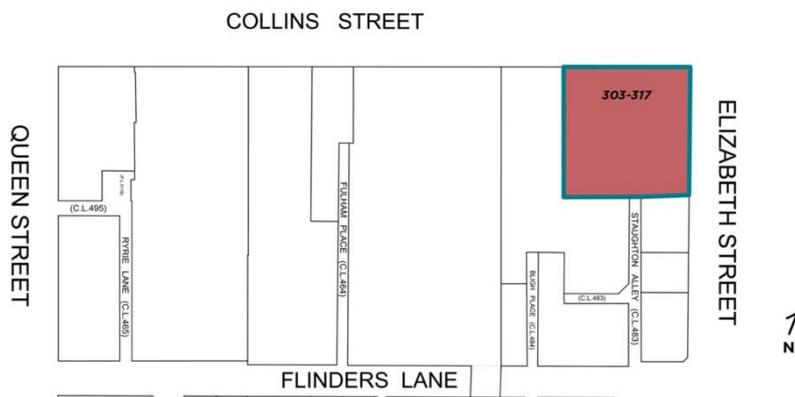


<b>SITE NAME</b>	Former MLC Building [also known as Royal Bank Plaza and IOOF Centre (current name)]
<b>STREET ADDRESS</b>	303-317 Collins Street, Melbourne
<b>PROPERTY ID</b>	110762



<b>SURVEY DATE:</b>	October 2019	<b>SURVEY BY:</b>	GJM Heritage
<b>HERITAGE INVENTORY</b>	No	<b>EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY</b>	No
<b>PLACE TYPE</b>	Individual Heritage Place	<b>PROPOSED CATEGORY</b>	Significant
		<b>FORMER GRADE</b>	Ungraded
<b>DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:</b>	Civil and Civic Pty Ltd in association with Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton	<b>BUILDER:</b>	Civil and Civic Pty Ltd
<b>DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:</b>	Postwar Period (1945-1975)	<b>DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:</b>	c1970 - 1973

**THEMES**

<b>ABORIGINAL THEMES</b>	<b>SUB-THEMES</b>
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the postwar history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
<b>POSTWAR THEMES</b>	<b>DOMINANT SUB-THEMES</b>
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.9 Beyond the curtain wall
3 Building a commercial city	3.2 Buiness and finance

**LAND USE**

<b>THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE</b>	
1890s	Retail, Workshop, Office, Café/Restaurant, Studio, Medical, Education, Caretaker, Carrier
1920s	Workshop, Office, Retail, Hairdresser, Café/Restaurant, Storage, Studio, Carrier, Retail, Caretaker, Trade
1960s	Café/Restaurant, Office, Retail, Studio, Medical, Hairdresser, Merchant, Carrier, Retail/Workshop, Caretaker

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

**Extent of overlay:** To extent of property boundary

**SUMMARY**

The building at 303-317 Collins Street, on the south-west corner of Collins and Elizabeth streets, was completed in 1973 as the Melbourne headquarters of the Mutual Life and Citizens Assurance Company Pty Ltd (MLC). Design co-ordination, construction and mechanical and electrical engineering of the building was carried out by Civil and Civic Pty Ltd (the design and construction subsidiary of Lend Lease Corporation Ltd) with architects in association being R. S. Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton.

## 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 MLC Building, on the south-west corner of Collins and Elizabeth streets, was completed in 1973 for the Mutual Life and Citizens Assurance Company Pty Ltd (MLC) who redeveloped their site, replacing the earlier Melbourne headquarters for the company on the site (*Age*, 13 Aug 1973:17; *Telegraph*, 30 Mar 1937:8; *Construction*, 29 Mar 1939:6; BAF).

MLC acquired the corner property in 1936, occupying an earlier building on the site from 1938. The company temporarily relocated to the Guardian Building at 454-456 Collins Street in 1969 (which they had previously occupied between 1911 and 1938) during redevelopment of the subject site (*Age*, 13 Aug 1973:17, 21; S&Mc).

The insurance company MLC was established in Victoria in 1888 as The Citizens' Life Assurance Company, providing life assurance with low premiums to the working man. Previously, life assurance benefits were restricted to the wealthy in Victoria. The company grew rapidly, taking over the Mutual Life Association of Australasia in 1908 and the Australian Widow's Fund Life Assurance Society in 1910. The company became the Mutual Life and Citizens Assurance Company Pty Ltd. By the 1970s there were 19 district and sales offices throughout Victoria (*Age*, 13 Aug 1973:17). Today, MLC provides life insurance as well as investments, superannuation and financial advice to corporate, institutional and retail customers (MLC, 'About').

