV copyright)



Figure 3. Detail of Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street, Melbourne (Sievers 1970, SLV copyright)

In 1985 internal alterations and refurbishments were carried out on levels one to 14 of the subject building, which was subsequently advertised for sale as a 'modern recently refurbished building' in 1987 (MBAI; *Age* 24 February 1987:33). The ground floor had construction work and alterations carried out in 1991; it is likely that this work involved the infill of the plaza (MBAI).

The building presently houses 23 businesses, two shops, and food and drink outlets (CoMMaps).

E and G Kolle & Associates, architects and engineers and occupier 1969-c1975

E and G Kolle & Associates were the architects and engineers of the subject building, and occupied the premises until c1975. E and G Kolle & Associates comprised Erik and Grethe Kolle.

Erik Kolle was a Danish engineer practising in Melbourne in the postwar era (Age 23 January 1951:3; Age 11 February 1956:58). Erik Kolle & Associates Pty Ltd, a chartered engineering consultants' firm, was established c1956 with an office located in William Street, Melbourne (Age 11 February 1956:58). Kolle reputedly was responsible for introducing lightweight foam concrete to Australia, a patented technique that involved adding aluminium powder to cement mixture to create a lightweight concrete (Sydney Morning Herald 4 July 1951:2).

Danish born Grethe Kolle was a registered architect and a member of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (Age September 1958:49). She arrived in Melbourne from Denmark in 1952 where she worked in an architect's office while studying for an examination to be registered as an architect in Australia (Sun-Herald 28 November 1954:60). She studied at a technical college in Copenhagen before taking her degree at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Denmark (Sun-Herald 28 November 1954:60; News 11 November 1954:20). As part of her course, Grethe was one of four women in a cohort of 100 who completed a practical course in bricklaying and plastering (Sun-Herald 28 November 1954:60).

E and G Kolle & Associates, architects and engineers, was established c1963 and appears to have operated until c1975 (Age 18 April 1963:7; Age 21 September 1974:74). The firm designed the Unitarian Peace Memorial Church in Grey Street, East Melbourne, opened in 1966 (Cross-Section 1966). They were responsible for the design of Marland House at 562-574 Bourke Street (1975), which, at 32-storeys, was then one of the tallest buildings in Australia, and were the architects for a \$50 million development at the Royal Agricultural Society Showgrounds, Moore Park, Sydney, and the MLC Centre in Martin Place, Sydney (1975) (Age 27 April 1971:13; Age 18 August 1973:5; NSW State Archives and Records; SRIA 1994:15).

SITE DESCRIPTION

Cowan House at 457-469 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, is an 18-storey commercial building in the Post-War Modernist style constructed in 1969 and designed by architects E and G Kolle & Associates. Located on the southern side of Little Collins Street, it occupies an island site bound by Temple Court Place to its east and south and Gurners Lane to the west.

The principal façade to Little Collins Street comprises a 15 storey office tower with a substantial setback from a two-storey podium level built to the street frontage. The principal tower façade is symmetrical, comprising nonloadbearing precast concrete curtain wall panels divided into 10 vertical bays. Each panel is a U-shaped precast concrete frame with a large window opening infilled with two panes of fixed glass in an aluminium frame. Above and below each window are two courses of narrow red/brown glazed tiles laid in vertical stack bond. The top of the building has no formal termination as is typical of the style, except that a concrete frame extends above the roof line at every second column grid, forming a pergola, with a simple metal balustrade set between the concrete posts. The 17th floor of the building is recessed, creating a roof deck that originally serviced a penthouse level.

At the street level there is a two-storey horizontal podium built to the property boundary, supported by a colonnade of five aluminium clad columns. The podium returns into the Temple Court Place and Gurners Lane frontages, with recessed sections at the corners. A continuous horizontal band of glazing extends around the first-floor podium, and the wall above and below the band of glazing is clad in masonry (probably limestone) tiles, which may be a later alteration (refer to 1970 configuration in Figure 2 & Figure 3). Aluminium-clad vertical fins are fixed to the face of the podium in alignment with the columns, probably as part of the 1991 alterations. The street level shop fronts are set back to form an undercroft, and the shop fronts have been replaced.

The podium undercroft continues along Gurners Lane as a loggia behind a colonnade of seven square columns, stepping down to Temple Court Place at its southern end. The western wall of the tower behind the podium is clad in a variety of materials providing textural interest to the façade. In its middle section, the building is clad in rough face concrete blocks, whilst wall panels set between expressed structure at the southern and northern ends are clad in the red/brown ceramic tiles. Immediately above the colonnade the walls are clad in glazed muted green tiles laid in vertical stack bond, and the same tiles also clad the columns. The panels below the columns to street level are clad in bluestone.

