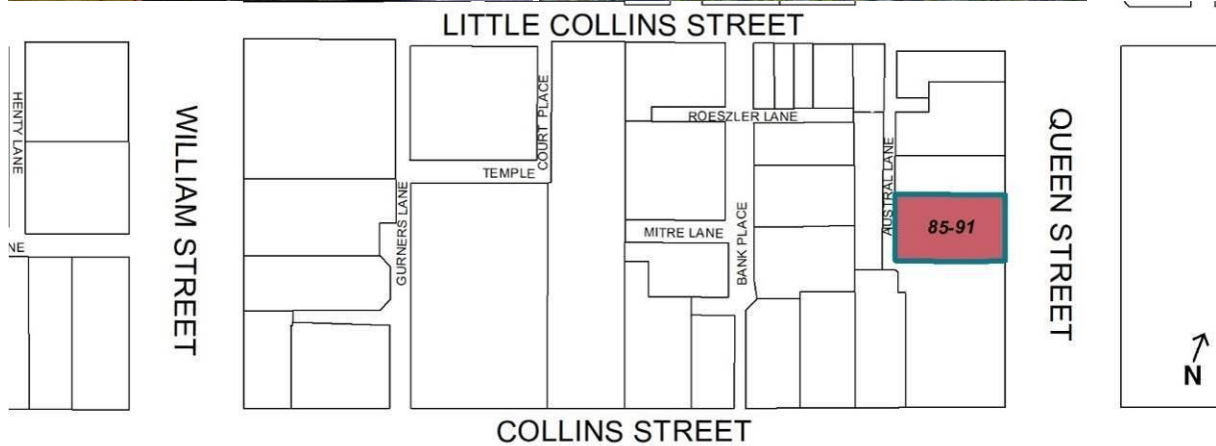


SITE NAME	Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch
STREET ADDRESS	85-91 Queen Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	108064



SURVEY DATE: March 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:

Meldrum & Partners

BUILDER:

Not known

DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:

Postwar Period (1945-1975)

DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:

1973

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, Banks

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

The former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch building at 85-91 Queen Street is a ten-storey postwar office building with a basement, completed in 1973 to designs by architects Meldrum & Partners in a later derivative of the Postwar Modernist style. The building was owned and occupied by the bank until c1998. It continues to be used as offices 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, econ

omic 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 at 85-91 Queen Street is part of Crown Allotments 8 and 9, Block 14, purchased by James Connell in 1837 ('Town of Melbourne' 1838). In 1880 the land comprised two allotments with a laneway at the southern property boundary, and was occupied by two three-storey office buildings addressed as 35 and 37 Queen Street (Mahlstedt Map, no14, 1888). By 1895 the southern building was addressed as 85 or 87 Queen Street and the northern as 89-91 Queen Street (MMBW Detail Plan no 1011, 1895).

From the turn of the twentieth century, a series of trustee, insurance and other professional services companies occupied the office buildings. The Equity Trustees, Executors and Agency Company Limited occupied purpose-built premises at 85 Queen Street from c1901 to 1956, with the building known as the Equity Trustees building during this time (*Argus* 26 March 1956:12; *Royal Institute of Architects Journal* November 1905:169; S&Mc 1900-1955). From 1955, the building at 85-87 Queen Street was known as Insurance House (Figure 1) (S&Mc 1955). By 1960 the National Bank of

Australasia had moved into the building, trading from the premises along with consulting engineers, estate agents and auctioneers (S&Mc 1960).

By 1910 and until 1924, the Perpetual Trustees Company operated from 89-91 Queen Street (Mahlstedt Map Section 1, no 17, 1910; S&Mc 1924). The Australian Metropolitan Life Assurance Company Limited took up residency in the following year, and remained there until at least 1965. The building was known as the Metropolitan Building from 1925 until the 1970s (Figure 1) (S&Mc 1924, 19).



