

SITE NAME	Nubrik House
STREET ADDRESS	269-275 William Street, Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	110107



LA TROBE STREET



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:	Buchan, Laird & Buchan	BUILDER:	A V Jennings Industries Australia Ltd
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1972

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
POST WAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall 1.10 Brutalism and brickwork
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Business and finance

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Residential
1920s	Residential, Manufacturing
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

Nubrik House, 269-275 William Street, was built in 1972 as a 13-storey office building. It opened in 1972 as the national headquarters for Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd. The building was named after the company's main brand, Nubrik. Brick & Pipe Industries occupied the first and second floors of the building until c1993, with other businesses occupying the offices on the remaining floors. A roof top apartment was added in 1997 making the building 14 storeys.

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).

Brutalism and brickwork

Brutalism was another architectural style that emerged in commercial building design in Australia as early as 1959, when Harry Seidler used off-form concrete for an eight-storey office block in Ultimo, NSW. That same year, Melbourne architect Kevin Knight (from the office of Oakley & Parkes)

prepared plans for the International Order of Oddfellows (IOOF) Building at 380 Russell Street, Melbourne that broke new ground with its banded façade of reinforced concrete spandrels.

Based on the work of modern architecture pioneer Le Corbusier, and largely inspired by his design for the *Unité d'Habitation* in Marseilles (1952), this architectural style became widely accepted internationally. Brutalism incorporated ideas of integrity in expression of materials (especially off-form concrete), structure and function, and often gave rise to dramatic sculptural forms (VHD Hoyts Cinema Centre).

Brutalism became more widespread in central Melbourne in the 1970s. The Mid City Centre at 194-200 Bourke Street (Bogle & Banfield, 1969-70), is a notable example, with its façade of chamfered concrete volumes.

During the 1960s and 70s, face brickwork also made a return with the Houston Building at 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1964-65), the State Savings Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton & Lobb, 1967-68) and the 13-storey Nubrik House at 269-275 William Street by architects Buchan, Laird & Buchan (1972) (NTAV 2014:22).

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 site at 269-275 William Street is part of Crown Allotment 10, Section 31, purchased by J Whitehill Stevens in 1939 (CoMMaps).

In 1856, the site was used as a garden. By the 1890s, the site was occupied by a two-storey residence and its yard. The Victorian period residence remained through to the late 1960s, and was used as a boarding house, a hostel and then as the Queen Victoria Hospital's nurses' home (MMBW Detail Plan no 736, 1895; Mahlstedt Map section 2, no 2a, 1910 & 1923; S&Mc 1896, 1926, 1942, 1955 & 1960; Halla 1967). By 1923, a portion of the subject land adjoining Alsop Lane had been developed with a two-storey warehouse with a frontage to Little Lonsdale Street. Known as 440-442 Little Lonsdale Street, the warehouse was occupied from the 1920s to the 1960s by various manufacturing businesses including a motor garage, an electrical instrument maker, an artificial flower manufacturer, printers and a typewriter setter (S&Mc 1926, 1955 & 1965).

In May 1971 the subject site was acquired by Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd, Victoria's biggest brick manufacturer at the time (*Age* 2 May 1970:17; *Age* 9 May 1970:20). Named after the company's main brand, Nubrik, Nubrik House was constructed at 269-275 William Street as the new national headquarters for Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd in 1971-72 to a design by Buchan, Laird & Buchan. The builder was A V Jennings Industries Australia Ltd, and the engineering consultants were Lovell, Smith & Crisp (Buchan, Laird & Buchan 1971; *Age* 6 November 1972:24). Nubrik House officially opened on 18 December 1972 (*Age* 18 December 1972:13).

Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd was formed in July 1964 after Brick Industries Ltd (established in July 1959), changed the company name (delisted n.d.). By the early 1970s, Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd was one of Australia's biggest brick manufacturers (*Age* 24 July 1974:20). In October 1989, Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd was taken over by Arnsberg Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of the Goldberg Group, and was again sold to Pioneer International in 1990 (delisted n.d.; *Age* 18 April 1990:23; *Age* 26 February 1992:19). All divisions were merged into Pioneer Building Products by 1996, which was taken over by Brickworks Ltd in 2001. The Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd main brand, 'Nubrik', survives as a brand of Austral Bricks within the Brickworks Building Products Group (Austral Bricks 2019). Its main brick pit and factory was situated in Craigieburn Road, Wollert (some 25 kilometres north of Melbourne's CBD) (Bricks in Victoria 2013).