The rear elevation to Temple Court Place is asymmetrical. Above the base levels, the tower element utilises the same precast concrete panels with red/brown ceramic tiles above and below the windows as used on the principal façade to Little Collins Street. The two eastern bays differ, being clad in the rough face concrete blocks rather than precast panels. At street level the building is also clad in the rough face concrete blocks whilst the first floor is clad in the glazed green tiles used along the Gurners Lane loggia. Five windows align with the windows of the tower above. At street level various openings provide service access into the building including an open grille door allowing car access to the basement. Above this door a large window is divided vertically into five panels.

The eastern elevation to Temple Court Place is clad in the rough face blocks concrete blocks. At the northern end the return section of the tower has an expressed structural concrete frame infilled with red/brown glazed ceramic tiles laid in vertical stretcher bond.

INTEGRITY

Cowan House is highly intact with very few changes visible to original or early fabric.. The building retains its original two-storey podium level, recessed office tower with modular precast concrete curtain wall cladding including original aluminium frame windows and red/brown ceramic tiles, and with original details and varying wall cladding finishes.

Alterations are minimal and largely limited to the podium on the Little Collins Street frontage. These include the aluminium cladding of the podium level columns and contemporary shopfronts at street level, the addition of aluminium clad vertical fins to the face of the podium in alignment with the columns, and the (probable) recladding of first floor podium level with limestone tiles. Overall the building has very high integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The 1950s saw the development of the modern multi-story office building in Melbourne, often built for insurance companies or finance companies, or for professional offices. From this time through to the 1970s, the Post-War Modernist style enjoyed widespread popularity, particularly for high-rise

commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne. Reinforced concrete frames provided the structural systems, allowing the façade to be clad in a non-load bearing curtain wall. In early examples, curtain walls were typically fully glazed, while in later examples, precast concrete was used to achieve variety of expression and flexibility of form, led by Bates Smart & McCutcheon's South British Building of 1960-62.

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 Cowan House. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

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

- Total House, 170-90 Russell Street (Bogle & Banfield 1964-65; VHR H2329 & HO1095)
- Former Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-44 Bourke Street (Peter Muller 1966-69)
- Victorian Government Offices, Treasury Reserve Precinct (Yuncken Freeman 1967-68 – outside the Hoddle Grid)
- Eagle House, 473 Bourke Street (Yuncken Freeman 1971-72; VHR H1807 & HO901)
- BHP House, 130-148 William Street (Yuncken Freeman 1969-72; VHR H1699 & HO767).

Locally-significant places

As only a piece-meal evaluation of postwar buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne has previously occurred, few buildings from this period are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme on a permanent basis. Those that are, are generally currently included within Heritage Precincts but are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay as Individual Heritage Places, as follows:

Precinct Heritage Overlay



Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins



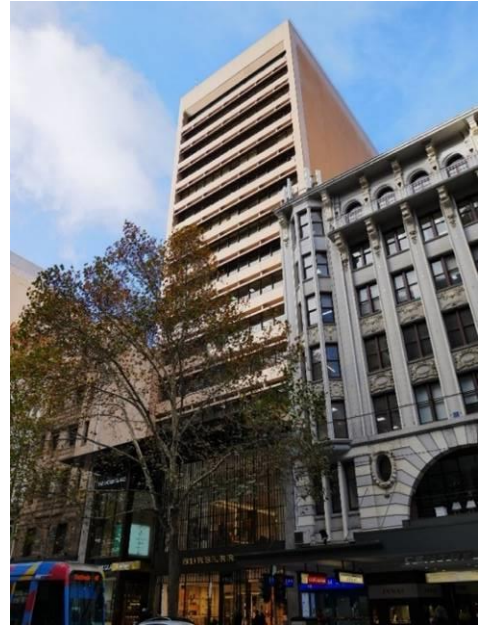
Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63

Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



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.

Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 19741-73 included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

One individual heritage place recently included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis is the Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1966) (HO1213):



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not

currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



Former RACV Club, 111-129 Queen Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1961) (Interim HO1068)



Former Australia Pacific House, 136-144 Exhibition Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1975-78)



Royal Insurance Group Building, 430-442 Collins Street, (Yuncken Freeman, 1965) (Interim HO1010)



Office Building, 516-520 Collins Street (architect unknown, c1974)



Former Guardian Building, 454-456 Collins Street
(Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1960-61)



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



Former State Savings Bank, 258-264 Little Bourke
Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1961)



MLA Building, 308-336 Collins Street (Stephenson &
Turner, 1963)



Royal Mail House, 255-267 Bourke Street (D Graeme
Lumsden, 1963)



Former Sleigh Corner Building, 158-164 Queen Street
(Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1964)



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street

AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555
Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association

(E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



Former Dalgety House, 457-471 Bourke Street
(Peddle Thorp & Walker, 1966-68)

with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



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,



Former Methodist Church Centre, 130-134 Little Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1966-67)

