

**PLANNING PANELS VICTORIA**  
**Melbourne Planning Scheme Amendment C405melb**  
**(Carlton Heritage Review)**  
**Proposed Heritage Overlay HO1398**

**Subject Sites:**

**RMIT University Building 51**, No. 80 – 92 Victoria Street  
**Building 56**, 115 Queensberry Street  
**Building 57**, 53 Lygon Street  
**Building 94**, 23 – 37 Cardigan Street  
Carlton

**Expert Heritage Evidence**

**Prepared for**

**Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University**

**By**

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September, 2022

# RMIT University Buildings 51, 56, 57 and 94

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## 1.0 Introduction

1. I have been instructed by Hall&Wilcox, on behalf of RMIT University, to prepare expert heritage evidence which addresses the proposed new Heritage Overlay serial listing over the above site as a consequence of Amendment C405melb. The Amendment proposes to implement the recommendations of the *Carlton Heritage Review*.
2. The buildings are presently not included in the Schedule to Cl. 43.01 (Heritage Overlay) of the Melbourne Planning Scheme however, as part of Amendment C405melb it is proposed to include them in the Schedule. The RMIT buildings in Victoria, Queensberry and Lygon Streets are places which date from the 1970s-80s period of RMIT master planning and Building 94 in Cardigan Street (1994-96) dates from the post-master planning era. All are part of the expansion into Carlton and are proposed to be included as a Serial listing which is one of two Serial listings identified in the *Carlton Heritage Review*.<sup>1</sup> No particular controls are proposed.
3. It is also proposed to include Building 51 in the *Melbourne Heritage Places Inventory* as a Significant place.<sup>2</sup> In the *Inventory*, "Significant" places are defined as viz.:

A 'significant' heritage place is individually important at state or local level, and a heritage place in its own right. It is of historic, aesthetic, scientific, social or spiritual significance to the municipality. A 'significant' heritage place may be highly valued by the community; is typically externally intact; and/or has notable features associated with the place type, use, period, method of construction, siting or setting. When located in a heritage precinct a 'significant' heritage place can make an important contribution to the precinct.<sup>3</sup>

## 1.1 Previous Involvement

4. Previously I have not provided any advice to Hall&Wilcox or RMIT University in relation to the proposed inclusion of the places in the Heritage Overlay.

## 1.2 Site Inspection, Location and Proposed Planning Scheme Map

5. I have undertaken an external inspection of the sites. I have not undertaken any internal site inspections as no internal controls are being proposed.
6. The sites are located the north of Victoria Street, Carlton and are in Victoria, Lygon. Queensberry and Cardigan Streets.

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<sup>1</sup> Lovell Chen and Extent Heritage. *Carlton Heritage Review: Methodology Report*. 2121. p. 16 and 32.

<sup>2</sup> Melbourne Planning Scheme Incorporated Document. *Heritage Places Inventory February 2020 Part A* (Amended May 2021).

This document is an incorporated document in the Melbourne Planning Scheme pursuant to Section 6(2)(j) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 OFFICIAL

<sup>3</sup> Melbourne Planning Scheme Incorporated Document. *Heritage Places Inventory February 2020 Part A* (Amended May 2021). p. 4.

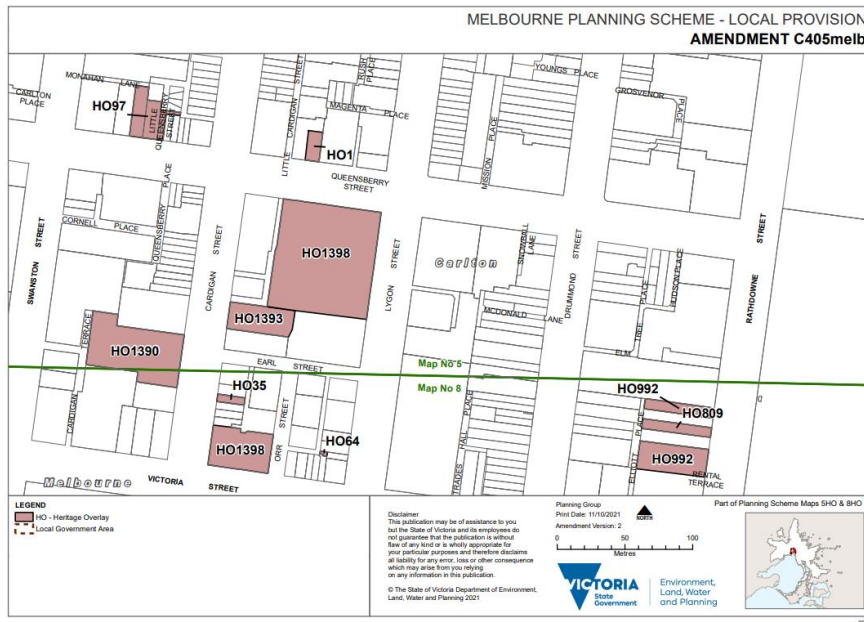


Figure 1 Map accompanying Amendment C405melb showing the location of RMIT Building 51 (HO 1398 – Victoria Street), Building 56 and 57 (HO1398 – Queensberry and Lygon Streets), Building 94 (HO 1390 - Cardigan Street).

### 1.3 Reference Materials

7. I have referred to the following and as might be footnoted below.

“Allan Coulstock Powell, Architect”. *The Age*. 26 March, 2022.

“Allan Powell Architects”. *Architectureau*.  
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DELWP. Planning Practice Notes. PPN1: *Applying the Heritage Overlay*. August 2018.

Edquist, Harriet and Grierson, Elizabeth. *A Skilled Hand and a Cultivated Mind: a Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*. 2nd ed. Melbourne, RMIT University. 2021.

Goad, Philip. “Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton”. *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*. Melbourne, Cambridge, 2011.

Goad, Philip, ed. *Judging Architecture: issues, divisions, triumphs, Victorian Architecture Awards 1929-2003*; edited by Philip Goad; photographed by John Gollings. Melbourne, RAIA Victoria, 2003.

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Grow, Robin. *MELMO: Modernist Architecture in Melbourne*. Melbourne, Slattery Books, 2021.

Hamann, Conrad. "Edmond & Corrigan". *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*. Melbourne, Cambridge, 2011.

Heritage Council Victoria. *Assessing The Cultural Heritage Significance of Places and Objects for Possible State Heritage Listing: The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines*. Endorsed by Heritage Council 6 December 2012. Reviewed and updated 4 April 2019. (VHRG)

Heritage Council Victoria. *Modern Melbourne: Allan Powell*. Interview by Emma Telfer. <https://heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/get-involved/watch-heritage-videos/modern-melbourne-videos/allan-powell/>

London, Geoffrey. "Brutalism". *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*. Melbourne, Cambridge, 2011.

Lovell Chen and Extent Heritage. *Carlton Heritage Review: Methodology Report*. 2121.

Melbourne Planning Scheme Amendment C387melb Hoddle Grid Heritage Review Panel Report. Planning and Environment Act 1987, 10 November, 2021. Ch.5 passim.

Murray-Smith, Stephen and Dare, Anthony John. *The Tech: a Centenary History of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology*. Melbourne, Hyland House, 1987.

Planning Panels Victoria. *Guide to Expert Evidence*.

"Powell & Glenn: Melbourne Architects". <https://powellandglenn.com.au>

Rich, Joe. "RMIT University". *Encyclopedia of Melbourne*. <https://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM01253b.htm> Accessed 20/05/2022.

RMIT University Architecture & Urban Design. "RMIT Building 94 TAFE School of Design". <http://architecture.rmit.edu.au/projects/rmit-building-94/>

"RMIT University started its life as the Working Men's College on 7 June 1887". <https://www.rmit.edu.au/about/our-heriage/history-of-rmit>

Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. *Report of the Council of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology for the period 1 January to 31 December 1996*.

*The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013*.

*The Burra Charter. Practice Note Version 1: November 2013*. "Understanding and assessing cultural significance".

Van Schaik, Leon. *Mastering Architecture: Becoming a Creative Innovator in Practice*. [Chichester], Wiley-Academy, 2005.

Van Schaik, Leon. "Vale Allan Powell". *Architectureau*. 5 April, 2002. <https://architectureau.com/articles/vale-allan-powell/>

Yule, Peter, ed. *Carlton: a History*. Carlton, MUP, 2004.

## 1.4 Qualifications and Expertise

8. I am a director and principal of Anthemion Consultancies and am also an architectural historian, an interior designer and a heritage consultant. I was a graduate architect member of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, was a Deputy Chair of the Institute's (Victorian Chapter) Heritage Committee and a member of the AIA Awards Jury in the Conservation Section for the years 2000-01. I was at Lovell Chen, architects and heritage consultants for approximately 18 years and most of that time as an associate director. Within that practice and presently my responsibilities include the co-ordination and preparation of conservation management plans, heritage assessments, preparation of expert evidence, development of site interpretation and the restoration of historic interiors.
9. I am also a Past President of Australia ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), and presently the Secretary and the Treasurer, of the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Risk Preparedness (ICORP); past Secretary-General of the ICOMOS Scientific Council; inaugural convenor of Blue Shield Australia and past member of the Board, and past Board member of Blue Shield (The Hague) and current Board member and immediate past Secretary of AusHeritage. I completed my term as a member of the Local Government Specialist Committee which is a committee of the Victorian Heritage Council. In the past I was a long-standing councillor of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria).
10. I have been a heritage adviser in Monash and Bayside, have undertaken heritage studies in at least 8 municipalities<sup>4</sup> and am presently a member of the Yarra Heritage Panel. I have provided expert witness statements on similar matters on numerous occasions at Heritage Victoria, VCAT, the Building Appeals Board, Planning Panels Victoria and other similar forums on behalf of councils, objectors and developers. My *Curriculum vitae* is appended.

## 1.5 Summary of Opinions

### *Background summary*

### *Buildings 51, 56 and 57*

11. Buildings 51, 56 and 57 were constructed in 1972, 1976 and 1983. They are large red brick buildings designed by Dominic Kelly of Demaine Russell Trundle Armstrong and Orton. RMIT also commissioned them to develop a master plan for the block bounded by Victoria, Lygon, Queensberry and Cardigan Streets. The master plan envisaged that the entire block would be redeveloped with similar large buildings. The master plan was ultimately abandoned by RMIT and only 3 out of the 7 proposed buildings were constructed. The Lovell Chen citation for these buildings attributes historical (Criterion A) and Aesthetic (Criterion E) significance. The citation principally bases these conclusions on being the work of Demaine, the site's location in proximity to Trades Hall and two hotels, the buildings being part of the master plan, materiality, solidity of the building elements and detailing. Also they are claimed to be part of built form changes in Carlton in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century. I have several methodological issues with the citation and do not consider that these buildings reach the relevant threshold for application of the Heritage Overlay. My key concerns are as follows.
12. Claims made on the basis of Criterion A (historical significance) have been variously found to not be correct or cannot be substantiated beyond mere facts to a level of significance which would warrant the application of a Heritage Overlay over Buildings 51, 56 and 57.

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<sup>4</sup> Fitzroy, Yarra, Bayside, Port Melbourne, Whitehorse, Bass Coast, Swan Hill, Shepparton.

13. In respect of Criterion A, the establishment of the Working Men's College as an institution was a significant event in the course of Melbourne's, even Victoria's, cultural history. Such a claim has not been made in the Statement of Significance. Instead claims for significance in relation to Criterion A are based on the master plan, Demaine's and Dominic Kelly's input and the site's proximity to Trades Hall. These claims are variously incorrect or in the discussion below have been found not to be significant. In my opinion Criterion A has not been met in respect of Buildings 51, 56 and 57..
14. The section in the Statement of Significance which specifically makes a claim for aesthetic significance is straightforwardly a statement of fact. While it accords with "The visual qualities of a place or object lie in the form, scale, setting, unity, contrast, colour, texture and material of the fabric of a place or object" in my opinion this does not elevate the facts to a level of significance which might be acceptable or that the application of a Heritage Overlay is justified .
15. *Building 94*
16. Building 94 was constructed in 1994-96 and post-dates the master plan. It is reflective of then Dean of Architecture Leon Van Schaik's new approach to the design of new buildings at RMIT, who championed progressive architects, in this case Allan Powell in association with Pels Innes Neilson Kosloff. The building comprised several elements in various colours and the facade has variously been described as "compositionally diverse" and "unresolved". The building won an RAIA Award of Merit in 1996. The Lovell Chen citation for these buildings attributes Aesthetic (Criterion E) significance. The citation principally bases these conclusions on being the above factors. Also they are claimed to be part of built form changes in Carlton in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century. I have several methodological issues with the citation and do not consider that these buildings reach the relevant threshold for application of the Heritage Overlay. My key concerns are as follows.
17. To make a case for significance, reliance has been placed on Leo Von Schaik's programme of commissioning progressive architects to design RMIT's buildings which was a change from the previous master plan(s) approach. In my opinion this was an episode in the history of RMIT similarly to the master plan eras and while introducing a big change into RMIT, it is not of such significance of itself as to warrant a Heritage Overlay over any buildings which emanated from this programme.
18. Building 94 was the work of Allan Powell in association with Pels Innes Neilson Kosloff (PINK) however, there is no information as to the roles which they played and in my opinion this should be researched further and clarified.
19. Building 94 won a RAIA Victorian Chapter Award of Merit in 1996 but according to Goad and Elliott there is some doubt as to how objective the awards juries have been. In my opinion winning an award does not automatically signify that a building is of heritage significance.
20. While the RAIA citation refers to "contemporary impossibility of an architecture of resolution" and clever resolution, Edquist and Grierson state that it was intentionally unresolved. This needs clarification. In my opinion the composition is unresolved.
21. A careful consideration of the documentation available raises some fundamental questions, throws up inconsistencies and is silent on some aspects which I would consider to be fundamental to know in order to make a critical judgement about any heritage merits which Building 94 might have. In my opinion a strong case for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay has not been made and further research needs to be undertaken to fill in the blanks and to sort out inconsistencies in the information now to hand. I would recommend that inclusion in the Heritage Overlay should not proceed at this time.
22. Building 94 was not nominated in 2002 by a group of 23 peer "architects" in the list of the 30 (finally 35) best buildings in Victoria. Powell was one of the group. When

interviewed for the Heritage Council of Victoria Powell did not mention Building 94 as being a project of which he was most proud.