The 13-storey brick and concrete building featured a face brick exterior to all three exposed elevations, using bricks made by the company to showcase its products. Although the National Trust states that Nubrik House was Australia's tallest building of loadbearing brick construction at that time, and that the use of loadbearing brick was uncommon in the construction of the mid- to high-rise buildings in central Melbourne in the postwar period, further research reveals that the brick pier was a non-structural veneer (NT 2014:38, 52) (see Figure 1). According to the building plans, each unit of the brick piers is a combination of structural (internal) and non-structural (external) parts. Supporting the floor-by-floor load between two floor slabs, each internal brick pier interlinked with the external non-loadbearing brick veneer, which was supported on shelf angles tied to the floor slabs. (see Figure 2 and Figure 1). Internally, reinforced concrete columns and beams were adopted to support the load (Buchan, Laird & Buchan 1971). More than 500,000 bricks were used in the construction of the subject building (*Age* 18 December 1972:13).

The internal masonry structures in the foyer and the office spaces on all levels above were exposed face brick, featuring bricks of varying colours and textures. The foyer was paved with brown tiles with

an antique finish. All bricks and tiles used were the company's own products (Age 18 December 1972:13).

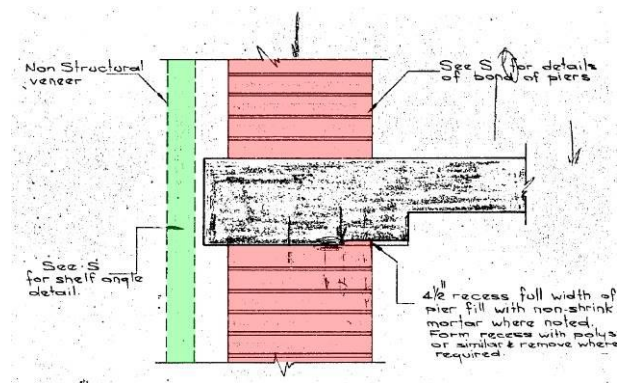


Figure 1. A vertical section showing the arrangement of the masonry and reinforced concrete slab. Shaded in red indicates the loadbearing masonry and in green indicates non-loadbearing brick veneer. The writings on the left-hand side note: 'non-structural veneer' and 'see [section] for shelf angle detail'. (Source: Buchan, Laird & Buchan 1971 [copyright](#))

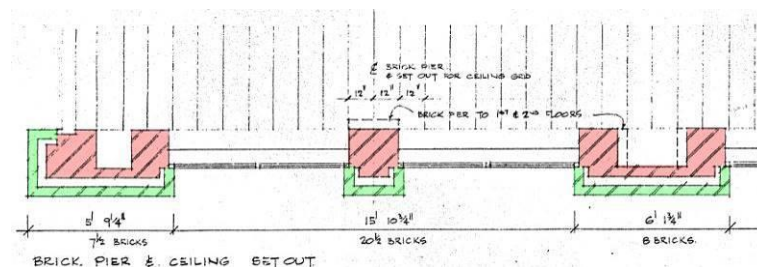


Figure 2. A horizontal section showing the pier types B (left), A (middle) and C (right). Shaded in red indicates the loadbearing masonry and in green indicates non-loadbearing brick veneer. (Source: Buchan, Laird & Buchan 1971 [copyright](#))



Figure 3. A 1972 advertisement showing the newly erected Nubrik House viewed from the southwest (left) and another 1972 photograph showing the view from southeast (right). (Source: Age 6 November 1972:24; Age 18 December 1972:13)

On the ground floor at street level, an open public area was provided near the corner of William and Little Lonsdale streets. Provided as a thoroughfare or a shortcut, it was required by a special condition to the planning permit granted by the Melbourne City Council under the *Town and Country Planning Act* 1961 (Vic). In 1974, a case was held at the Supreme Court of Victoria, when Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd sought to remove the condition so that the thoroughfare could be permanently enclosed to give entry only to users of the building. The firm claimed that the paved area was misused by drunks, derelicts and 'undesirables'. The Court, however, concluded that the use of that land was to remain dedicated to the public without compensation, and that the area could be closed to public only outside normal office hours (Morris 1975:120-122). Part of the original open area remained as a corner splay, with the lobby becoming an enclosed space, installed with automatic glazed sliding doors, and open to public during business hours.