The City of Melbourne received a building permit application for the 30-storey office building at the site in January 1970 (BAI; BAF). Design co-ordination, construction and mechanical and electrical engineering of the building was carried out by Civil and Civic Pty Ltd (the design and construction subsidiary of Lend Lease Corporation Ltd). The architects in association were R. S. Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton (Goad 2012:199; BAP). In August 1973 *The Age* published a feature on the newly completed building, reporting that the architects in association were 'R S Demaine and Partners', the structural engineers were W J and W L Meinhardt and mechanical engineers in association were Rider Hunt and Partners (architectural plans record Norman & Addicoat as the latter, in 1969) (*Age*, 13 Aug 1973:17).

Architectural drawings dated 1969 show the north and south elevations and ground floor plan (Figure 1 - Figure 3). The designs included a plaza, basement car parking, ground floor shops, offices and a banking chamber, a first floor theatrette (in the circular section projecting into the plaza) and offices, a 13<sup>th</sup> floor executive level, 15<sup>th</sup> floor caretaker's flat, two plant/motor rooms, and the remainder as offices (BAF; BAP). MLC constructed a temporary building on the site to house the State Savings Bank (whose premises were acquired for the new build) until occupancy was available in the new building (BAF; *Age*, 13 Aug 1973:20).

The building was opened by Premier Rupert Hamer at a special function held on site in August 1973 (*Age*, 13 Aug 1973:17). The (almost 400ft/122m) high-rise building was completed at a total cost of \$12.5 million. A technique new to Australia, 'rock socketting' was used for the foundations. The building was constructed of precast concrete and clad with re-constituted granite panels (*Age*, 13 Aug 1973:17-21; AIA, May/June 1973). The design requested a facing that would 'produce a subdued but rugged brown effect', the response to which was a natural stone aggregate from Talbot, a mining town near Maryborough, and sandblasting techniques to expose the stone (as the semicircular shape of the building made polishing of panels impracticable). The overall result was a natural look, rather than a contrived or artificial appearance. Each panel was between 2½ to 4 inches (6.3-10cm) thick. A contemporary newspaper article stated that the 'precast cladding is also serving as external formwork, designed to withstand great pressures during placement. In this way the cladding became an integral part of the structure instead of being just "hung on."' Aggregates in the same Talbot quarts were used to finish off the ground floor columns and entrance, this applied finish being 'water washed with a fine spray and then cleaned with acid' (*Age*, 13 Aug 1973:17-21).

The completed building comprised two basements, ground and 29 upper floors, a spacious forecourt with a circular rotunda and fountain, and an 'unusual semi-circular shape with circular lift-tower at the rear' and sill-to-ceiling aluminum-framed windows on all elevations, and a theatrette. The high-rise building was also fitted with the fastest lifts in Melbourne at the time, servicing the upper floors (*Age*, 13 Aug 1973:17-21).

The MLC weather beacon from an earlier MLC building – reportedly a 'long feature of Melbourne life' – was relocated to the top of the new building. Operated remotely by the Weather Bureau, the beacon provided weather updates and forecasts (*Age*, 13 Aug 1973:19).

An image (appears to be a photo montage prior to completion) of the building was published in *The Age* in 1972 (31 Jul 1972:37), requesting occupants for 'The MLC Building', 'Melbourne's outstanding new office building' (Figure 5). 'The MLC Building' at 303-317 Collins Street was advertised in August 1973 as 'Melbourne's newest prestige office building' by leasing agents George G Henderson (*Age*,

13 Aug 1973:21). Photos published during this period showed the original entrance and forecourt area (Figure 4 – Figure 5).

In 2012, the building was referred to as Royal Bank Plaza (Goat 2012:199). MLC sold the property in 2017 (MLC). A low-scale addition has been constructed in front of the building, extending to the Collins and Elizabeth street boundaries (post-1984), and is occupied by Westpac in 2019. In 2019 the name of the building is the IOOF Centre (CoMMaps); the top of the weather beacon bears the name 'IOOF'.