23. Building 94 has not been widely written up or even studied in some depth and in my opinion not enough is known yet as a basis on which to ascribe objectively any level of significance. I note also that Building 94 was constructed only 24 - 26 years ago and it is generally accepted that approximately 50 years is the minimum effluxion of time in order to make an objective assessment of the heritage significance of a place. In my opinion the present time is too soon.
24. In my opinion the comparative analysis is inadequate and not in accord with PPN1.
25. Building 94 has only been considered to satisfy Criterion E: Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance). Given the contradictory comments about the design of the building and the limited documentation available and the lack of clarity as to how the association between Powell and PINK worked. I am not of the opinion that a strong case has been made to satisfy Criterion E.
26. In my opinion no case has been substantiated to support the inclusion of RMIT Buildings 51, 56 and 57 in a Heritage Overlay. Similarly no case has been made to include Building 94 in a Heritage Overlay at this time.

## **2.0 Assessment of the Review Methodology**

### **2.1 Applying the Heritage Overlay**

27. The methodology for undertaking heritage studies is set out in "Applying the Heritage Overlay", Planning Practice Note 1, August 2018 (PPN1). Apart from identifying types of places which should be included in the Heritage Overlay and setting out the recognised heritage criteria and direction on how to write a Statement of Significance, the most relevant paragraphs in relation to this matter are *viz.*:

The heritage process leading to the identification of the place needs to clearly justify the significance of the place as a basis for its inclusion in the Heritage Overlay. The documentation for each place shall include a statement of significance that clearly establishes the importance of the place and addresses the heritage criteria.

The thresholds to be applied in the assessment of significance shall be 'State Significance' and 'Local Significance'. 'Local Significance' includes those places that are important to a particular community or locality. Letter gradings (for example, "A", "B", "C") should not be used.

To apply a threshold, some comparative analysis will be required to substantiate the significance of each place. The comparative analysis should draw on other similar places within the study area, including those previously included in a heritage register or overlay. Places identified to be of potential state significance should undergo analysis on a broader (statewide) comparative basis.

Group, thematic and serial listings Places that share a common history and/or significance, but which do not adjoin each other or form a geographical grouping may be considered for treatment as a single heritage place. Each place that forms part of the group might share a common statement of significance; a single entry in the Heritage Overlay Schedule and a single Heritage Overlay number.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> DELWP. Planning Practice Notes. PPN1: *Applying the Heritage Overlay*. p. 2.

### *The Thematic History*

28. The Thematic History mentions RMIT in the context of the move away from Carlton by industry and its replacement by institutions. In the case of RMIT it replaced the Davies Coop complex in Cardigan Street as RMIT expanded north of the city campus.<sup>6</sup> Under the specific heading of "Education", the University of Melbourne and RMIT are both written up, more so the University rather than RMIT. In the case of RMIT the connection of the unions and Trades Hall is mentioned briefly.<sup>7</sup> The brevity is misleading as further research has found that while these two groups were involved in the initial establishment of the Working Men's College this was not exclusive and there were numerous other actors involved. It is also stated that the present Carlton site "was in close proximity to Trades Hall which was partially occupied by the Builders Labourers Federation and also in proximity to "two hotels with close ties to the union movement".<sup>8</sup> The sources for these claims are The Argus and Joe Rich. While the exact Argus article has not been located, further research has not found any evidence to support any claim that the siting of the Working Men's College was to be in close proximity to the Trades Hall. Rather what has been found is that land was available on the north-east corner of Bowen and La Trobe Streets south of the former Supreme, and later Magistrate's, Court and where Building No. 1 (named after Francis Ormond) is located. No mention of any hotels has been found in any references consulted.

## **2.2 Comparative Analysis Methodology**

29. The most recent methodological assessment of heritage studies undertaken in the City of Melbourne is contained in the C387melb Panel Report. With regard to comparative analysis its findings were *viz.*:

The Panel agrees that a comparative analysis is a fundamental and critical step in determining whether the threshold of heritage significance is reached. It enables an understanding and qualitative assessment of the relative quality and value of a place and whether it stands out or compares favourably with similar in terms of architectural quality, remaining intactness and integrity, and their ability to demonstrate key characteristics or stylistic and technical developments of a period. It requires therefore more than just a list of places or services of photos of similar period or classes of building to serve this task.

PPN01 confirms the role of the comparative analysis, identifying that to apply a threshold:

... some comparative analysis will be required to substantiate the significance of each place. The comparative analysis should draw on other similar places within the study area, including those previously included in a heritage register or overlay.

PPN01 does not identify what level of analysis is required, nor does it limit the analysis to just those places within a Heritage Overlay.<sup>9</sup>

The process of comparative analysis for local level significance does not require places to be better than others but they should compare at least as well as

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<sup>6</sup> Lovell Chen and Extent Heritage. *Carlton Heritage Review: Methodology Report*. Attachment A: Thematic Environmental History. p. 31.

<sup>7</sup> Lovell Chen and Extent Heritage. *Carlton Heritage Review: Methodology Report*. Attachment A: Thematic Environmental History. p. 55.

<sup>8</sup> Lovell Chen and Extent Heritage. *Carlton Heritage Review: Methodology Report*. Attachment A: Thematic Environmental History. p. 55.

<sup>9</sup> Melbourne Planning Scheme Amendment C387melb. Panel Report | 10 November 2021. pp. 42-43 of 281.



others that are similar phase, era or class. This is important to ensure the integrity of existing places included in the Heritage Overlay is not diminished. It also ensures that it is not just the grand and landmark buildings that are identified but also allows for the humbler places to be recognised as contributing to the heritage significance of a city, town or precinct.

This exercise will not always be clear cut as not all places display the same characteristics or reasons for significance. Some comparators while similar in era, typology or class may have different attributes which contribute to their significance in different ways. Some existing Heritage Overlay places may have been assessed under different thresholds or when some attributes were not considered important at the time. The Panel considers that this is perhaps one reason why PPN01 does not try to establish a particular approach to the exercise. While the Panel appreciates the positions expressed by some parties and experts that the Heritage Review's comparative analysis is somewhat simplistic and generic, it is not required to be an exacting exercise or an exhaustive and detailed analysis. Project budgets simply don't enable such a high degree of analysis and even then, would be subject to differences of opinion and make the process prohibitive.<sup>10</sup>

30. With regard to Comparative Analysis, the *Carlton Heritage Review* adopted the following rationale for its comparative analysis methodology, viz.:

Comparative analysis was a key part of the assessment methodology. It assisted in identifying whether a place met the threshold for an individual Heritage Overlay control, or a group of places met the threshold for a precinct or serial listing. As per the VPP Practice Note: To apply a threshold, some comparative analysis will be required to substantiate the significance of each place. The comparative analysis should draw on other similar places within the study area, including those previously included in a heritage register or overlay. Places identified to be of potential state significance should undergo analysis on a broader (statewide) comparative basis. In undertaking the comparative analysis for this study, similar places were referred to in order to better understand how the place under review compared.

Questions asked when comparing similar places included:

- Does the subject place have a more significant history or historical associations?
- Is the subject place more highly valued and regarded by a community?
- Is the subject place more intact?
- Is the subject place more architecturally or aesthetically distinguished?
- Is the subject place typical or does it stand out within the comparative group?

For example, if the place under review is an interwar manufacturing building which is being assessed for an individual HO control, then the analysis examined other generally comparable interwar manufacturing buildings, including those which already have an individual control or are identified as significant. This typically included buildings in the study area, or municipality, but may go beyond these geographical confines if the analysis assisted with understanding

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<sup>10</sup> Melbourne Planning Scheme Amendment C387melb. Panel Report | 10 November 2021. p. 43 of 281.

the relative significance or importance of the place. For example, the citation for RMIT Building 71, 33-89 Lygon Street, provides an illustration of how the comparative analysis was undertaken for an interwar manufacturing building (see Attachment C)....

The comparative analysis also assisted in the assessment of later twentieth century places and developments (from the 1960s through to the 1990s) of potential heritage value in the study area.

These places generally did not have comparable places with existing heritage controls in the study area, largely due to their later dates of construction and the focus of previous heritage studies, including of Carlton, on the Victorian [sic. – from?] through to the interwar periods. However, in this case, the comparative analysis examined a broader range of similar places, from mostly outside the study area. It also identified the architectural influences and precedents for some of these places, many of which derived from international examples.<sup>11</sup>

31. With regard to Statements of Significance, the C387melb Panel Report found that:

Place citations are important. They provide context and valuable background information as to why a place was identified in the first instance. While in this instance the citations are included in the Heritage Review, which is a reference document, they do not carry the same weight in decision making. They should not be relied upon to understand what is important about a place. The Statement of Significance is an incorporated document and is therefore a key document in understanding why a place is significant and to establishing what is significant when making decisions and managing place outcomes. It should clearly articulate what is significant and why the place is important and not be generic. Critically, any significant information contained in the citation pertaining to the significance of a place should be included in the Statement of Significance. Given the scope and format of Statements of Significance set out in PPN01, it is unrealistic to expect that all information will be able to be included. However, the key justification and citation details should be in the Statement of Significance. PPN01 suggests that in identifying 'What is significant' "there should be no doubt about the elements of the place that are under discussion" as well as elements that are not significant. ...

Details in the Statements of Significance should however be consistent with those in the citation including construction dates, architects and designers and other key criterion detail ....

The Panel concludes:

- Statements of Significance have greater weight than citations and should be relied upon to understand what is significant about a place including the significant elements and why it is significant.
- Critical information about the significance of a place should be contained within the Statement of Significance.<sup>12</sup>

### 3.0 The Citation for Buildings 51, 56 and 57

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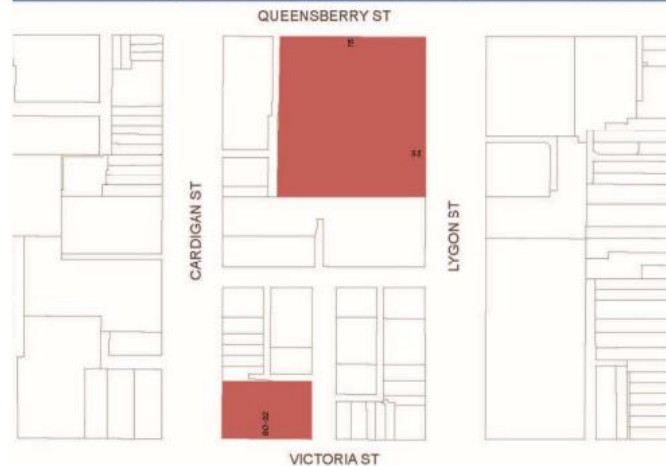
<sup>11</sup> Lovell Chen and Extent Heritage. *Carlton Heritage Review: Methodology Report*. 2121. pp. 14-15.

<sup>12</sup> Melbourne Planning Scheme Amendment C387melb. Panel Report | 10 November 2021. pp. 57-58 of 281.

32. The citation is included in the *Carlton Heritage Review*, Attachment C: Citations for Places Recommended for Heritage Overlay Controls. It reads as follows:

LOVELL CHEN

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>SITE NAME</b>      | RMIT BUILDINGS 51, 56 AND 57   |
| <b>STREET ADDRESS</b> | 80-92 VICTORIA STREET (BUILDING 51), 115 QUEENSBERRY STREET (BUILDING 56) AND 53 LYON STREET (BUILDING 57), CARLTON, VIC |
| <b>PROPERTY ID</b>    | 106082, 109849, 521663   |



|                                       |                                    |   |                            |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| SURVEY DATE: SEPTEMBER 2018           |                                    | SURVEY BY: LOVELL CHEN                        |                            |
| <b>PREVIOUS GRADE</b>                 | N/A                                | <b>HERITAGE OVERLAY</b>                       | SERIAL LISTING RECOMMENDED |
| <b>PROPOSED CATEGORY</b>              | SIGNIFICANT                        | <b>PLACE TYPE</b>                             | EDUCATIONAL BUILDINGS      |
| <b>DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:</b> | DOMINIC KELLY AND LLOYD ORTON      | <b>BUILDER:</b>                               | N/A                        |
| <b>DESIGN PERIOD:</b>                 | LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1965-2000) | <b>DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:</b> | 1972, 1976 AND 1983        |

**THEMES**

| HISTORICAL THEMES                      | DOMINANT SUB-THEMES     |
|--|-------------------------|
| 8.0 BUILDING COMMUNITY LIFE            | 8.2 EDUCATING PEOPLE    |
| 9.0 SHAPING CULTURAL AND CREATIVE LIFE | 9.5 ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE |

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The three buildings are recommended to be added to the Heritage Overlay as a serial listing, i.e. with a shared Heritage Overlay number and scheduling, with the mapping indicated at Figure 1.