Figure 1. Detail from a c1950-60 photograph of the western side of Queen Street, showing Insurance House (left) and the Metropolitan Building (right). These buildings predated the subject building on the site of 85-91 Queen Street. (Source: Pratt c1950-60, SLV [copyright](#))

In 1971 a permit application was lodged with Melbourne City Council to construct an '11-storey office building' on the site of the existing bank and office building at 85-91 Queen Street (MBAI 42401). Plans were drawn up by architects Meldrum & Partners for NBA Properties, a subsidiary company of the National Bank of Australasia to whom the land was transferred in 1972 (CT:V8945 F296).

The National Bank of Australasia began commercial operations in Queen Street, Melbourne, in 1858. They became the National Bank of Australasia Limited on 1893, registered under the *Victorian Companies Act 1890*. The National Bank of Australasia merged with the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney in 1982 to form the National Australia Bank (NAB) (Merrett 2008). Along with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Westpac Banking Corporation and the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group, the NAB has become one of the Australia's four major banks. NBA Properties Limited was established in 1965 as a subsidiary company of the National Bank of Australasia. Its main purpose was to acquire and redevelop sites throughout Australia to house the bank's branches (*Age* 18 January 1966:9; *Age* 16 November 1972:16). The bank owned and occupied 85-91 Queen Street from 1972-73 to c1998.

By December 1973 the subject building had been completed, as a 10-storey building with basement level. Located opposite the stock exchange at the corner of Collins and Queen streets, the subject building was named the Stock Exchange Branch of the National Bank of Australasia (Figure 2) (*Age* 22 December 1973:16).

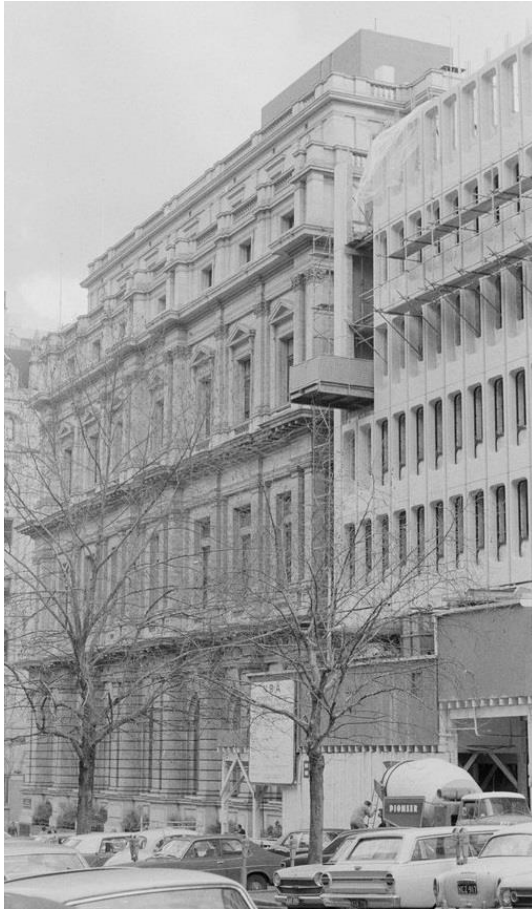


Figure 2. A c1972 photograph showing 85-91 Queen Street (right) under construction. (Source: Halla c1972, SLV copyright)

In 1982 the National Bank of Australasia merged with the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney to become the National Australia Bank (NAB). The National Australia Bank remained as the building's major tenant until at least 1998 (*Age* 16 September 1998:30; Merrett 2008). Other tenants during this period included commercial real estate agents Allard and Shelton (c1980-c1992), the Southern Australian Perpetual Forests Limited, and various solicitors (*Age* 3 December 1980:26; 14 November 1992:92; 26 March 1998:37).

Changes to the building since its construction have been largely confined to the interior spaces, with the regular alteration of the internal configuration of all floors since 1974 (MBAI). In 1992 the ground level foyer was refurbished at a cost of \$636,250, and in 2002 alterations included extending the first floor and refurbishing the ground floor façade (see Figure 3) (MBAI 70931; CoMMaps).

Today, the ground floor of the subject building comprises retail, while the upper levels house commercial offices and consulting rooms for professional services companies, education and training providers and health professionals (CoMMaps).