Following the acquisition of Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd by Pioneer International in 1990, Nubrik House was sold in 1993, at which time it is believed the company vacated the building. The building was subdivided into strata titles and offered for purchase in 1994 (CT:V10215 F757-F770).

During the 1990s, the building was tenanted by various real estate agents and solicitors (*Age* 17 January 1994:20; *Age* 25 February 1995:91; *Age* 8 September 1997:24; *Age* 28 May 1998:36). A roof top apartment was added in 1997 making the building 14 storeys. The building was refurbished in 2013 (CoMMaps).

The 14-storey building with a basement currently contains one residential property, 39 businesses and ground level retails (CoMMaps).

Buchan, Laird & Buchan, architect

Buchan, Laird & Buchan designed Nubrik House, adopting extensive use of brick for the façade and interior elements, as well as incorporating structural brick piers in conjunction with the reinforced concrete structure, to promote the products of Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd.

Laird & Buchan was founded in Geelong, Victoria, in 1890 by Angus Laird. It became Buchan, Laird & Buchan in 1937 after Laird's death, becoming a partnership between Laird's son Ewen Laird, and father and son, Thomas Johnston (Tom) Buchan and (Sir) John Buchan. One of the firm's early projects, the Pilkington's Glass Factory, Melbourne Road, Geelong (1936-37), became an early icon of modernism in Australia (Willis 2012:111).

After World War Two, John Buchan set up the Melbourne office in 1946. In the postwar period, the firm expanded, becoming involved in large-scale commercial and industrial projects including the Ford administration building, Broadmeadows (1964) and significant town planning and housing projects for the Housing Commission of Victoria. In the 1960s and 1970s, the firm gained particular prominence for its designs for office buildings. Notable works from this period include Shell House, William and Bourke streets (1960, since demolished); and the former Stock Exchange House, Collins Street (1968) (Willis 2012:111).

The firm became Buchan, Laird & Bowden in 1982, and today continues as the Buchan Group, formed in 1990. The practice currently operates offices in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Perth, London, Shanghai, Dubai, Auckland and Christchurch (Willis 2012:111).

A V Jennings Industries Australia Ltd, builder

Sir Albert Victor Jennings was an early pioneer in Australia of the pre-construction sale of house and land packages. An estate agent turned house builder during the 1930s depression, with architectural student, Ed Gurney, and builder Billy Vine, he formed the A V Jennings' Construction Co (Garden 2017). Jennings started with single houses in the Melbourne suburb of Glenhuntly in 1932, then from 1933 began building the housing groups and estates with which his name is most associated (Garden 2012:366).

With the banning of construction of private houses during World War Two, the A V Jennings Construction Co undertook government construction including, from 1942, military camps around Victoria. After the war, the company built thousands of houses and undertook other works in Victoria, Tasmania and Canberra for both the state and federal governments. The company's work for the Victorian Housing Commission in 1944-49 transformed the firm into a large-scale construction enterprise (Garden 2012:366). In 1950 A V Jennings Industries (Australia) Ltd was formed as a public company with Albert Victor Jennings as its chairman and managing director (Garden 2017). The construction of private housing gathered pace in the 1950s and became the firm's principal activity. (Garden 2017).