Extent of overlay:

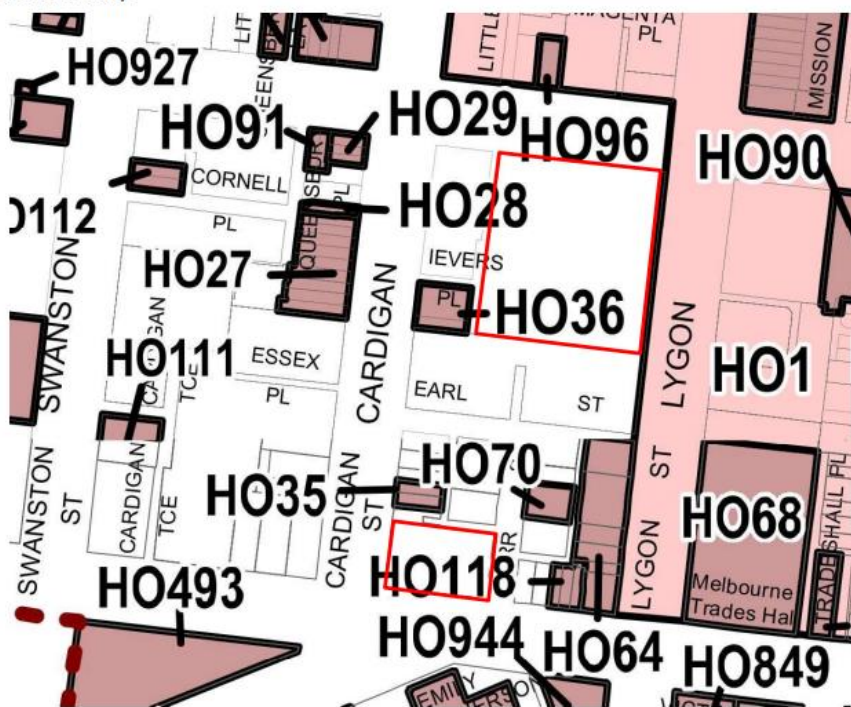


Figure 1 The proposed extent of overlay indicated by the red line; the northern component includes Buildings 56 and 57, while the southern component includes Building 51.  
Source: Melbourne Planning Scheme

## SUMMARY

RMIT Buildings 51, 56 and 57 are located in a complex of RMIT (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) buildings in the south of Carlton, and are of historical (Criterion A) and aesthetic significance (Criterion E). The buildings were constructed, respectively, in 1972, 1976 and 1983, to a design by the architectural practice of Demaine Russell Trundle Armstrong and Orton (later Demaine Partnership), with specific input from architect Dominic Kelly. The practice also prepared a master plan for RMIT's expansion into Carlton, in 1971. Although the plan was never fully realised, the three buildings, and their tertiary uses, were largely anticipated in the plan, including their substantial footprints and overall massing.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Education at a variety of levels has long had an impact on the community and built form of Carlton, and includes primary and tertiary institutions. Although the first campus is not located in Carlton, RMIT University, formerly the Working Men's College and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, has long had associations with Carlton, in particular with Trades Hall. Founded in 1887 by philanthropist and grazier Francis Ormond, the Working Men's College was supported by the unions, with members of Trades Hall included in the college's governing body.<sup>1</sup> The institution eventually evolved to offer courses in trades, technology and other skills for both men and women.<sup>2</sup> The motto of the Working Men's College was *perita manus, mens exulta* ('a skilled hand, a cultivated mind').<sup>3</sup> After a number of name changes, the institution became the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in 1960 to better reflect its purpose. By the mid-1960s, with its student population growing and course offers also increasing, RMIT began to expand beyond its city location into Carlton. As part of this growth, the institution undertook a process of master planning, initially led by architects Bates Smart and McCutcheon. For the city campus, the plan was to build a series of 'homogenous' buildings or blocks;<sup>4</sup> while in Carlton, a long-term building plan was embarked on from 1970, in the southern part of the suburb. This was driven by a different architectural practice (see 'History' below) and included new buildings and the conversion of existing buildings to tertiary/educational use. By the mid-1980s, a group of large red brick buildings (including the subject buildings) had been constructed fronting Swanston and Lygon streets.

Concurrently in this period, changes in demographics in Carlton saw changes in approach to the built form of the suburb. This included notable new developments in the suburb by contemporary architects, adapting the terrace form and corner buildings for the late twentieth century. While such development was often residential, it also included commercial and institutional buildings, such as offices, galleries and educational buildings, through which architects challenged the typical built form in the suburb.

## SITE HISTORY

RMIT, from the 1960s, experienced a significant period of growth, including growth in student numbers and an increasing variety of course offerings.<sup>5</sup> As part of this growth, the institute undertook a process of master planning, initially led by architects Bates Smart and McCutcheon; and in 1970, the institution embarked on a longer-term building plan after the Victorian government set aside properties for such development at the southern end of Carlton. The block, which fronted Lygon, Queensberry, Cardigan and Victoria streets, was situated immediately to the north of the city campus. It was also in close proximity to Trades Hall, and occupied in part by the Builders Labourers Federation headquarters and two hotels with close ties to the trade union movement. The shift into Carlton also followed a decision to provide students with two different streams of education: an advanced college offering degrees and diplomas and a technical college for those seeking apprenticeship courses. The former was overseen by the Federal Government while the latter by the Victorian Education Department. The new Carlton campus was earmarked as a technical college.<sup>6</sup>

Dominic Kelly and Lloyd Orton, from the architectural practice of Demaine Russell Trundle Armstrong and Orton, prepared a master plan for the Carlton site in 1971, which RMIT architectural historian, Harriet Edquist,

has described as 'one of the most accomplished of all the plans put forward for RMIT's building program over its 120-year history'.<sup>7</sup> Referred to as the Demaine plan (Figure 2), the design strategy was 'to build across the site, within the height limit, maximising the footprint and money available, closing off lanes where necessary and accommodating departments as they decanted from the city site'.<sup>8</sup> Although the plan was never fully realised, the three subject buildings were largely anticipated in the plan. RMIT also acquired and adapted a substantial number of other existing buildings within the block, as well as other Carlton buildings acquired outside the block.

Known as the Frederick Campbell Building, Building 51, which fronts Victoria Street, was the first of the subject buildings to be constructed, in 1972. It was named after the director and secretary of the Working Men's College between 1887 and 1913. Designed by Dominic Kelly, the building was described as:

...a reinforced concrete building with a vigorously modelled front elevation to Victoria Street that boasts innovative structural, pre-cast concrete panels with glazing set into rubber gaskets (rather than aluminium frames) for soundproofing. This is set against the tower of the service core while the additional brick service shafts cling to the north face of the building.<sup>9</sup>

Buildings 56 and 57 were also designed by Kelly and were part of a two-pronged development of the Lygon and Queensberry streets corner. The first of these erected was Building 56 (the northern building), or the Ronald R Mackay Building, named in honour of the head of the School of Radio and principal of the Melbourne Technical College (1934-54) and its successor Royal Melbourne Technical College (1954-60). Located on the former factory site of the institute's engineering departments, the building was erected in 1976 for the School of Engineering. Initially designed as a four-storey construction, an additional two floors were added to the design when enrolments increased across the TAFE sector. The building was reputedly the first of its type in Australia to set sheets of glass directly into a continuous frame, a glazing system Kelly had observed in Boston.<sup>10</sup>

Named the Edward Jackson Building after a former director of Technical Education, Building 57 (the southern building) was constructed in 1983 to a design by the restructured architectural firm, Demaine Partnership, which Kelly headed. Similar to its neighbouring structure, it housed the School of Engineering and was purposefully designed to meet an array of different engineering requirements, including accommodation for large scale projects. From 2010, it became a training facility for the electrical apprenticeship program.

The south side of this building also fronted onto (and continues to do so) O'Grady Place and O'Grady Courtyard, with a café located in the building, and the courtyard providing outdoor seating areas for students. A student space/courtyard is indicated in this location in the Demaine plan, albeit on a larger scale and (with what appears to be) more formal landscaping than the current courtyard.

The completed buildings can be seen in an aerial photograph of the mid-1980s, with the substantial building footprints and scale readily distinguished from the earlier buildings within this Carlton block (Figure 3).

Building 51 currently houses RMIT's School of Vocational Engineering, Health and Sciences; with two levels dedicated to the School of Global Studies and the School of Education.<sup>11</sup> Buildings 56 and 57 continue to house the School of Engineering.<sup>12</sup>



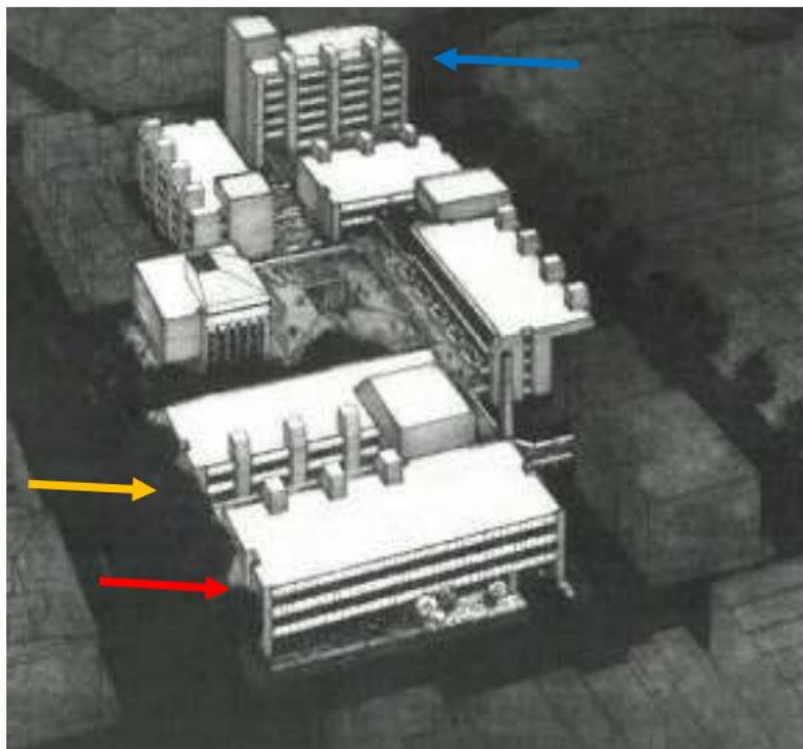


Figure 2 The Demaine plan for RMIT of 1971, showing the block fronting Lygon (left), Victoria (top), Cardigan (right) and Queensberry (bottom) streets, with north at bottom, and illustrating early designs for the Carlton campus buildings. Building 51 is indicated by the blue arrow, Building 56 by the red arrow, and Building 57 by the yellow arrow  
 Source: Harriet Edquist and Elizabeth Grierson, *A Skilled Hand and Cultivated Mind: A Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*, RMIT University, 2008

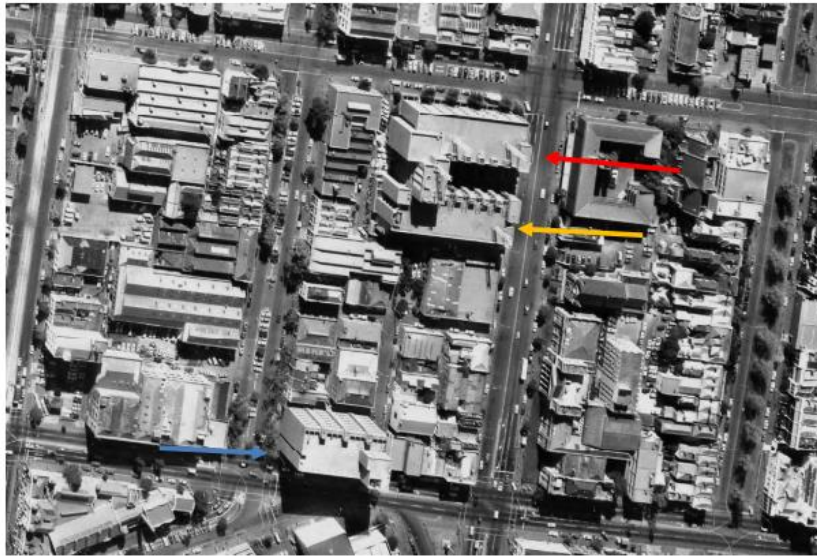


Figure 3 A 1985 aerial view of the subject area, showing the completed buildings. Building 51 is indicated in blue, Building 56 in red and Building 57 in yellow

Source: Land Victoria Aerial Photography Collection, Central Plan Office, Landata

#### SITE DESCRIPTION

The three buildings are located within a complex of RMIT (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) buildings, in a large block bounded by Queensberry, Lygon, Victoria and Cardigan streets, Carlton. The block is also dissected by lesser streets, including Earl, Orr and Little Cardigan streets, O'Grady Place and Ievers Place. The subject buildings are:

- Building 51 at 80-92 Victoria Street
- Building 56 at 115 Queensberry Street
- Building 57 at 53 Lygon Street

All three buildings were largely anticipated in the RMIT Carlton campus master plan of 1971, prepared by the architectural practice of Demaine Russell Trundle Armstrong and Orton (later Demaine Partnership). While the buildings differ in their external appearance from the images shown in the master plan, their general mass and proportions remain broadly similar. Of interest, the distinctive and monumental brick service shafts to the rear elevations of the buildings (described in more detail below) were indicated in the original plan.