Figure 3. A 1998 photograph shows the building prior to its refurbishment in 2002, which saw the first floor extended to the building line and glazed. In the above image, the first floor is clearly recessed beneath the upper levels and the double height street level under-croft and colonnade is clearly intact. (Source: *Age* 16 September 1998:30)

Meldrum & Partners, architects

The architectural practice Meldrum & Partners was formed in 1959 by Percy Hayman Meldrum (1887-1968); it became Meldrum Burrows when Sydney-based Bill Burrows joined the firm. In 1951, Meldrum was joined in practice by his son, Richard John Meldrum (1928-2004), who had a bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of Melbourne. Meldrum Snr retired from practice in 1965. Meldrum Burrows gained particular prominence in the 1970s and 1980s and were involved in advising on and strategic planning for, large projects, including the Australian Embassy at Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (1989) in collaboration with Daryl Jackson, and with Philip Cox in designing Parliament House, Darwin (Willis 2012).

Percy Hayman Meldrum studied at Ballarat College and was articled to A A Fritsch from 1907 to 1913. Moving to London in 1914, Meldrum practiced as an aircraft designer at the War Office and established an atelier in Wells Street, London, which became a gathering place for Australian architects engaged in war service. At the end of World War One Meldrum joined the staff of the Architectural Association, where he taught A G Stephenson and Donald Turner. In 1921, he returned to Australia to join A G Stephenson as Stephenson & Meldrum. Practising as principal designer, he strongly encouraged the inclusion of murals and sculpture in the firm's projects. His work during this time included Newspaper House, Collins Street (1932) and Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historic Museum (1930). Meldrum went on to practice as Meldrum & Noad between 1937 and the 1950s, during which time he won the 1942 RVIA Street Architecture Medal for the National Bank of Australasia building in Collins Street (1938) (Willis 2012).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch building at 85-91 Queen Street is a ten-storey commercial building in the late Post-War Modernist style, constructed in 1973 and designed by architects Meldrum & Partners. Located on the west side of Queen Street between Collins Street and Little Collins Street, the building has a secondary frontage to Austral Lane.

The building demonstrates key characteristics of the Post-War Modernist style, particularly through its use of free form or organic nonloadbearing precast concrete panels as its principal façade element, instead of the flat aluminium framed glass curtain-wall systems that characterised other examples of the style, or the use of precast concrete elements but with a rectangular emphasis that characterised others. The subject building used the potential of precast concrete to create moulded and curved façade modules incorporating window openings while maintaining the rigid modular Bauhaus inspired aesthetic.

The principal facade to Queen Street comprises a nonloadbearing precast concrete panel curtain wall divided vertically into 13 narrow bays of panels with windows set between narrower end panels. The vertical edges to each panel are convex curves, which results in a vertical shadow line where each pair of panels meet, whereas their horizontal joints are simple square butt joints. Cast into each panel is a vertically proportioned window opening with curved corners, with aluminium frame windows divided into two sashes by a horizontal glazing bar set deep into the panels. The building has no formal termination or parapet at the top level, as is typical of the style.

The building originally featured a high double storey undercroft space at street level, typical of commercial buildings in the late Post-War Modernist style, with the entry lobby and first floor mezzanine set back behind a colonnade of widely spaced concrete columns supporting the building above. The building underwent refurbishments in 1992 and 2002 which included the infilling of this undercroft space with new shopfronts for retail tenancies and extending the first floor mezzanine level to the main frontage of the building with a glazed curtain wall. The curving of the lower edge of the original precast panels remains extant, but the dramatic sculptural impact of the original undercroft and colonnade has been reduced. A slim profile aluminium cantilevered awning has also been attached across the width of the façade at the first-floor level.

The western elevation facing Austral Lane comprises 13 equal bays divided vertically by structural precast concrete mullions. Spandrel panels clad in face brick inlay panels sit below fixed windows with projecting precast concrete sills. At the ground level the facade is clad in the same material as the spandrel panels. Windows along the southern elevation (facing the rear of 394 Collins Street) comprise the same applied spandrel panels and precast concrete sills.