In the 1960s, the company's notable building projects, apart from housing, include the Wrest Point Casino, Tasmania (1969-73) and the Adelaide Festival Theatre, South Australia (1970-73) (Garden 2012:366). The company portfolio grew to encompass ventures related to its core home and general construction businesses, including finance, transport, and caravans (Garden 2017). The company continues today as A V Jennings Ltd.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Designed by Buchan, Laird & Buchan and constructed in 1971-72, Nubrik House at 269-275 William Street is a 14-storey (originally 13-storey) commercial building that demonstrates aspects of the Post-War Modernist style. Located on the northwest corner of William Street and Little Lonsdale Street, the building also has a rear (western) frontage to Alsop Lane.

The principal facades to both Little Lonsdale Street and William Street consist of vertical panels of brickwork that vary in width, between which are vertical bands of aluminium framed glass, with opaque panels alternating with clear glazed windows at each floor level. Whilst the brick piers appear to be loadbearing, they are a non-structural veneer, concealing an interior structure that is an unusual composite of a reinforced concrete column and slab frame supported on its perimeter by sections of loadbearing brickwork.

The Little Lonsdale Street façade of the building is divided into five vertical modules divided by wide brick piers, with each module in turn divided into two vertical glazed panels by narrow brick piers. The southern half of the William Street façade comprises a single vertical module divided into two vertical glazed panels by narrow brick piers, as for the Little Lonsdale Street façade. The northern half of the facade comprises a sheer wall of face brickwork. The windows sashes are fixed, with some fitted with wall hung air conditioning units. The building has no formal termination at the top level which is typical of the style. The vertical panels of brickwork extend above the roof line and appear to have undergone some repair work, possibly during the 1997 construction to add the penthouse apartment.

At street level the wall has been rendered. The southern end, above street level, is divided into two modules divided by a narrow brick pier and inset with the glazed curtain wall system

At street level along Little Lonsdale Street, a solid brick base follows the fall of the site above which are four large fixed aluminium framed windows. Above each window a deep unpainted concrete lintel supports the narrow brick piers above. On William Street, the sheer wall of face brickwork extends to the street level, but has been rendered and painted.

The corner of the building above street level has a projecting cantilevered awning with a double curve (this appears to be a later addition), and a recessed entry of contemporary aluminium framed glazing. The base of the corner pier of brickwork has also been rendered and painted.

Facing Alsop Lane, the northern half of the facade comprises a sheer wall of brickwork with small louvres at some floor levels for ventilation. The southern half comprises a single vertical module divided into two vertical glazed panels by narrow brick piers supported on a deep unpainted concrete lintel, as for the Little Lonsdale Street façade. At the laneway level, a recessed roller shutter door sits below three large fixed panels of glass.

INTEGRITY

Nubrik House is highly intact with very few changes visible to original or early fabric. The building retains its original scale, form and configuration, including a strong vertical emphasis resulting from the alternating pattern of wide brick piers separated by vertical panels of glazing, unrelieved by any horizontal connectivity other than the deep reinforced concrete beams at the first-floor level.

Alterations include the addition of a corner awning, replacement of the original recessed entry with contemporary glazing, the additional penthouse level, and the rendering and painting of the base of the corner pier and northern section of wall along William Street. Overall the building has very high integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

During the early 1950s, following the end of the World War Two, building activities in central Melbourne slowly revived. The Post-War Modernist style, which was accompanied by the development of the curtain wall, became popular and was the preferred style for the new wave of early high-rise commercial buildings. During the late 1960s and beyond, the style developed with a more eclectic use of materials and forms, combining expansive glazed panels with solid masonry sections to achieve a less repetitive, more distinctive and robust aesthetic.

The following examples are comparable with Nubrik House, being of a similar use, scale, style and/or construction date.

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, 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 (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)



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



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

Built in 1971, Nubrik House at 269-275 William Street is a highly intact example of a Post-War Modernist building, that combines expansive glazed panels with solid masonry sections to achieve a less repetitive, more distinctive and robust aesthetic. While the adopted structural masonry was designed to be exposed in the interior, the exterior design of Nubrik House consciously emphasised the unconventional use of high vertical panels of brickwork to give the appearance of supporting the building, although the external brickwork was actually supported by the internal reinforced concrete frame. In this respect the building differs from many of its contemporaries that also utilised brickwork as their primary façade material. In the other examples brick is used as a nonloadbearing infill or as cladding materials where the primary structure (usually reinforced concrete) is deliberately expressed or through the spandrels.