They are all substantial buildings in terms of their footprints and overall scale. They also share a use of crisp face red brick in their walling, and concrete elements including window and other framing, the latter often expressed as a rough-surfaced pebble-textured (exposed aggregate) material.

The materials, and the striking building masses and forms, reflect some Brutalist influences in the design.

Building 51, the first of these buildings, was constructed in 1972 of concrete and face red brick (see Figure 5, Figure 6 & Figure 7). It is the tallest of the three buildings, rising to some eight storeys with a taller service tower



at its east end. Its main or principal presentation is to Victoria Street (on the south side), where a stepped entrance is located at the east end of the façade; the western presentation is to Cardigan Street, with the eastern presentation to Orr Street. The north side of the building is also highly visible, including from the north on Earl Street, and more generally from within the campus of RMIT buildings.

As noted, the south façade has been described as being ‘vigorously modelled’ with ‘innovative structural, pre-cast concrete panels with glazing set into rubber gaskets (rather than aluminium frames) for soundproofing’.<sup>13</sup> This highly regular arrangement of concrete panels, or window grilles, is given added drama through being ‘wedged’ between two large and plain (largely expressionless) expanses of red brick, being the tall service tower at the east end, and the west elevation. A colonnaded loggia is located at ground floor level to the south façade, where the entrance is located; with the loggia set atop a high base (or stylobate) which is again in plain red brick. The base rises in height from east to west, following the grade of Victoria Street.

The north façade of Building 51 also shares the ‘vigorous modelling’ of pre-cast concrete panels, or window grilles, and is articulated into bays by three massive red brick pilasters (monumental service shafts) which corbel out from the building at first floor level to provide deep service ducts to the levels above. Rising through the full height of the building, the shafts are unornamented but incline away from the vertical at roof level, folding inwards to grip the roof in a bold sculptural gesture.

The next of the three buildings, Building 56, was constructed in 1976 and is also of reinforced concrete and red brick (see Figure 8, Figure 9, Figure 10 & Figure 12). It is located to the corner of Queensberry and Lygon streets, and has a largely rectilinear building plan. Its principal north façade is to Queensberry Street, its east elevation is to Lygon Street, with its west elevation to Little Cardigan Street. This building has six storeys, the bottom storey being a basement or below ground level that draws light from a lightwell with an open trabeated canopy above, on the north side (Figure 11). At pedestrian level, planters set in a plain face brick base to Queensberry Street largely conceal the lightwell and the basement spaces, providing both shade and a degree of seclusion. The stepped entrance rises through the brick base at the west end of the Queensberry Street façade.

The north façade to Building 56 is set within a thick face brick rectangular frame, with regular red brick and concrete vertical bays which contain recessed windows with concrete aprons. As noted, the building was reputedly the first of its type in Australia to set sheets of glass directly into a continuous frame, a glazing system which the architect, Kelly, had observed in operation in Boston.<sup>14</sup> Behind the front northern bay is another larger red brick volume which is higher and wider – it extends further to the east and west – than the front bay. The brick east and west elevations are largely plain, save for vertical strips or bays of windows. The rear or south elevation of Building 56 has five massive red brick service shafts, generally in the form of those to the north elevation of the earlier Building 51. Windows are set between the service shafts.

The basement/below ground level extends from Building 56 to the south to Building 57. From Lygon Street, this level presents with a glazed roof or atrium over the space below (Figure 12).

The last, and most recent of the three buildings is Building 57, constructed of red face brick and concrete in 1983 (Figure 13, Figure 14 & Figure 15). To Lygon Street (east façade) it presents as a five storey building, with again a largely plain or expressionless brick wall, save for a central recessed window bay (of glazing and concrete), where the entrance is located at ground level and accessed via a red brick walled ramp. The profile of the east façade at the south end is sharply angled, or ‘jagged’, reflecting the tiered form of the concrete and glazed south elevation. The latter, which is largely devoid of the red face brick so prevalent elsewhere in this suite of buildings, has an address to O’Grady Courtyard (off O’Grady Place), with another ramped entrance to the building (constructed in concrete) located here.

The north elevation of Building 57 also has five massive red brick service shafts, again generally in the form of those to the south elevation of Building 56 and the north elevation of Building 51.

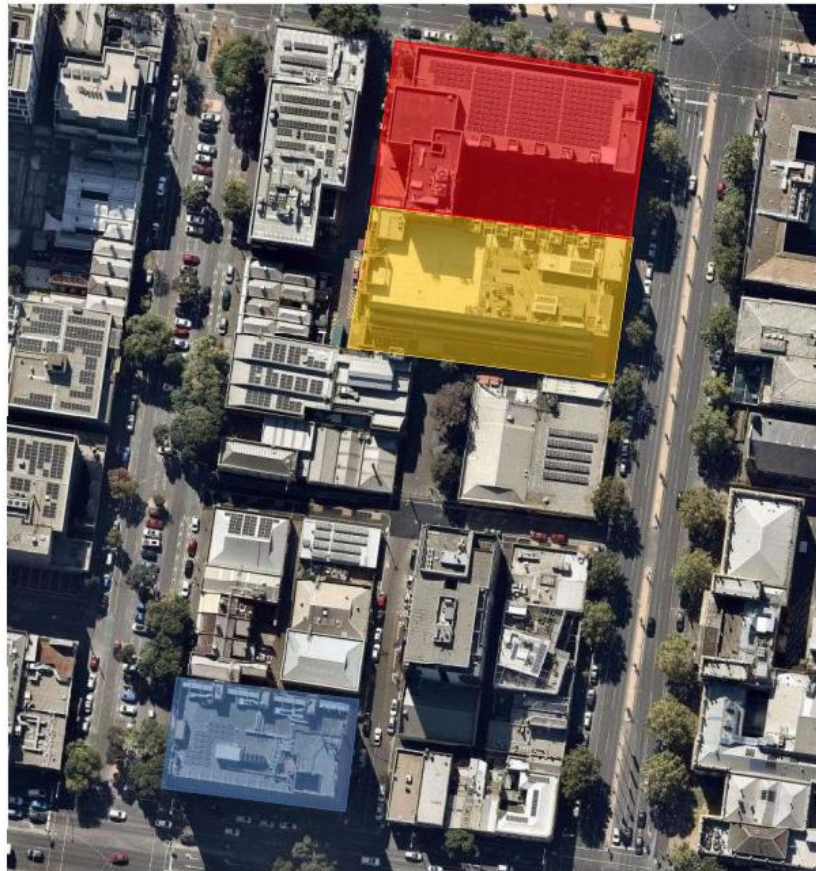


Figure 4 Aerial photograph with subject buildings indicated: Building 51 (blue), Building 56 (red) and Building 57 (yellow)  
Source: Nearmap, February 2019



Figure 5 Building 51 as viewed from the corner of Victoria and Cardigan streets; the concrete façade faces south, with the service tower and stepped entry at the east end (right of image); the brick elevation at left faces west  
Source: Lovell Chen



Figure 6 Detail of rear or north elevation of Building 51, with massive brick pilasters or shafts  
Source: Lovell Chen





Figure 7 North side of Building 51, as seen from Earl Street  
Source: Lovell Chen



Figure 8 Building 56, north façade, as seen from Queensberry Street; the entrance is via the steps at centre image  
Source: Lovell Chen



Figure 9 Building 56, east elevation to Lygon Street, with the east elevation of Building 57 at left  
Source: Lovell Chen



Figure 10 Building 56, west elevation to Little Cardigan Street; the west elevation of Building 57 is in the distance  
Source: Lovell Chen



Figure 11 Building 56, north side, detail of lightwell to basement level below  
Source: Lovell Chen

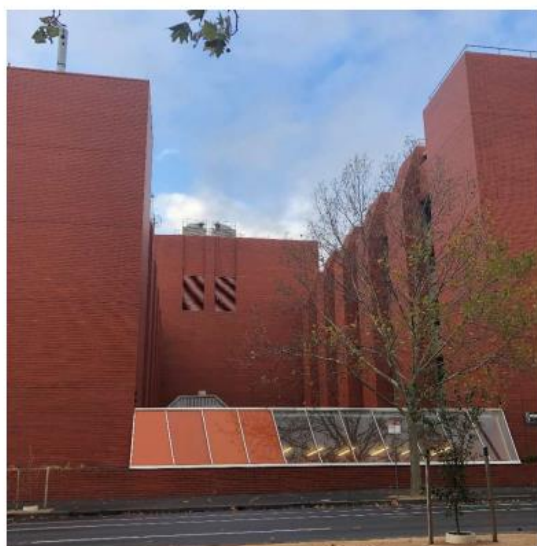


Figure 12 At right is the south elevation of Building 56; the glazed roof/atrium at centre image is over the basement level which connects Buildings 56 and 57; the north end of Building 57 is at left  
Source: Lovell Chen



Figure 13 Building 57, east elevation; note entrance in recessed centre bay and the angled profile at the south end (left of image)  
Source: Lovell Chen



Figure 14 South façade of Building 57, as seen from O'Grady Place, with concrete tiered levels and concrete entrance ramp  
Source: Lovell Chen





Figure 15 Buildings 57 and 56, as seen from the south on Lygon Street; note the tiered form of the south elevation of Building 57 (at left)  
Source: Lovell Chen

#### INTEGRITY

The three RMIT buildings are largely externally intact to their original state.

#### COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The three subject RMIT buildings were constructed over the period 1972 to 1983, under the authorship of the architectural practice of Demaine Russell Trundle Armstrong and Orton (later Demaine Partnership), with specific input from architect Dominic Kelly. RMIT in this period formed a link with the practice, which continues to this day.<sup>15</sup> Their later work (post-dating the subject buildings) included, in conjunction with Edmond and Corrigan, the much celebrated city campus RMIT Building 8 (1991-94, Figure 16).<sup>16</sup>

The practice was established by Robert Demaine in 1937, who was joined in 1943 by Arthur Russell and Ailsa Trundle, and in 1957 by Tony Armstrong and Lloyd Orton, both Haddon Scholarship winners. Trundle was one of the first women to be offered a named partnership in an architectural practice in Australia.<sup>17</sup>

Buildings designed by the firm leading up to the period of the subject buildings include BP House at 1-29 Albert Road, Melbourne (1962-4, HO319, Figure 17) a finely-worked design in precast concrete panels and face brick that curves gracefully in line with St Kilda Road; and the inward-curved MLC Tower at the south-west corner of Elizabeth and Collins streets (1973, Figure 18). These buildings have been described as being unusual for the time in revealing an 'interest in strong formal gestures' in combination with 'ornament and decorative relief', and further, that they demonstrate the practice's resolve to 'enrich' Modernism.<sup>18</sup>

Neil Clerehan observed that BP House was, together with Yuncken Freeman's Royal Insurance offices, the first substantial move back towards 'solidity' in large inner-city Melbourne buildings, after the tide of curtain-walling passed, first seen from 1953 onwards.<sup>19</sup> The MLC Tower was completed roughly in parallel with RMIT's Building



51. The firm's RMIT work also paralleled their new buildings for Caulfield Technical College (c1973-5), now the Caulfield campus of Monash University. Caulfield's Art and Design workshop building (c 1972) is an example, as was the former library there, since given a new exterior and hall by John Wardle. These technical college buildings share some commonalities, including rough-surfaced pebble-textured window framing at a monumental thickness, bracketed between slab end walls and service 'pylons' (towers) expressed in crisply cut, vivid red brick.

The two brick masses at each end of Building 51 parallel those on Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell's slightly later (1974) car park for the Royal Women's Hospital (recommended for a Heritage Overlay control, as part of this study, Figure 19). This design also featured two largely windowless brick service blocks – or 'pylons' – at each end of the building, with the carpark levels appearing as spans 'slung' between the pylons. Drawing on earlier influences, the 'cellular' form of the building's concrete window bays also recalls Le Corbusier's use of it on the Unite d'Habitation in Marseilles (1944-52, Figure 20).

Buildings 56 and 57 continue in an evolved form from Building 51, repeating the predominant materials of red brick and concrete. The former, on its north façade, employs a strong red brick rectangular frame. The thickness and spacing of the framing resemble the wing wall spacing between nineteenth-century terrace houses. Further, the thick gauge of each frame component was reflective of the 'solidity' marking Demaine projects from BP House onwards.