INTEGRITY

The former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch building is highly intact in terms of its original scale, built form and configuration. Above the street level, the building retains its original modular pattern of fenestration, and the materiality of the precast panels with their curved corners, window openings and recessed aluminium window frames. There have been some changes to aspects of its original design at ground and first floor level. The original high double-storey undercroft space at street level has been infilled with new shopfronts and the first-floor mezzanine level extended to its main frontage. A cantilevered awning has been added at the first-floor level. In spite of

these changes, the building retains its original built form and scale, much of its original materials and key stylistic details. The building is of 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 and even beyond, the Post-War Modernist styles enjoyed widespread popularity, particularly for medium-rise and high-rise commercial buildings. 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 with an aluminium frame, while in later examples, precast concrete was used to create moulded and curved façade modules incorporating window openings while maintaining the rigid modular Bauhaus inspired aesthetic.

There are a number of buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne which were constructed in the same period and display similar characteristics to the former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch building. These are detailed below.

State-significant places

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

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

Locally-significant places

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

Precinct Heritage Overlay



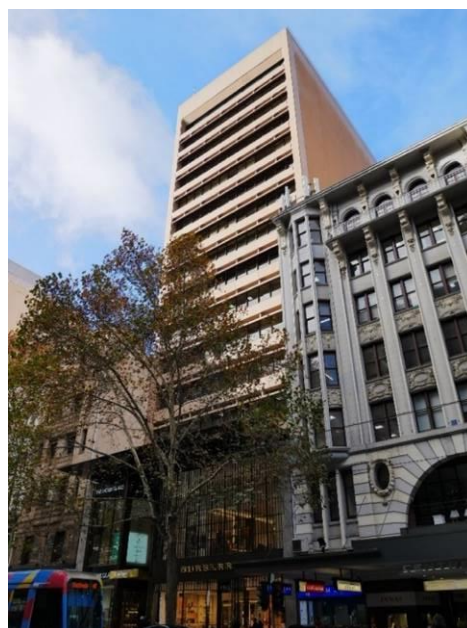
Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



Former State Savings Bank of Victoria, 45-63 Swanston Street, (Buchan Laird & Buchan, 1974) included in HO505 Flinders Gate Precinct (Non-contributory).



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.



Former Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Building, 251-257 Collins Street, (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1974-73) included in HO502 The Block Precinct (fronting Collins Street) & HO506 (fronting Flinders Lane) (Non-contributory).

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



Scottish Amicable Building, 128-146 Queen Street

Other examples

Despite the demolition of many 1960s and 1970s multi-storey commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne, a number of fine and highly representative examples of this building type that are not currently included in the Heritage Overlay on a permanent basis have been retained with sufficient integrity to demonstrate this class of place. These buildings clearly illustrate the advancement of construction techniques from the 1960s through to the mid 1970s and demonstrate the broad range of design approaches of the period. The podiums of the majority of these places have been modified at street level. Examples include:



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



The Former Houston Building, 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1965)



AMP Tower and St James Building Complex, 527-555 Bourke Street (Skidmore Owings & Merrill in association with Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1965-69)



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



Former State Saving Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1967-68)



Former Legal & General House, 375-383 Collins Street (B Evans, Murphy, Berg & Hocking, 1967)



Former AMP Building, 344-350 Collins Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton and Lobb, 1966-68)



Equitable House, 335-349 Little Collins Street (unknown architect, 1968)



Former Australia-Netherlands House, 468-478 Collins Street (Meldrum & Partners with Peddle Thorp Walker, 1968-70)



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



Cowan House, 457-469 Little Collins Street (E & G Kolle, 1969)



Lonsdale Exchange, 447-553 Lonsdale Street
(Commonwealth Department of Works, 1969)



Former Dillingham Estates House, 114-128 William
Street (Yuncken Freeman, 1976) (Interim HO1180)



Former Bryson Centre, 174-192 Exhibition Street
(Perrot Lyon Timlock & Kesa, 1970-72)



Former Commonwealth Banking Corporation Building,
359-373 Collins Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon,
c1972-75)



Nubrick House, 269-275 William Street (Buchan
Laird & Buchan, 1972)