#### **Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, architects**

Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton was established in 1957, originating from the private practice of architect Robert Snowden Demaine in 1937. Demaine acted as caretaker for a number of Melbourne practices during World War II while their directors were involved in the war effort and gained considerable experience in hospital and industrial architectural design. Demaine was instrumental in advocating for the establishment of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects (RVIA) Small Homes Service in 1947 and served as RVIA president in 1945 and RAI national president in 1952-54.

Ailsa Merle Trundle joined the firm as junior partner in 1943, forming Demaine, Russell and Trundle alongside Arthur Leslie Russell, who specialised in hospital design. Trundle, born in Murwillumbah, NSW began her architectural studies through the Bendigo School of Mines, followed by study at the Gordon Institute at Geelong and the University of Melbourne's Architectural Atelier (MUAA). One of the first women to be offered a named partnership in an Australian architectural firm, she was responsible for much of the firm's welfare work, including buildings for the Autistic Children's Association (Black Rock, Mansfield and Bayswater), and the Dalkeith Home for the Aged, Traralgon.

In 1957, the firm amalgamated with the existing firm of Armstrong and Orton to become Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton. Lloyd Orton was educated at the Melbourne Technical College and the University of Melbourne and travelled to Europe on a scholarship after WWII. On his return to Melbourne in 1951 he co-founded the firm of Armstrong & Orton with young designer, Anthony Brown Armstrong.

Notable postwar buildings in central Melbourne designed by Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton include BP House on Albert Road, Melbourne (1962-4), the Naval and Military Club, Little Collins Street, Melbourne (1967) and the MLC Building, Collins Street, Melbourne (c1970-1973) in association with Civil and Civic Pty Ltd. The firm also designed three red-brick Brutalist buildings for the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT, buildings 51, 56 and 57) in the 1970s.

The firm continues to practise as Demaine Partnership.

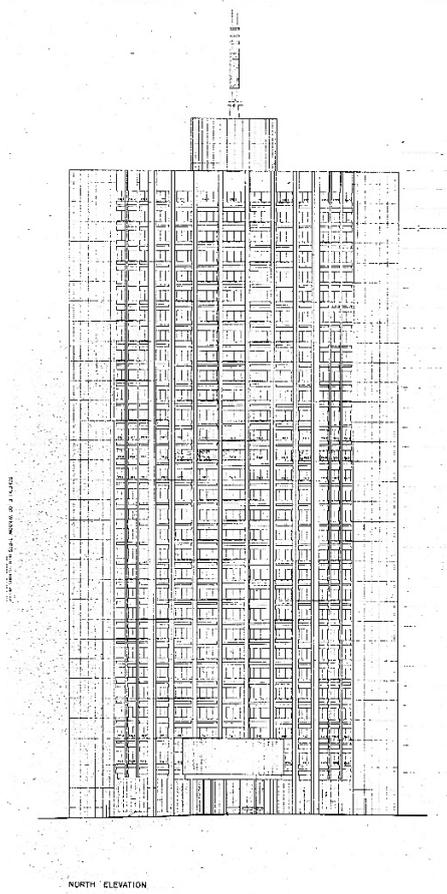


Figure 1. Architectural drawing of the north elevation, dated 1969 (BAP).

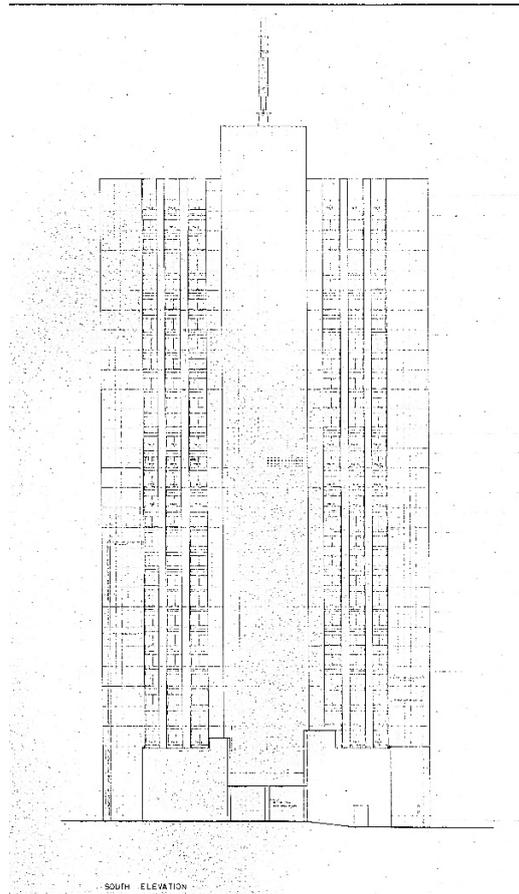


Figure 2. Architectural drawing of the south elevation, dated 1969 (BAP).