Phillip Goad describes the RMIT buildings as 'striking red-brick Brutalist' buildings.<sup>20</sup> Building 57 particularly displays its Brutalist influences. In its east façade to Lygon Street, the largely unrelieved and flat red brick masses give way, or part, in the centre to reveal a sudden change to the 'scooped' vertical window bay. The south end of the brick façade also has a sharp angle which gives the building a 'jagged' appearance, in responding to the tiered concrete form of the south façade behind the wall. Such sudden alternations, or changes in the building planes, are often associated with Brutalist massing.

Architect James Stirling's Cambridge History Faculty (1963-68, Figure 21)<sup>21</sup> was widely admired in Australia, and his vivid red brick usage is seen in Building 57, as in Buildings 51 and 56. Building 57 additionally reflects, on its east facade, the changes in wall angle and profile seen in the earlier Cambridge building; and on its the south side, the terraced or tiered form also seen in the Cambridge building, albeit rendered in Carlton in Brutalist concrete rather than the glazed material of Stirling's design. Stirling also often designed for tertiary institutions.

Examples referred to above, including comparative examples comprise the following places:

- RMIT Building 8, 360 Swanston Street, Melbourne (1991-94, Figure 16)
- BP House, 1-29 Albert Road, Melbourne (1962-4, HO319, Figure 17)
- MLC Tower, 303 Collins Street, Melbourne (1973, Figure 18)
- Former Caulfield Technical College, now Monash University Caulfield Campus, 900 Dandenong Road, Caulfield East (c. 1973-5)
- Caulfield's Art and Design workshop building, Monash Art Design and Architecture building, Monash University, Caulfield Campus, 900 Dandenong Road, Caulfield East (c 1972)
- Royal Women's Hospital carpark (recommended for a Heritage Overlay control, as part of this study, Figure 19).
- Unite d'Habitation, 280 Boulevard Michelet, Marseilles, France (1944-52, Figure 20).
- Faculty of History, University of Cambridge, West Road, Cambridge, United Kingdom (1963-68, Figure 21)



Figure 16 RMIT Building 8  
Source:  
<http://architecture.rmit.edu.au/projects/rmit-building-8/>



Figure 17 BP House, HO319  
Source:  
<http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/pictoria/gid/slv-pic-aab80516>



Figure 18 MLC Tower  
Source: Streetview



Figure 19 Royal Women's Hospital Carpark  
Source: Lovell Chen



Figure 20 Unite d'Habitation, Marseilles  
Source:  
<http://architecturalmoleskine.blogspot.com/2011/10/le-corbusier-unite-dhabitation-in.html>



Figure 21 Cambridge History Faculty  
Source: Biblioteca Cambridge

**ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA**

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

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE****WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT**

The three RMIT buildings, located in a complex of RMIT (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) buildings in the south of Carlton, are significant. The subject buildings are:

- Building 51 at 80-92 Victoria Street (1972)
- Building 56 at 115 Queensberry Street (1976)
- Building 57 at 53 Lygon Street (1983)

**HOW IT IS SIGNIFICANT**

RMIT Buildings 51, 56 and 57, located in a block bounded by Queensberry, Lygon, Victoria and Cardigan streets, Carlton, are of local historical and aesthetic significance.

**WHY IT IS SIGNIFICANT**

Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) Buildings 51, 56 and 57 are of historical significance (Criterion A). The buildings were constructed between 1972 and 1983 to designs by the architectural practice of Demaine Russell Trundle Armstrong and Orton (later Demaine Partnership), with specific input from architect Dominic Kelly. The practice had earlier, in 1971, prepared a master plan for RMIT's expansion into Carlton, at a time when the institute was experiencing significant growth in student numbers and course offerings. RMIT embarked on its Carlton building plan from 1970, after the Victorian government set aside properties for the institute's development at the southern end of the suburb. The block in which the subject buildings are located was situated immediately to the north of the city campus, and also in close proximity to Trades Hall with which the institute, originally the Working Men's College founded in 1887, had long had an association.

RMIT Buildings 51, 56 and 57 are also of aesthetic significance (Criterion E). The architects, Demaine, are a highly regarded Melbourne-based architectural practice, with a comprehensive and diverse portfolio of work including hospital, institutional, corporate and educational projects. Although their master plan for the Carlton campus was never fully realised, the three subject buildings, and their tertiary uses, were largely anticipated in the plan. This included their substantial footprints and overall massing, and notably their distinctive and monumental brick service shafts to the rear elevations. Aesthetically, the three buildings form a largely cohesive group, unified in the use of large-scale (monumental) red brick volumes; huge expanses of plain red brick walling; recessed vertical window bays or, alternatively in the earlier building, regular arrangements of concrete window grilles; concrete detailing often expressed as a rough pebble-textured finish; and the striking service shafts with their corbelled forms.

While they are of a group, the three buildings are also individually distinguished, with each demonstrating different architectural references and specific influences, including some Brutalist influences. Building 51 shares commonalities with other Demaine tertiary buildings of the general period, including the rough-surfaced pebble-textured window panels bracketed between brick end walls and service towers; and the 'cellular' form of the window grilles which recalls Le Corbusier's earlier work. Building 56 on its north façade employs a thick red brick rectangular frame, reflective of the 'solidity' which marked Demaine projects from the 1960s onwards, which was in turn a reaction to the earlier predominance of curtain walling. Building 56 is also distinguished by its incorporation of a basement level and lightwell to the north side, which is largely concealed from Queensberry Street; and by its innovative continuous window framing system. Building 57 is the more overtly Brutalist of the three, seen in the angled ('jagged') form of the east façade to Lygon Street, and its sudden central break which reveals a 'scooped' vertical window bay. The tiered concrete form and concrete entrance ramp of the south elevation also draw strongly on Brutalist influences.

More broadly, the buildings are of aesthetic significance for being reflective of the built form changes in Carlton in the later twentieth century, when contemporary architects were responsible for some celebrated new developments which, in turn, challenged the typical building form and character of the suburb. The three buildings are also significant as large and robust forms, which dominate their contexts, and draw attention to RMIT's presence in this area of Carlton.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The three buildings are recommended to be added to the Heritage Overlay as a serial listing, with the Schedule as follows.

**MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS   | No |
| INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS  | No |
| TREE CONTROLS   | No |
| OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES<br>(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 |
| NAME OF INCORPORATED PLAN UNDER CLAUSE 43.01-2                        | No |
| ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE   | No |

**REFERENCES**

See endnotes.



## PREVIOUS STUDIES

Not identified in any  
previous studies.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> *The Argus*, 17 May 1882, p. 10.
- <sup>2</sup> Joe Rich, 'RMIT University', eMelbourne, Encyclopedia of Melbourne, <http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00767b.htm>, accessed 29 January 2019.
- <sup>3</sup> 'History of RMIT', <https://www.rmit.edu.au/about/our-heritage/history-of-rmit>.
- <sup>4</sup> Harriet Edquist and Elizabeth Grierson, *A Skilled Hand and Cultivated Mind: A Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*, RMIT University, 2008, p. 64.
- <sup>5</sup> Joe Rich, 'RMIT University', eMelbourne, Encyclopedia of Melbourne.
- <sup>6</sup> Harriet Edquist and Elizabeth Grierson, *A Skilled Hand and Cultivated Mind: A Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*, RMIT University, 2008, pp. 92-3.
- <sup>7</sup> Harriet Edquist and Elizabeth Grierson, *A Skilled Hand and Cultivated Mind: A Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*, RMIT University, 2008, p. 93.
- <sup>8</sup> Harriet Edquist and Elizabeth Grierson, *A Skilled Hand and Cultivated Mind: A Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*, RMIT University, 2008, p. 93.
- <sup>9</sup> Harriet Edquist and Elizabeth Grierson, *A Skilled Hand and Cultivated Mind: A Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*, RMIT University, 2008, p. 96.
- <sup>10</sup> Harriet Edquist and Elizabeth Grierson, *A Skilled Hand and Cultivated Mind: A Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*, RMIT University, 2008, p. 98.
- <sup>11</sup> <https://www.rmit.edu.au/maps/melbourne-city-campus/building-51>, accessed 26 May 2019.
- <sup>12</sup> <https://www.rmit.edu.au/maps/melbourne-city-campus/building-56>, and <https://www.rmit.edu.au/maps/melbourne-city-campus/building-57>, accessed 26 May 2019.
- <sup>13</sup> Harriet Edquist and Elizabeth Grierson, *A Skilled Hand and Cultivated Mind: A Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*, RMIT University, 2008, p. 96.
- <sup>14</sup> Harriet Edquist and Elizabeth Grierson, *A Skilled Hand and Cultivated Mind: A Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*, RMIT University, 2008, p. 98.
- <sup>15</sup> Philip Goad, 'Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong and Orton', in Philip Goad and Julie Willis (eds., contrib.), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge, Melbourne, 2011, pp. 199-200.
- <sup>16</sup> Conrad Hamann, *Cities of Hope Remembered: Australian Architecture by Edmond and Corrigan 1962-2012*, Thames and Hudson, Melbourne, 2012, pp. 16-41; Leon van Schaik (ed., contrib.), *Building 8: Edmond and Corrigan at RMIT*, Transition, Melbourne, 1995, 3 vols.
- <sup>17</sup> Philip Goad, 'Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong and Orton', in Philip Goad and Julie Willis (eds., contrib.), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge, Melbourne, 2011, pp. 199-200.
- <sup>18</sup> Philip Goad, 'Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong and Orton', in Philip Goad and Julie Willis (eds., contrib.), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge, Melbourne, 2011, pp. 199-200.
- <sup>19</sup> Neil Clehahan, 'The Contemporary City', Introduction, in Philip Goad (ed., contrib.), *Melbourne Architecture*, Watermark, Sydney, 1999, p.176.
- <sup>20</sup> Philip Goad, 'Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong and Orton', in Philip Goad and Julie Willis (eds., contrib.), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge, Melbourne, 2011, p. 199.
- <sup>21</sup> Cambridge University: Faculty of History: The Building, via <https://www.hist.cam.ac.uk/directory/building>, viewed 17 April 2019.

### 3.1 My Response to the Citation for Buildings 51, 56 and 57

#### Research

33. For the citation, research has mostly been confined to quotes from Harriet Edquist and Elizabeth Grierson. *A Skilled Hand and a Cultivated Mind: a Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*, whereas citations for some other places have referenced original architectural drawings and the like. This might have been necessary as perhaps no original material survives and an explanatory note would be useful. The lack of

reasonably wider research for the place citation might also have been due to budgetary considerations.<sup>13</sup> Whatever the reason the historical information mostly just quotes others without looking behind the texts so as to check and ensure accuracy.

34. It should be noted that research for this report necessarily has been also confined but it is in greater depth than that evidenced in the citation. The RMIT Archives has been contacted and at the time of writing some items are yet to be viewed.
35. *A Skilled Hand and a Cultivated Mind* is a series of well-illustrated but very short articles, often a few sentences only, and with illustrations of the relevant topic i.e. buildings, paintings, sculpture etc. As the sub-title states, it is a "Guide" to RMIT's architecture and art rather than being an in-depth tome. The edition which was used by Lovell Chen to prepare the RMIT citation has been superseded by the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the work and the earlier edition is not available, at least not at the State Library of Victoria. The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition may contain additional information which was not included in the earlier edition.

### *Historical Context*

36. Under the heading "Historical Context" reference is made to the fact that the former Working Men's College and RMIT have "had associations with Carlton, in particular Trades Hall ... [and] was supported by the unions, with members of Trades Hall included in the college's governing body" referenced to an article in *The Argus* 17 May, 1882. Philanthropist and founder, Francis Ormond, is also mentioned. This is not strictly correct and is misleading. These sentences convey the idea that the Working Men's College, established in 1882, was governed by Francis Ormond and the unions only, however the original college Council "consisted of representatives of the Government, Trades Hall, the University of Melbourne, the Public Library, subscribers and the founder, the Hon. Francis Ormond".<sup>14</sup> Early on it appears that there were two representatives of the Committee of the Trades Hall prior to the establishment of a provisional committee.<sup>15</sup> After a reasonable search in Trove *The Argus* article referenced in the citation could not be located but an assumed similar article in the *Emerald Hill Record* of 26 May, 1882 (p.3) records that there were two delegates of the Committee of the Trades Hall and they together with Francis Ormond, MLC, obtained a promise from the then Premier Sir Bryan O'Loughlen about withholding from sale land adjacent to the Trades Hall until the ultimate site of the college had been decided upon. By 1892 the following members of the Council were recorded *viz.*: Professor Kernot from Melbourne University was Chairman and "Messrs. W. M. K. Vale, C. S. Paterson [presumably Charles Paterson of Melbourne's premier artistic decorating firm 'Paterson Brothers'], F. M. Bromley M.L.A., G. M. Prendergast MLA, J. Graham, R.L.J. Ellery [Robert Lewis John Ellery (1827-1908), astronomer and first director of the Melbourne Observatory, public servant and a leading member of the colony's scientific community; President in 1866-85 of the Royal Society of Victoria, Treasurer of the Council of the University of Melbourne, Chairman of the Alfred Hospital and a Trustee of the Public Library, Gallery and Museum]<sup>16</sup>, James Smith, J. C. Kaufman LL.D, and J. L. Bagley.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Melbourne Planning Scheme Amendment C387melb. Panel Report | 10 November 2021. p. 43 of 281.