While the primary uses differ, Nubrik House is also comparable to the residential towers Treasury Gate at 93-101 Spring Street (Interim HO1262 – recommended as individually significant in the

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review), which also features high vertical panels of brickwork that appear to be the primary structural basis of the building, especially on the podium element which is similarly separated by vertical bands of aluminium framed glass alternating with lightweight opaque panels at each floor level. The building is also somewhat comparable with , 447-453 Lonsdale Street (recommended as individually significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review), which also used brick as non-loadbearing infill but where the primary reinforced concrete structure is clearly expressed.

The subject building is distinguished by its design that consciously utilised bricks, the main product of the company, to promote this material, and in a way that visually suggests it is fulfilling a structural role.

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*

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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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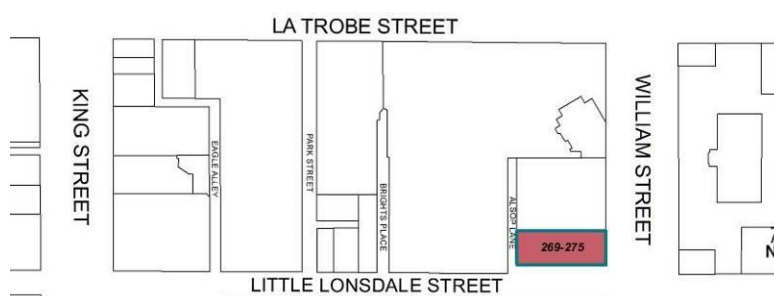
Central City Heritage Review 2011	Ungraded
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Nubrik House



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

Nubrik House at 269-275 William Street, Melbourne, completed in 1972 to a design by Buchan, Laird & Buchan, is significant.

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

- Original building form and scale;
- Original configuration of vertical panels of brickwork separating vertical bands of aluminium framed glass, with opaque panels alternating with clear glazed windows at each floor level, offset by sheer walls of face brickwork to the William Street and Alsoy Lane facades; and
- Original aluminium framed windows.

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

How it is significant?

Nubrik House at 269-275 William Street is of historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Nubrik House, designed by Buchan, Laird & Buchan and constructed by A V Jennings Industries Australia Ltd, is historically significant for the evidence it provides of Melbourne's postwar development and rapid growth of corporate architecture of the 1950s-70s. Its development 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. Nubrik House was constructed as the national headquarters for Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd, Victoria's biggest brick makers, and one of Australia's

largest brick manufacturers. The building was named after the company's main brand, Nubrik. The building is distinguished by the extensive and prominent use of brick in the building's construction to promote the products of the building's original owner, Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd. (Criterion A)

Nubrik House is significant as a highly intact example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building constructed during the postwar period that utilised a reinforced concrete frame. This framing allowed for a variety of design approaches to the non-loadbearing façades. During the late 1960s and beyond, the style developed with a more eclectic use of materials and forms, combining glazed panels with solid sections to achieve a less repetitive, more distinctive and robust aesthetic. The principal façades of Nubrik House to both Little Lonsdale Street and William Street are demonstrative of this tendency, combining glazed panels with solid masonry sections. (Criterion D)

Nubrik House is of aesthetic significance for its distinctive design that adopted robust brick piers as one of the main design elements. While the structural masonry was used internally and designed to be exposed in the interior, the exterior design of Nubrik House consciously emphasised the unconventional use of high vertical panels of brickwork to give the appearance of supporting the building, although the external brickwork was actually supported by the internal reinforced concrete frame. While the brick piers appear to be loadbearing, they are a non-structural veneer, concealing an interior structure that is an unusual composite of a reinforced concrete column and slab frame supported on its perimeter by sections of loadbearing brickwork. Designed by Buchan, Laird & Buchan for Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd, Victoria's biggest brick manufacturer at the time, the subject building is distinguished by its design solution that consciously utilised bricks, the main product of the company, to promote this material, and in a way that visually suggests it is fulfilling a structural role. (Criterion E)

Primary source

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