Former Law Department Building, 221-231 Queen
Street (Fischer Group, 1972)



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



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

The former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch building at 85-91 Queen Street is comparable to a number of central Melbourne buildings included– or recommended for inclusion – in the HO, including the Scottish Amicable building at 126-146 Queen Street (HO1213), Equitable House at 335-349 Little Collins Street, and Royal Insurance Group Building at 430-442 Collins Street. These buildings all demonstrate the prominent Bauhaus grid design aesthetic of the Post-War Modernist style, based on repetitive nonloadbearing precast concrete façade modules to achieve a more three-dimensional depth to the facades and to maximise access to daylight.

The subject building also demonstrates how some designers used the potential of precast concrete to create moulded and curved façade modules incorporating window openings while maintaining the rigid modular Bauhaus inspired aesthetic. In this respect there are few comparative examples in central Melbourne with sufficient integrity to demonstrate these characteristics in their original condition. It is also unusual for its attention to detail on its secondary façades facing Austral Lane and

the rear of 394 Collins Street with applied decorative brick spandrel panels and precast concrete sills. One clearly comparable example is the former State Laws Office building at 221-233 Queen Street, recommended as individually significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review.

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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PREVIOUS STUDIES

Central Activities District Conservation Study 1985	Ungraded
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Central City Heritage Review 1993	Ungraded
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Review of Heritage overlay listings in the CBD 2002	Ungraded
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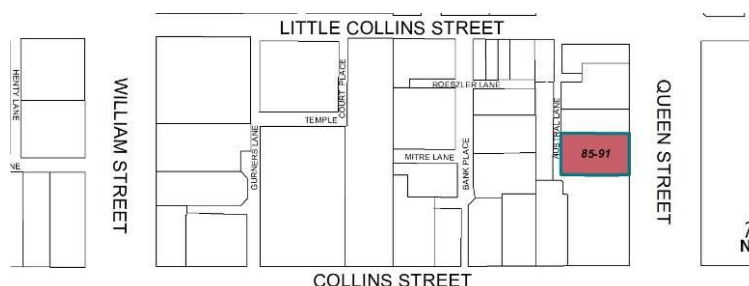
Central City Heritage Review 2011	Ungraded
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch at 85-91 Queen Street, Melbourne, completed to a design by Meldrum and Partners in 1973, is significant.

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

- Original building form and scale;
- Original nonloadbearing precast concrete curtain wall cladding including recessed window openings to its principal (Queen Street) façade;
- Original nonloadbearing curtain walls to its secondary facades facing Austral Lane and the rear of 394 Collins Street; and
- Original aluminium frame windows set deep into the panels.

Later alterations, particularly at street level, are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch at 85-91 Queen Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch building, opened in 1973 and designed by Meldrum & Partners, is historically significant as evidence of the postwar development and rapid growth of corporate architecture of the 1950s-1970s that reflected 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. Located in the financial and commercial precinct of Queen Street, the former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch building is significant historically as it reflects the growth of banks in Victoria following deregulation of the financial sector from the mid-1960s, cementing Melbourne's pre-eminent role for financial institutions. (Criterion A)

The former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch building is significant as a highly intact example of postwar commercial development in central Melbourne that utilised the Post-War Modernist style, which characterised this wave of development. These buildings represented the new modernism in their modular, industrial, Bauhaus inspired aesthetic incorporating features such as consistent access to daylight and open floor plans to meet new standards for commercial office accommodation. The former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch is a substantial example of the later development in curtain wall design during the 1960s and into the 1970s and beyond when precast concrete was used to create moulded and curved façade modules incorporating window openings while maintaining the rigid modular Bauhaus inspired aesthetic. The building retains its original form and scale, as well as the key characteristics of its original design, including the distinctive free form or organic nonloadbearing precast concrete panels as the principal façade element. The western and southern elevations are highly intact retaining original structural precast concrete mullions, spandrel panels clad in face brick inlay panels below fixed windows with projecting precast concrete sills and ground level detailing to the western façade, and the same applied spandrel panels and precast concrete sills to the southern facade. (Criterion D)

Primary source

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