1968-70)



Office Building, 178-188 William Street (McIntyre McIntyre & Partners, 1972-73)



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)

Analysis

In its early use of a non-loadbearing precast concrete panel façade system, Cowan House at 457-469 Little Collins Street is comparable to a number of other buildings in central Melbourne included – or proposed for inclusion – in the HO, although distinguished by its early use of reinforced concrete ‘waffle’ floor slabs. It is particularly comparable with the Wales Corner building at 227 Collins Street (Contributory in HO502 The Block Precinct) the former HC Sleigh building at 160 Queen Street (Recommended as individually significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review) and the Reserve Bank of Australia at 60 Collins Street (Contributory in HO504 Collins East Precinct). It shares with these examples’ characteristics consistent with the Post-War Modernist style, including concrete post and slab construction, a non-loadbearing precast concrete panel façade with a repetitive modular geometry and a street level undercroft and colonnade. Unusually, in this instance, this undercroft forms part of a podium that aligns with the street whilst the tower component of the building above is set back. The return of the undercroft along Gurners Lane also allows for sheltered pedestrian access through to Collins Street.

Unusually, the positioning of Cowan House on an island site has allowed for a range of detailing to all four facades and for the use of a variety of materials of differing colours and textures with each elevation being well considered and detailed.

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

REFERENCES

- Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*
- City of Melbourne Interactive Maps (CoMMaps) 2018, <http://maps.melbourne.vic.gov.au/>, accessed 4 December 2018.
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PREVIOUS STUDIES

Central Activities District Conservation Study 1985	Ungraded
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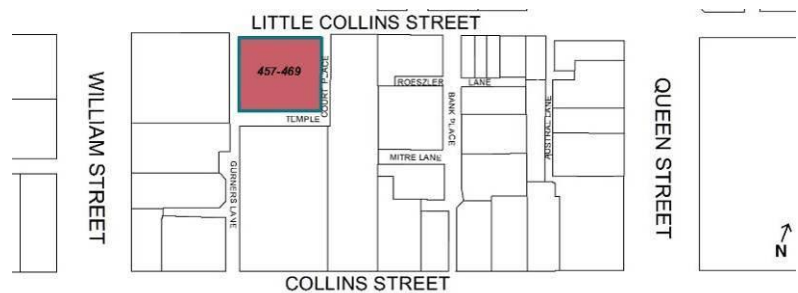
Central City Heritage Review 2011	Ungraded
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Cowan House



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

Cowan House at 457-469 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, designed by architects E & G Kolle & Associates and constructed in 1969, is significant.

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

- Original form and scale;
- Original modular composition of the facades to the office tower comprising precast concrete panels with inset aluminium frame windows and glazed ceramic tiles;
- Original podium form and undercroft, colonnades and loggia; and
- Original materials including glazed ceramic tiles, glazing and rough face concrete blockwork.

Later alterations are not significant.

How it is significant?

Cowan House at 457-469 Little Collins Street is of historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Cowan House, designed by *E & G Kolle & Associates*, and opened in 1969, is historically significant for the evidence it provides of postwar development and rapid growth in Melbourne of corporate architecture of the 1950s-70s. Located in the financial and legal precinct in the western part of the city, it reflects the expansion of large national and international companies opting for construction and naming rights of new city office buildings as a form of promotion and fund investment. Constructed for the Melbourne-based subsidiary of English real estate and investment company Capital & Counties

(Australia) Pty Ltd, occupants from 1969-c1983, the building evidences the significant investment made in city building after World War Two by overseas companies. (Criterion A)

Cowan House is significant as a highly intact example of postwar commercial development in central Melbourne in the Post-War Modernist style that characterised this new wave of development. These buildings represented the new modernism in their modular, industrial Bauhaus inspired aesthetic and incorporated features such as consistent access to daylight and open floor plans to meet new standards for commercial office accommodation. The building exhibits key attributes of the Post-War Modernist style that characterised this wave of development, including concrete post and slab construction, a non-loadbearing precast concrete panel façade with a repetitive modular geometry and a street level undercroft and colonnade which wraps around two sides of the building. Cowan House is also representative of the early wave of high-rise commercial buildings constructed following the abolition of the 40 metre (132 foot) height limit for buildings in the city centre. The building is notable for its incorporation of a colonnade and loggia to the Gurners Lane frontage. (Criterion D)

Cowan House is aesthetically significant as a highly intact example of the later postwar development in curtain wall design during the 1960s, where a mix of materials was utilised to create a greater modularity and three-dimensional quality to the facades. Its aesthetic significance resides in the fine attention to detail on all four elevations and for the variety of materials used, of differing colours and textures including precast concrete panels, glazed ceramic wall tiles and rough-cast concrete blockwork, with each elevation being well considered and detailed. (Criterion E)

Primary source

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