<sup>14</sup> "Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology..." AROC Research Data Australia.  
<https://researchdata.edu.au/royal-melbourne-institute-1960-ct/491243>  
Accessed 24/05/2022.

<sup>15</sup> "Working Men's College". *Record*. Emerald Hill. 26 May, 1882, p.3.

<sup>16</sup> Gascoigne, S. C. B. "Ellery, Robert Lewis (1827-1908" in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.  
<https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/ellery-robert-lewis-3477> Accessed 24/05/2022.

<sup>17</sup> "Working Men's College". *The Age*. Melbourne. 6 March, 1892. p. 7.  
More about Francis Ormond's involvement in the early years of the development of the College and subsequent donations is set out in Frederick Campbell and Stephen Murray-Smith and John Anthony Dare. *The Tech*. pp. 13 – 49.

Various other compositions of the Council indicating changes of individuals but not member groups are set out in Frederick Campbell and Murray-Smith and Dare (passim).

37. A working men's college had been proposed in Sydney in 1879<sup>18</sup> and this may have encouraged a similar aspiration in Melbourne around 1882. The idea of a working men's college in Melbourne came from Francis Ormond *viz.*:

Another special interest was the education of working men, and in England and on the Continent after 1860 Ormond took particular note of institutions for technical education. In 1881 he began his long struggle to found a technical institute in Melbourne, but his toil and doggedness did not succeed until the Working Men's College was founded in 1887. He contributed £20,500 to this project and as its chairman spent much anxiety and effort.<sup>19</sup>

38. The steps required to provide adequate funding, to acquire a site, to construct or adapt a building(s) and to develop a curriculum all had considerable input from others, including Francis Ormond, the Victorian government and Frederick Campbell, the first director, and more than Trades Hall and the unions in quantum. Early on the unions were divided in their opinions and progress on the establishment of the Working Men's College was in part held back. The Working Men's College was open to men and women students and in the second year of operation courses included initiative and elementary schooling, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, grammar, language (Latin, French and German), bookkeeping and shorthand, violin, singing, architecture, mechanical drawing and theoretical and applied mechanics. Trade courses, modelling, physics and physiology were also taught. The founders wished to appeal to as wide a clientele as possible and students included skilled workers, clerks, teachers, draftsmen and people, presumably women, involved with domestic duties, schoolchildren and unskilled workers.<sup>20</sup> Education at the College was seen as the "ladder" for poor or rural boys and girls to better themselves through education and a possibility of receiving a university education.<sup>21</sup> The Working Men's College was many things and it catered to a much broader clientele than just trade unions and the link between it and the unions and Trades Hall has been overstated.
39. The "Site History" section of the citation notes that Building 51 (Frederick Campbell Building), designed by Dominic Kelly of Demaine Russell Trundle Armstrong and Orton, was the first of the buildings included in the master plan to be constructed in 1972.
40. The "Historical Context" and "Site History" sections also address the master planning of the Carlton part of the wider RMIT University campus. They note that this process was begun by Bates Smart and McCutcheon [no date given but it was 1965 according to source Edquist and Grierson], but in fact it began earlier in 1961 when some, presumed RMIT, councillors produced a plan which started from a clean slate for the site bounded by Swanston, Franklin, Bowen and La Trobe Streets.<sup>22</sup> The envisaged architectural style was for "a number of separate international-style, corporate looking blocks". This master plan was revised in 1963 and 1964 and again in 1965 when Osborn McCutcheon took up the baton eventually with "dismaying" results. The next iteration of a master plan was by Dominic Kelly and Lloyd Orton of Demaine Russell Trundle Armstrong and Orton in 1971. Edquist and Grierson consider the master plan for the Carlton site to be

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<sup>18</sup> "Working Men's College". *Evening News* (Sydney). 5 April, 1879. p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Chambers, Don. "Ormond, Francis (1829-1889)". *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/ormond-francis-4340> Accessed 24/05/2022.

<sup>20</sup> Murray-Smith, Stephen and Dare, John Anthony. *The Tech*. pp. 27-35 and Campbell, Frederick. *The Working Men's College in the making 1887-1913*. pp. 13-14, 20.

<sup>21</sup> Campbell, Frederick. *The Working Men's College in the making 1887-1913*. p.

<sup>22</sup> Edquist, Harriet and Grierson, Elizabeth. *A Skilled Hand and a Cultivated Mind: a Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*. p. 69.



"the most accomplished of all the architectural plans put forward from RMIT's building program over its 125 year history".<sup>23</sup> However, this plan was never fully executed – only buildings 51, 56 and 57 were completed i.e. three of the original seven shown on the bird's eye view (Figure 2 in the place citation). No explanation as to why this was so has been provided in the citation or by source Edquist and Grierson. Given the accolades, it would not be unreasonable to expect that given the past history of master planning at RMIT this plan, if it were a good one, might have been completed, noting also that there might have been a lack of funds but this has not been mentioned. Also another possible reason for abandonment might have been Leon Von Schaik's new programme of appointing progressive architects and architectural firms to design buildings for RMIT. Von Schaik was appointed a Professor in 1987. This is discussed further in relation to Building 94. However, according to source Edquist and Grierson "The Demaine plan continued the theme of unadorned, tough red brick, introduced by Bates Smart and McCutcheon's Building 55". No commentary is provided as to how this design was received at the time and there is no mention of any awards being received so it is reasonable to assume that there were none. Edquist and Grierson also state that as in the Bates Smart and McCutcheon plan the main level of the master plan buildings was above the street and in regard to pedestrian access this "proved to be a major drawback".<sup>24</sup>

41. In summary, the Demaine master plan appears to have included seven buildings and drew upon key elements of the Bates Smart and McCutcheon plan which had been abandoned previously due to its failings.<sup>25</sup> In turn some aspects of the Demaine plan also proved to be problematic or failures probably because they drew upon the already rejected Bates Smart and McCutcheon plan. This might have been a reason for the plan being incomplete, although no actual reason has been advanced in the citation or in the sources referred to, principally Edquist and Grierson. Another likely explanation is that it was probably supplanted by Van Schaik's new approach. It is questionable as to whether a master plan, in which less than half the proposed buildings were actually constructed, is of any heritage (architectural) significance of itself. As noted in the place citation and as evidenced by a walk around the block bounded by Victoria, Cardigan and Queensberry Streets and part of Lygon Street, the on-ground extent proposed by the master plan, RMIT has instead, for whatever reason, acquired and/or occupied and adapted almost every existing (pre-1971) building, including several buildings on the west side of Cardigan Street which were not part of the master plan. No new buildings (post-1971) exist within the master plan curtilage.

#### *Site History*

42. Under the heading "Site History" the citation links RMIT to Trades Hall by geographical proximity. What should have been established is what, if any, direct or daily connection between the two might have been. As it is all that has been stated is a fact which is not of any significance in itself. Similarly, the connection between the Builders Labourers Federation (BLF), then domiciled in Trades Hall, and the proximity of "two hotels with close ties to the trade union movement" are merely facts, if this is correct, and not aspects of significance.<sup>26</sup> Two representatives of Trades Hall are recorded as being

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<sup>23</sup> Edquist, Harriet and Grierson, Elizabeth. *A Skilled Hand and a Cultivated Mind: a Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*. p. 103. (Quoted in the place citation p. 4).

<sup>24</sup> Edquist, Harriet and Grierson, Elizabeth. *A Skilled Hand and a Cultivated Mind: a Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*. p. 103.

<sup>25</sup> Edquist, Harriet and Grierson, Elizabeth. *A Skilled Hand and a Cultivated Mind: a Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*. p. 70.

<sup>26</sup> Edquist, Harriet and Grierson, Elizabeth. *A Skilled Hand and a Cultivated Mind: a Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*. p. 103.

involved in the early discussions<sup>27</sup> but beyond that the nature of any connection between the Working Men's College/RMIT and the BLF and any hotels has not been elucidated and therefore not established other than for geographical proximity which is not a significant fact in itself.

43. As it was there was some land adjoining Trades Hall which was potentially available, the then Premier suggested "that a portion of the Exhibition building might be used for the purpose of the college" and the addition of some land to the site of the engineers orderly room were also considered as possible locations.<sup>28</sup>
44. Nothing of any particular significance with regard to any connection between the Working Men's College and the societies/organisations (later unions) has been established in the citation. However it is known that in 1886 (and indeed on the original College Council) the unions had two of sixteen nominees on the new Council.<sup>29</sup>

#### *Site Description*

45. This section of the citation is an appropriate description of Buildings 51, 56 and 57 insofar as factual information is concerned. Value judgements such as "vigorously modelled" etc. are open to opinion.
46. While the use of "innovative pre-cast concrete panels" and "rubber gaskets" are mentioned in the "Site Description", this is not mentioned in the "Why it is Significant" section of the Statement of Significance and therefore these can be dismissed from any claim for significance. No assessment has been made against Criterion F, technical significance which is appropriate.
47. Curiously, the description of Building 51 refers to "large and plain (largely expressionless) expanses of red brick"<sup>30</sup> which are equally applicable to Buildings 56 and 57. The red brick is unquestionably eye-catching but red brick has not been advanced as an attribute nor has the skill of the bricklayers.

#### *Comparative Analysis*

48. While PPN01 requires that "The comparative analysis should draw on other similar places within the study area," the Lovell Chen methodology went "beyond these geographical confines if the analysis assisted with understanding the relative significance or importance of the place" particularly where "comparable places with

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This link between RMIT, the BLF and the Curtin Hotel seems to have come from Harriet Edquist who considers these places to be "the stronghold of Melbourne's labour movement, which could not be moved". It is not clear what is meant by "could not be moved" – does it mean that because of some supposed connection between RMIT and the unions that they had to be located in proximity and not RMIT located elsewhere? Frederick Campbell and Stephen-Murray Smith and Dare have set out how the initial land was acquired for the College and this was not because of any direct link with unions or Trades Hall. While the area, e.g. Lygon Street south of Queensberry Street, is/was the centre of the union movement, some unions, including the ANMF, AMWU, CFMEU (successors of the BLF) have relocated to Elizabeth, Leicester and Queensberry Streets thus dispersing the concentration or otherwise establishing a new union occupied precinct. Edquist and Grierson provide no basis for the comment and it can therefore be assumed that it is opinion and not necessarily fact or an aspect of cultural heritage significance. There is no established connection, or even apparent connection, with RMIT other than for geographical proximity, which has been substantiated in either Edquist's and Grierson's survey or the place citation.

<sup>27</sup> "Working Men's College". *Record*. Emerald Hill. 26 May, 1882. p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> "Working Men's College". *Emerald Hill Record*. 26 May, 1882, p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> Murray-Smith, Stephen and Dare, Anthony John. *The Tech*. p. 25.

<sup>30</sup> Lovell Chen. Place citation. p. 7.

existing heritage controls in the study area, largely due to their later dates of construction and the focus of previous heritage studies, including of Carlton” did not exist. Therefore “the comparative analysis examined a broader range of similar places, from mostly outside the study area. It also identified the architectural influences and precedents for some of these places, many of which derived from international examples”. Logically this is not an unreasonable approach however, as set out in the citation, some examples do not appear to have any commonalities with Buildings 5, 56 and 57.

49. The first comparison is in the context of the work of Demaine *et. al.* and Dominic Kelly. The citation claims that Demaine *et al.* formed a link with RMIT at the time when Building 51 was designed and constructed. It also claims that this link still continues. The article on “Demaine, Russell, Trund, Armstrong and Orton” in *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture* is cited as the source for this information.<sup>31</sup> The article provides short educational and professional biographies of Demaine, Trundle and Orton, stating *inter alia*, that Lloyd Orton “was educated at the Melbourne Technical College and the University of Melbourne” and that at some time he was President of Swinburne Technical College. None of this indicates any particular link between Demaine *et. al.* and RMIT or that such a link continues. The only other connection with RMIT is “

Another stream of the firm’s practice was a series of striking red-brick Brutalism buildings for Royal Melbourne Institute of technology (RMIT Buildings 51, 56 and 57, designed by Dominic Kelly and Caulfield institute of Technology in the 1970s, as well as RMIT Technical College Master Plan (1971).

50. There is nothing which suggests that the connection between Demaine *et. al.* or Dominic Kelly in particular, was any more than a typical client-architect relationship as would have been the case with the other buildings designed by the practice and which are cited in the article.
51. It is not clear what relevance there is to Buildings 51, 56 and 57 and Dominic Kelly of the inclusion of brief biographical information on Robert Demaine, Arthur Russell, Ailsa Trundle, Tony Armstrong and Lloyd Orton in the comparative analysis section of the citation – no actual comparison with anyone or any other firm has been made. This information should more properly have been included in the Site History and if thought to be significant then carried through to the Statement of Significance which it has not.
52. Actual comparators cited are BP House, MLC Tower, both by Demaine, buildings by John Wardle on the Caulfield Technical College (now the Caulfield campus of Monash University, Mockridge Stahle and Mitchell’s Royal Women’s Hospital car park and James Stirling’s Cambridge History Faculty, the latter as a particular comparator with Building 57 and also Buildings 51 and 56 but to a lesser degree.<sup>32</sup> Le Corbusier’s Unité d’Habitation is illustrated and also mentioned briefly but only in reference to “the ‘cellular form of the building’s concrete window bays”. This mention is more by way of a precedent example than a comparison. BP House<sup>33</sup>, MLC Tower and the car park are discussed, listed and illustrated and the comparison is quite obvious e.g. unadorned vertical monumentality, use of concrete spandrels, mullions and in the case of the MLC Tower pylon-esque end wings. The Caulfield buildings are discussed briefly but are not illustrated.
53. The Brutalist similarities and dissimilarities with Stirling’s Cambridge History Faculty (1963-68) are also obvious as a source precedent. Noting the Brutalist design it is not

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<sup>31</sup> Goad, Philip. “Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton”. *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*. p. 199.