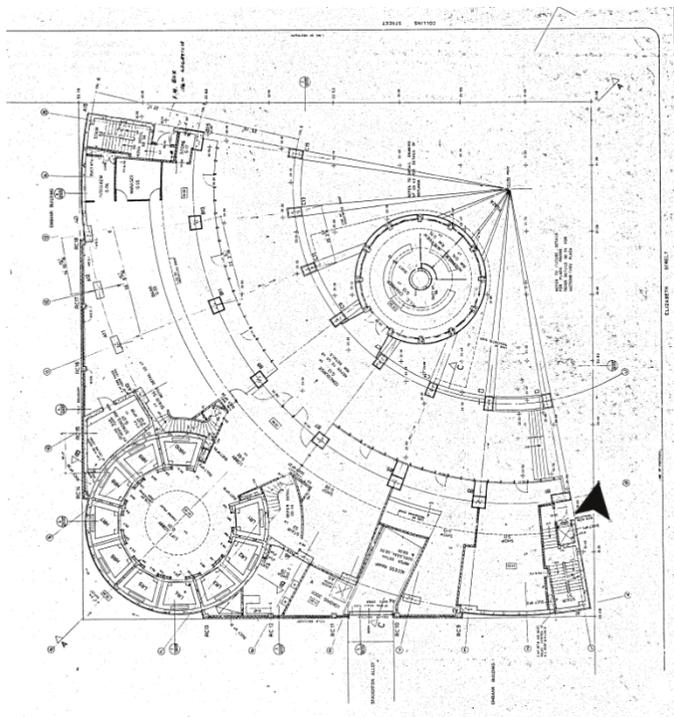


Figure 3. Ground floor plan, drawing dated 1969 (BAP).

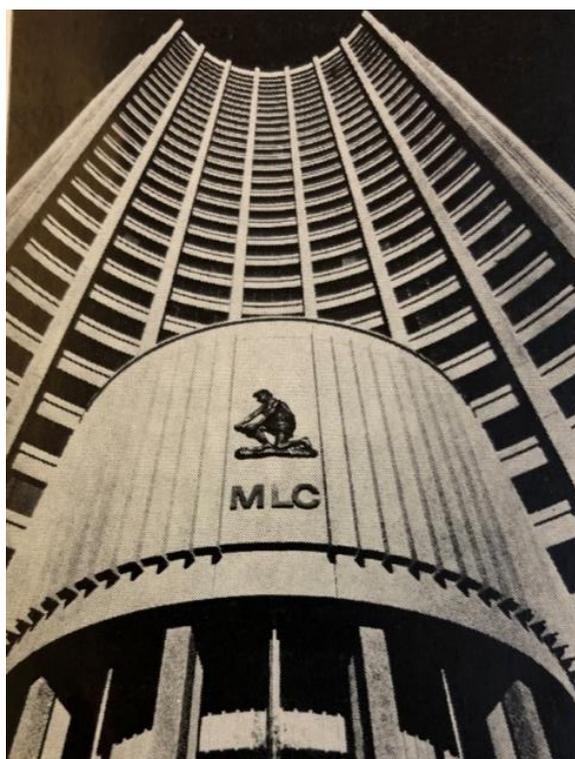


Figure 4. Photo of the building published in the May/June edition of *Architecture in Australia* (AIA, May/Jun 1973:8).



Figure 5. An image of the newly completed building published in *The Age* in July 1972 (*Age*, 31 Jul 1972:37).