<sup>32</sup> “James Stirling and Modernism in Cambridge”. YouTube.  
<https://www.hist.cam.ac.uk/stirling-building> Accessed 1/06/2022

<sup>33</sup> Grow, Robin. *Melmo: Modernist Architecture in Melbourne*. pp. 162-163.

clear why one of the most known examples of Brutalism in Melbourne, Graeme Gunn's Plumbers and Gasfitters Employees Building at 52 Victoria Street, Carlton, immediately behind (east of) Trades Hall was not cited as a comparator.<sup>34</sup> Possibly this was because it is executed in off-form concrete rather than brick rather than "raw concrete and exposed brickwork".

54. Not listed or discussed in this section but illustrated, is RMIT's Building 8 by Edmund and Corrigan which was part of Van Schaik's programme. Its relevance to Buildings 51, 56 and 57, other than being part of the RMIT, albeit City, campus, is not at all clear, indeed in my opinion there is no relationship in terms of design or origins i.e. Demaine master plan *vis-a-vis* Von Schaik. The only mention of Edmond and Corrigan in the citation is "Their [i.e. Demaine] later work (post-dating the subject buildings) included, in conjunction with Edmond and Corrigan, the much celebrated city campus RMIT Building 8 (1991-94).<sup>35</sup> First, Building 8 post-dates Building 51 by 28 years and its use as a relevant comparator is unclear. Secondly, Building 8 is attributed to Edmond and Corrigan and not Demaine. Conrad Hamann does not mention Demaine in his article on Edmond and Corrigan, in fact he states that "Building 8 initiated a wave of free and distinctly bold designs in the central city", and according to him having their origins in Gaudi's Barcelona buildings, Griffin's Capitol Theatre and streets of old Riga and Warsaw.<sup>36</sup> Any connection with Brutalism has not been substantiated. Thirdly, architecturally Building 8 is considerably at odds with Buildings 51, 56 and 57 – they are in two different idioms and as asserted by Conrad Hamann. Philip Goad's article states that "Through the 1990s, the practice [i.e. Demaine Partnership] formed numerous associations, assisting smaller firms like Edmond & Corrigan in the documentation of larger institutional projects".<sup>37</sup> If this is the basis for a comparable example then it is inappropriate.
55. Only three of the Australian examples cited i.e. BP House, MLC Tower and the car park, have any stylistic elements which could be reasonably compared with Buildings 51, 56 and 57. As it is, only the car park is in the study area although it is accepted that the other two Melbourne examples are useful comparators. The Cambridge example is also useful, not as a comparator but more appropriately as a source precedent. In summary, the comparative analysis fails to make a convincing case for significance in relation to Buildings 51, 56 and 57.
56. Last it is unclear why RMIT's red brick buildings at Bundoora, variously designed by Demaine, Peter Elliot and Perrott Lyon Mathieson, Perrott Lyon Timlock and Kesa. were not included as comparators.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> London, Geoffrey. "Brutalism". *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*. p. 110 and Grow, Robin. *Melmo: Modernist Architecture in Melbourne*. pp. 42-43.

<sup>35</sup> Lovell Chen. Place citation. p. 14.

<sup>36</sup> Hamann, Conrad. "Edmond & Corrigan". *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*. pp. 222-224.

<sup>37</sup> Goad, Philip. "Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton". *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*. pp.199-200.

<sup>38</sup> Edquist, Harriet and Grierson, Elizabeth. *A Skilled Hand and a Cultivated Mind: a Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*. pp. 180-181, 187.

*Statement of Significance.*

57. The C387melb Panel confirmed that, in its opinion and also as indicated by PPN01, viz.:

Statements of Significance have greater weight than citations and should be relied upon to understand what is significant about a place including the significant elements and why it is significant.

Critical information about the significance of a place should be contained within the Statement of Significance.

58. In relation to Criterion A: Building 51, *inter alia*, is considered to be historically significant because it was constructed 1972, was designed by Demaine Russell Trundle Armstrong and Orton and in particular by Dominic Kelly and as part of the never-completed master plan also developed by Kelly. These are statements of historical fact and no argument which states why these facts are significant in themselves has been advanced. The master plan was part of the growth and expansion of the curriculum and the need to accommodate students and at the time when the Victorian government set aside the land. Other than for the red brick buildings, the buildings on the block which are occupied today by RMIT are the same as existed in the 1970s. While facts have been articulated there is no explanation as to why they might be significant and in my opinion the threshold for significance has not been met.
59. While the "Historical Context" and "Site History" sections of the citation attempt to establish a significant connection between Trades Hall, the unions, the BLF and two hotels, actually all that has been established is support from the trade societies/organisations (later unions), with regard to the initial establishment of the Working Men's College. Not mentioned in the citation is the support and input from many other actors and public subscribers, the government and learned institutions. While it is asserted that the geographical proximity of Trades Hall etc. to the Working Men's College site was important or significant, nothing to this effect has been mentioned by Frederick Campbell or Murray-Smith and Dare. On balance this claim should be dismissed. The range of subjects taught initially came from prospective students as a result of advertisements and the range of subjects was more related to post-primary education and other areas of knowledge rather than direct trade subjects. Soon curriculum was taken over by the Federal and State governments as a wider variety of courses was being offered. Frederick Campbell states that teachers were appointed for all subjects including technical and trade subjects.<sup>39</sup> The Working Men's College did not start out as an exclusively or even overwhelmingly trade school controlled by or heavily influenced by the unions.
60. In the Statement of Significance, under Criterion A: "Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance)" the only information which has been included in the Statement of Significance under "Why it is Significant" is geographical proximity of the RMIT site to Trades Hall and a long association between the two upon which no further light has been shed. It is not sufficient to simply state a fact and then assert that it is significant without further illumination. In my opinion, any claim for significance on this basis can be dismissed.
61. In relation to Criterion E: Buildings 51, 56 and 57, *inter alia*, are considered to be aesthetically significant because Demaine is a well-regarded practice and whose portfolio covers a number of institutional building types. Again this is fact. There is no assessment of where the RMIT buildings sit within that portfolio. However the comments regarding style materiality etc. are all valid.

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<sup>39</sup> Campbell, Frederick. *The Working Men's College in the Making 1887-1913*. pp. 12-15.

62. The comments that somehow the RMIT buildings, including Building 94, are aesthetically significant as a reflection of “built form changes in Carlton in the later twentieth century, when contemporary architects were responsible for some celebrated new developments which, in turn, challenged the typical building form and character of the suburb” is not substantiated. No examples of the buildings or architects have been provided and without them this comment is unhelpful.
63. Finally the comment that the red brick buildings are “significant as large and robust forms, which dominate their context, and draw attention to RMIT’s presence in this area of Carlton” are facts which in my opinion do not equate to significance.

#### *Assessment Against Criteria*

64. In considering the criteria and whether or not they have been met at the local level I have used the Heritage Council Victoria. *Assessing The Cultural Heritage Significance of Places and Objects for Possible State Heritage Listing: The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines as a guide*. This is because PPN 1 Applying the Heritage Overlay only mentions that viz.:

The thresholds to be applied in the assessment of significance shall be ‘State Significance’ and ‘Local Significance’. ‘Local Significance’ includes those places that are important to a particular community or locality. ....

whereas the *Guidelines* (p. 3) are more explanatory and state *inter alia*, viz.:

#### **The role of thresholds in heritage assessment**

In Victoria, places and objects of cultural heritage significance can be protected and managed through one or more of four statutory mechanisms. The mechanism that protects the largest number of places of cultural heritage significance is the Heritage Overlay under a local planning scheme ... The significance threshold determines the level of cultural heritage significance a place or object has and what mechanisms can therefore be used to protect and manage it. The significance threshold can be defined as: [Emphasis added.]

***The minimum level of cultural heritage significance that a place or object must possess to justify its inclusion on the relevant local, state, national or world heritage list.***

As a general principle:

a place that is of heritage value to a locality or municipality has the potential to be recognised as being of local cultural heritage significance (and may be included in the Heritage Overlay of the local planning scheme); [Emphasis added.]

The thresholds to be applied in the assessment of significance shall be ‘State Significance’ and ‘Local Significance’. ‘Local Significance’ includes those places that are important to a particular community or locality. [Emphasis added.]

65. No case has been presented which indicates any level of interest in the building(s) by the community. The claims regarding the building’s significance to the locality, i.e. proximity to Trades Hall and hotels, have not been substantiated by fact.
66. Further, the Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme Amendment C262morn Part 2 Blairgowrie, Sorrento and Portsea Heritage Review Panel Report concluded viz.:

that it is appropriate to use the *Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines 2020* (VHR guidelines) as a guide to the application of the HERCON criteria in assessing local significance. (p. 29)

67. In relation to the use of the VHR *Guidelines* to establish a threshold for significance, the C387melb Panel concluded viz.:

That PPN01 is the primary tool for determining thresholds for places of local heritage significance, informed by the consideration of intactness and integrity and a comparative analysis.

- The VHRG provide useful guidance but should be used with care to avoid introducing a higher level consideration of significance at the local level.
- Planning policy is not a relevant threshold consideration for heritage significance.
- A place is not required to satisfy the definition of 'Significant heritage place' in Clause 22.04 in order to meet the threshold of local heritage significance.
- The application of thresholds requires the application of judgement.
- To meet Criterion A and Criterion E requires a place to be demonstrably important to its phase (theme, period or era) and class respectively.<sup>40</sup>

**Criterion: A Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's [i.e. the City of Melbourne's] cultural history.**

68. To meet Criterion A at the Local level, a place must have a CLEAR ASSOCIATION with an event, phase, period, process, function, movement, custom or way of life in the municipality's cultural history which IS EVIDENT in the physical fabric of the place/object and/or in documentary resources or oral history and the EVENT, PHASE, etc. is of HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE, having made a strong or influential contribution to the municipality.

69. The exclusion guidelines are viz.:

**Poor, indirect or unproven association**

The association of the place/object to the historically important event, phase etc. is either incidental (minor, secondary) or cannot be substantiated. For instance, every rural property [or building on the RMIT campus] is not important in demonstrating the spread of European settlement or pastoral land use across Victoria [or education] and a 'legend' relating to a place or object needs to be backed up by strong documentary or other evidence if the place/object is to be registered on the basis of that story.

**Low or questionable historical importance**

The place/object has an association with, or demonstrates evidence of, an historical event, phase etc. that is of low or questionable historical importance, i.e. the event, phase etc. has not made a strong or influential contribution to Victoria. For example, the recreational pursuit of table tennis is considered to be a niche activity that has not made a strong or influential contribution to the state.

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<sup>40</sup> Melbourne Planning Scheme Amendment C387melb. Panel Report | 10 November 2021. pp. 55-56 of 283.

### **Poor evidence**

No reliable or verifiable physical, documentary or oral history evidence remains to demonstrate the association of the place/object with an historical event, phase etc.

70. This criterion is concerned with events, phases, custom or way of life etc. in the municipality's cultural history.
71. In respect of Criterion A, the establishment of the Working Men's College as an institution was a significant event in the course of Melbourne's, even Victoria's, cultural history. Such a claim has not been made in the Statement of Significance. Instead claims for significance in relation to Criterion A are based on the master plan, Demaine's and Dominic Kelly's input and the site's proximity to Trades Hall. These claims are variously incorrect or in the above discussion have been found not to be significant. In my opinion Criterion A has not been met in respect of Buildings 51, 56 and 57.

### **Criterion E: Importance in Exhibiting Particular Aesthetic Characteristics**

72. To meet Criterion E at the Local level, the PHYSICAL FABRIC of the place/object clearly exhibits particular aesthetic characteristics (refer to Reference Tool E below).

Reference Tool E: What is meant by 'aesthetic characteristics'?

The Macquarie Dictionary Online 2012 defines aesthetic and aesthetics as:

Aesthetic adjective 1. relating to the sense of the beautiful or the science of aesthetics. 2. having a sense of the beautiful; characterised by a love of beauty. noun 3. a philosophical theory as to what is aesthetically valid at a given time. 4. an artistic expression, viewed as reflective of a personal or cultural ideal of what is aesthetically valid.

Aesthetics noun 1. Philosophy the science which deduces from nature and taste the rules and principles of art; the theory of the fine arts; the science of the beautiful, or that branch of philosophy which deals with its principles or effects; the doctrines of taste. 2. Psychology the study of the mind and emotions in relation to the sense of beauty. These definitions do not suggest that 'aesthetic' is synonymous with 'beauty'. Instead they imply a judgement against various qualities that may include beauty. To assume that 'aesthetic' and 'beauty' are interchangeable terms limits an understanding of aesthetic and aesthetics.