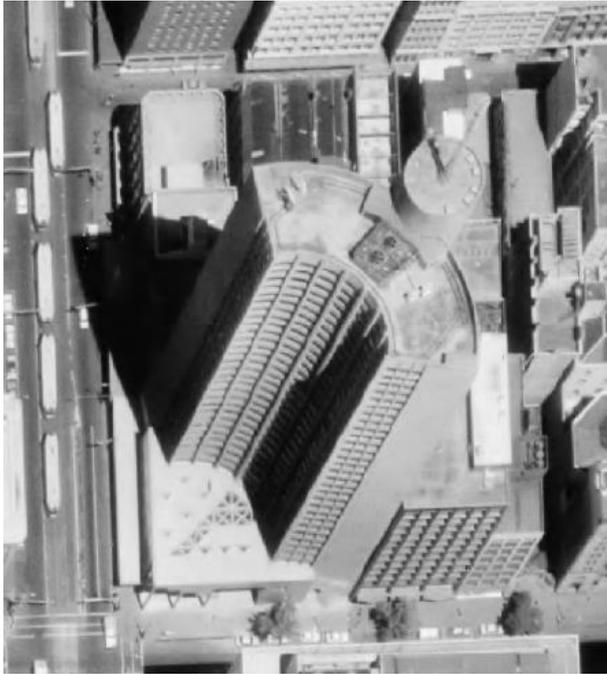


Figure 6. An oblique aerial of the building in 1987, showing the weather beacon (Landata Victoria).

### SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former MLC Building at 303-317 Collins Street is a 30-storey commercial building located at the south-west corner of Collins and Elizabeth streets. Completed in 1973 to a design by Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, the multi-storey building is an example of the Post-War Modernist style.

The building is of unusual quadrant form, with the focal point near the main Collins and Elizabeth street intersection. A circular lift tower is located at the rear of the building and a low-rise forecourt, extending to both street fronts, has replaced an original forecourt rotunda. Adjacent buildings in both Collins and Elizabeth streets are low-rise and therefore the subject building is visible from a number of directions. Staughton Alley provides access to the south side of the building from Flinders Lane.

The building is of reinforced concrete column and slab construction, with the structure clearly expressed on the highly visible concave front facade. External precast concrete cladding, faced with thick granite panels with sandblasted finish, is an integral part of the structure as it served as external formwork.

The concave front façade of the building is articulated with vertical stone-clad piers which rise to the apex of the building. Alternating rows of aluminium framed fixed windows and stone-clad spandrels are set behind these piers with a crowning solid band above. Alternating bands of windows and spandrels are repeated across parts of the other three facades, with the exception of solid stone-clad panels which enclose internal access stairs at the rear corners of the building and the circular lift well at the centre of the rear convex façade.

At the corner of Collins and Elizabeth streets the building has been substantially altered at ground level with the removal of the original entrance rotunda and replacement with a low-scale building which extends across the curved front façade of the multi-storey building, obscuring the lower façade. Extending to the Collins and Elizabeth street boundaries, this is a partially glazed and panelled pavilion with a combination of column and pier supports and cantilever verandah with deep fascia.

## INTEGRITY

The Former MLC Building, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building above street level, remains highly intact to its original construction in c1970-73. Works to the building at the Collins and Elizabeth street corner, including demolition of the forecourt rotunda and construction of a low-scale forecourt building which extends to both street boundaries, has altered the original design at street level.

Overall, the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the Post-War Modernist style in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone alterations at street level, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Post-War Modernist multi-storey commercial building.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Former MLC Building at 303-317 Collins Street is a fine and representative example of the Post-War Modernist style and clearly demonstrates the typical characteristics of a 1960s to mid 1970s multi-storey office building design. Located on a prominent site, the building's grid-like walls of clearly expressed structure, clad with precast granite-faced concrete panels, can be clearly observed from many directions. The curved form of the building is highly unusual and distinctive. Despite demolition of the original forecourt rotunda, and construction of a low-rise forecourt which extends to both Collins and Elizabeth street frontages, the upper curved facades of the Former MLC Building remain highly intact to their original design.

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 MLC 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*



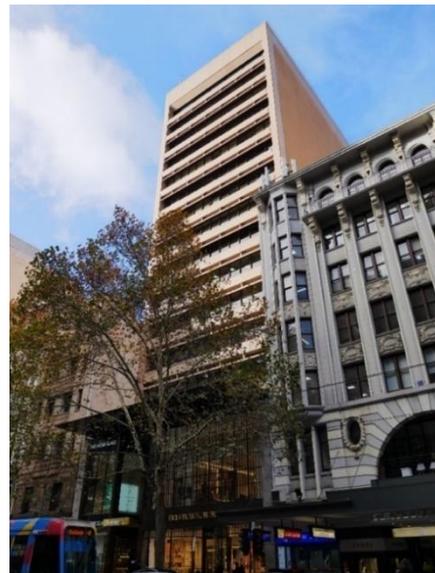
Former Reserve Bank of Australia, 56-64 Collins Street (Commonwealth Department of Works, 1964-66) included in HO504 Collins East Precinct as a Contributory place.



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) 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)



Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch, 85-91 Queen Street (Meldrum & Partners, 1973)



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



Office Building, 589-603 Bourke Street (Peddle Thorp de Preu, 1973-75)

### **Analysis**

As a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building, the Former MLC Building clearly demonstrates an important phase in the architectural development of multi-storey commercial buildings within the Hoddle Grid in the City of Melbourne. Similar to a number of 1960s to mid 1970s buildings listed above, the subject building clearly demonstrates this class of place.

**ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA**

✓	<p><b>CRITERION A</b> Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p><b>CRITERION B</b> Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p><b>CRITERION C</b> Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p><b>CRITERION D</b> Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
	<p><b>CRITERION E</b> Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p><b>CRITERION F</b> Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p><b>CRITERION G</b> 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).</p>
	<p><b>CRITERION H</b> Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

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

**MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME**

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

**OTHER**

N/A

## REFERENCES

- Contextual History references contained within *City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975*
- Architecture in Australia* (AIA), May/June 1973.
- Building Application File (BAF), No. 41046 (1970), City of Melbourne.
- Building Application Index (BAI) for the City of Melbourne.
- Building Application Plans (BAP), City of Melbourne.
- City of Melbourne Libraries online Heritage Collection, reference nos. as cited.
- City of Melbourne Maps (CoMMaps), Site Details.
- Construction* [Sydney, NSW].
- Goad, Philip (2012), 'Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton' in Philip Goad & Julie Willis's (Eds.) (2012), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Port Melbourne.
- Landata Victoria, historical aerial photographs.
- MLC Insurance (MLC), 'MLC Life Insurance on the move in 2017', <<https://www.mlcinsurance.com.au/about-us/media/mlc-life-insurance-on-the-move-in-2017>>, accessed 3 July 2019.
- MLC, 'About Us', <[https://www.mlc.com.au/personal/nav\\_top/about-mlc/about-super-investments/about-us](https://www.mlc.com.au/personal/nav_top/about-mlc/about-super-investments/about-us)>, accessed Feb 2020.
- Sands & McDougall Directory (S&Mc).
- The Age*.
- The Telegraph* [Brisbane, QLD].

## PREVIOUS STUDIES

---

**Central Activities District  
Conservation Study 1985**      Ungraded

---

**Central City Heritage  
Review 1993**      Ungraded

---

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

---

**Central City Heritage  
Review 2011**      Ungraded

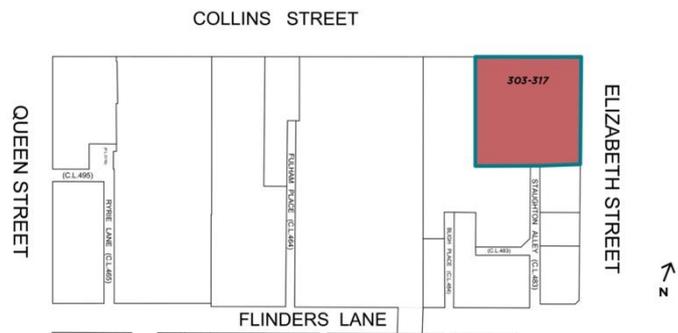
---

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

**Heritage Place:** Former MLC  
Building



**PS ref no:** HOXXXX



### What is significant?

The Former MLC Building, 303-317 Collins Street, a multi-storey office building constructed in 1970-73.

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

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

Later additions made to the forecourt are not significant.

### How it is significant?

The Former MLC Building at 303-317 Collins Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

### Why it is significant?

Constructed c1970-73 to a design by Civil and Civic Pty Ltd in association with Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton, the Former MLC Building has a clear association with the postwar building boom which transformed central Melbourne into a modern high-rise city. The design of these commercial buildings from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s – many of which were architect designed – was driven by the commercial demands and the prestige afforded by a dominant city presence (Criterion A).

The Former MLC Building is a fine and highly intact representative example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building. The building strongly reflects the style which was popular from the 1960s to the mid 1970s, particularly in central Melbourne. Constructed as a 30-storey structure, the Former MLC Building clearly demonstrates typical characteristics of a later postwar commercial building including

grid-like walls of clearly expressed structure, and the use of materials such as granite-faced precast concrete panel cladding. These demonstrate important aspects of the Post-War Modernist style. The adoption of a curved form to clearly display the trabeated system of construction is unusual and distinctive (Criterion D).

**Primary source**

---

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