Aesthetic characteristics are the visual qualities of a place or object that invite judgement against the ideals of beauty, picturesqueness, evocativeness, expressiveness, grotesqueness, sublimeness and other descriptors of aesthetic judgement. The visual qualities of a place or object lie in the form, scale, setting, unity, contrast, colour, texture and material of the fabric of a place or object.

73. The exclusion guidelines are viz.:

#### **XE1 Lacks distinctiveness**

The place/object has aesthetic qualities but they do not exceed those of the general class to which the place/object belongs.

#### **XE2 Poor, indirect or unproven recognition**

The aesthetic qualities of the place/object have only received limited public or disciplinary recognition (as appropriate).



### **XE3 Degraded aesthetic qualities**

The aesthetic characteristics of the place/object have been irreversibly degraded through changes to the fabric of the place/object, changes to the setting of the place/object; or the degraded condition of significant elements of the place/object (in some instances).

### **XE4 No clearly definable aesthetic characteristics**

Being "pretty" or "attractive" or popular is insufficient for the purposes of satisfying this criterion.

74. Buildings 51, 56 and 57 are distinctive. To date the aesthetic qualities of these buildings have only received limited recognition, possibly in part due to the fact that heritage studies are moving forward in time and places previously not included by virtue of age are now being included in heritage studies. The aesthetic characteristics of Buildings 51, 56 and 57 have not changed in any appreciable or major way since they were constructed. The aesthetic characteristics i.e. Brutalist style executed in red brick have been clearly defined. While these buildings cannot be excluded based on the above guidelines they equally cannot be included on the basis of beauty. The Statement of Significance advances the following:

Aesthetically, the three buildings form a largely cohesive group, unified in the use of large-scale (monumental) red brick volumes, huge expanses of plain red brick walling; recessed vertical window bays or, alternatively in the earlier building, regular arrangements of concrete window grilles; concrete detailing often expressed as a rough pebble-textured finish, and the striking service shafts with their corbelled forms".

75. The above is a statement of fact and while this accords with "The visual qualities of a place or object lie in the form, scale, setting, unity, contrast, colour, texture and material of the fabric of a place or object" in my opinion this does not elevate the facts to a level of significance which might be acceptable or justified.

#### *Justification for a Heritage Overlay?*

##### *Buildings 51, 56 and 57*

76. As discussed above, a case which substantiates significance at the local level has not been established and I see no justification to include the place in the Heritage Overlay to the Melbourne Planning Scheme.

## **4.0 The Citation for Building 94**

77. The citation is included in the *Carlton Heritage Review*, Attachment C: Citations for Places Recommended for Heritage Overlay Controls. It reads as follows:

**SITE NAME** BUILDING 94, ROYAL MELBOURNE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (RMIT)

**STREET ADDRESS** 23-37 CARDIGAN STREET, CARLTON, VIC 3053

**PROPERTY ID** 664021



|                                       |                                    |   |                      |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| SURVEY DATE: SEPTEMBER 2018           |                                    | SURVEY BY: LOVELL CHEN                        |                      |
| <b>PREVIOUS GRADE</b>                 | UNGRADED                           | <b>HERITAGE OVERLAY</b>                       | RECOMMENDED          |
| <b>PROPOSED CATEGORY</b>              | SIGNIFICANT                        | <b>PLACE TYPE</b>                             | EDUCATIONAL BUILDING |
| <b>DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:</b> | ALLAN POWELL                       | <b>BUILDER:</b>                               | N/A                  |
| <b>DESIGN PERIOD:</b>                 | LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1965-2000) | <b>DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:</b> | 1994-6               |

**THEMES**

| HISTORICAL THEMES                      | DOMINANT SUB-THEMES     |
|--|-------------------------|
| 8.0 BUILDING COMMUNITY LIFE            | 8.2 EDUCATING PEOPLE    |
| 9.0 SHAPING CULTURAL AND CREATIVE LIFE | 9.5 ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE |

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommended for individual inclusion in the Heritage Overlay, as indicated at Figure 1.

Extent of overlay:

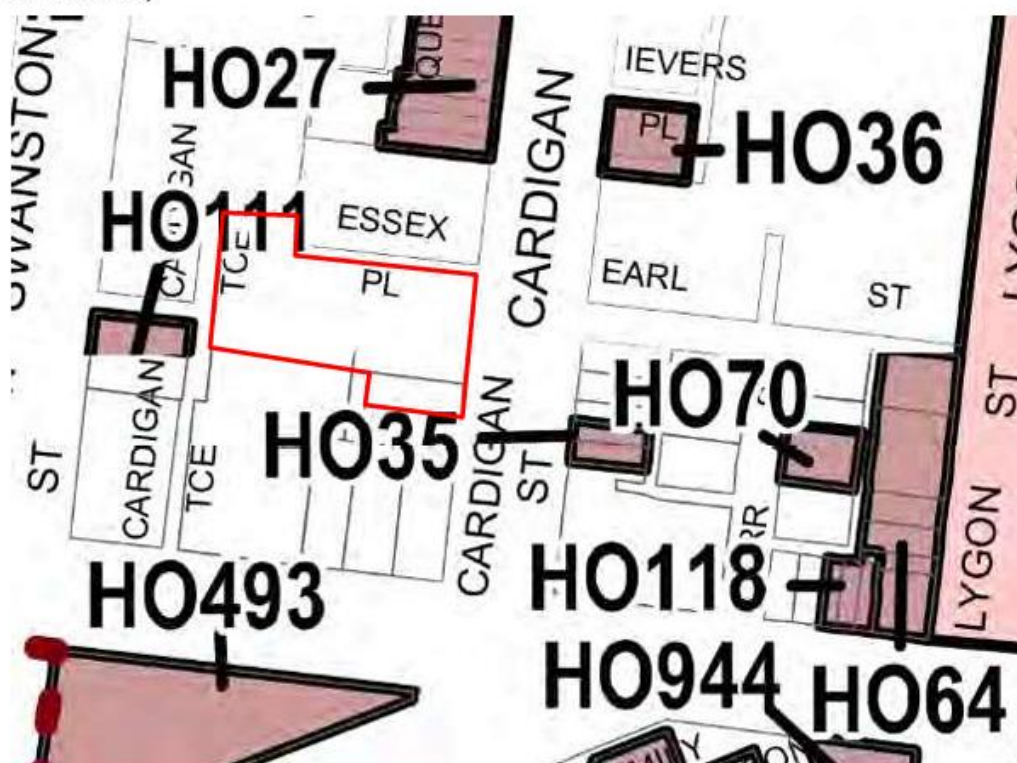


Figure 1 The proposed extent of overlay is indicated by the red line  
Source: Melbourne Planning Scheme

**SUMMARY**

RMIT Building 94, at 23-37 Cardigan Street, Carlton, is of aesthetic significance. It was designed by architect Allan Powell in association with Pels Innes Nielson Kosloff, and was constructed in 1994-96 to accommodate RMIT's School of Design. It is one of several new and architecturally distinguished buildings commissioned by RMIT in the early 1990s, and is an award-winning building which is noted for the architect's skilful application of striking materials and deft treatment of the four principal building masses which front Cardigan Street.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Education at a variety of levels has long had an impact on the community and built form of Carlton, and includes primary and tertiary institutions. Although the first campus is not located in Carlton, RMIT University, formerly the Working Men's College and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, has long had associations with Carlton, in particular with Trades Hall. Founded in 1887 by philanthropist and grazier Francis Ormond, the Working Men's College was supported by the unions, with members of Trades Hall included in the college's governing body.<sup>1</sup> The institution eventually evolved to offer courses in trades, technology and other skills for both men and women.<sup>2</sup> The motto of the Working Men's College was *perita manus, mens exulta* ('a skilled hand, a cultivated mind').<sup>3</sup> After a number of name changes, the institution became the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in 1960 to better reflect its purpose.

By the mid-1960s, with its student population growing and course offers also increasing, RMIT began to expand beyond its city location into Carlton. As part of this growth, the institution undertook a process of master planning, initially led by architects Bates Smart and McCutcheon. For the city campus, the plan was to build a series of 'homogenous' buildings or blocks;<sup>4</sup> while in Carlton, a long-term building plan was embarked on from 1970, in the southern part of the suburb. The new Carlton campus was in close proximity to Trades Hall, and partially occupied by the Builders Labourers Federation headquarters and two hotels with close ties to the trade union movement. The shift into Carlton also coincided with a decision to provide students with two different streams of education: an advanced college offering degrees and diplomas and a technical college for those seeking apprenticeship courses. The former was overseen by the Federal Government while the latter by the Victorian Education Department. The new Carlton campus was earmarked as a technical college.<sup>5</sup> By the mid-1980s, a group of large red brick buildings had been constructed fronting Swanston and Lygon streets, with classes held in existing buildings acquired for the RMIT Carlton campus.

Concurrently in this period, changes in demographics in Carlton saw changes in approach to the built form of the suburb. This included notable new developments in the suburb by contemporary architects, adapting the terrace form and corner buildings for the late twentieth century. While such development was often residential, it also included commercial and institutional, such as offices, galleries and educational buildings, through which architects challenged the typical built form in the suburb.

## SITE HISTORY

The subject site was originally part of Crown section 16 in the parish of Jika Jika, County of Bourke, sold as part of the earliest land sales in Carlton. A plan of Melbourne of 1866 indicates that development had taken place on the site by the mid-1860s (Figure 2). By the mid-1890s, the site appears to have been occupied by a timber yard and a number of small residences fronting the lane. As can be seen on the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) plans at Figure 3 and Figure 4, the site included a combination of brick and wooden residential structures, particularly in the western portion, and vacant land associated with the timber yard.

In the early 1900s, the building at 23 Cardigan Street (at the south end of the site) operated as a lodging house.<sup>6</sup> In 1925, it was one of nine Melbourne properties comprising the estate of a Mrs Jackson which was auctioned off.<sup>7</sup> The 1925 directory lists the adjacent yard (nos 25-37) as an iron yard.<sup>8</sup> The subject site was subsequently redeveloped with a large warehouse-like workshop (Figure 5).<sup>9</sup> Aerial photographs show the warehouse was extended west to the Cardigan Terrace laneway between the 1930s and 1940s (Figure 6).<sup>10</sup>

In 1960, the workshop of Pound Motors occupied the subject site which the *Sands and McDougall Directory* listed as 25-27 Cardigan Street.<sup>11</sup> The 1971 rate books for the City of Melbourne described this structure as a warehouse and service station occupied by Pound Motors. The site measured 120 feet by 165 feet and 135 feet by 60 feet.<sup>12</sup> An aerial photograph of 1984 shows the large warehouse, the footprint of which was largely followed by the present building (Figure 7). The site was acquired by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) after the tertiary institution expanded into Carlton from the 1960s. RMIT acquired



properties to develop with new buildings, as with the subject site; and also purchased existing buildings to retain and adapt to educational use.

The subject building was constructed in 1994-96, to accommodate RMIT's School of Design. It was one of the first wave of new buildings commissioned under the (then) Dean of Architecture at RMIT, Leon Van Schaik,<sup>13</sup> and was part of a larger plan to revitalise both the city campus and other RMIT campuses, including the institution's presence in Carlton. From c. 1991, Van Schaik commissioned a series of bold architectural projects for RMIT, including the subject development.

Van Schaik was appointed Professor of Architecture at RMIT in 1987, became Dean of the faculty in 1989 and later Pro Vice Chancellor, in 1999. Van Schaik has been described as a person of considerable influence, who 'changed the culture of Melbourne architecture, not by designing great buildings, but by empowering architects, helping them learn more, and by influencing project appointments'.<sup>14</sup> He has been described as playing '...a critical role in the early 1990s in reforming the process for the appointment of architects for buildings' at RMIT; and credited with the appointment of 'progressive architects and firms [that] transformed RMIT's reputation through award-winning buildings that were built across multiple campuses...'.<sup>15</sup>

The subject building was aimed at increasing the School's enrolments, expanding its programmes, and integrating two education streams of the institution – its TAFE programs and its university courses.<sup>16</sup> Referred to as Building 94, the building was designed by architect Allan Powell in association with Pels Innes Nielson Kosloff (PINK). Powell, together with RMIT Major Projects Unit, was also the principal interior designer.

Powell described the building as comprising '...a hovering mosaic tile element on Cardigan Street standing on black legs; the main body of the building rising full height; the service core to the south; and an intersecting stair rising between the other three elements'.<sup>17</sup> The new building incorporated a library, teaching rooms, lecture theatres, administration offices and galleries, as well as shopfronts and a terrace. Following the building's opening, the RMIT Annual Report of 1996 noted that the building:

...features a distinctive retail atmosphere, architectural austerity, environmental quality and technological intelligence.<sup>18</sup>

In 1996, the Royal Australian Institute of Architects Victorian Chapter recognised the building with a Merit Award in the Institutional Buildings (New) category. This was in the same year that Ashton Raggatt McDougall's Storey Hall at RMIT's city campus won the William Wardell Award for Institutional buildings.<sup>19</sup> The judges noted of the subject building:

Powell gives this large building with a narrow street frontage a compositionally diverse facade. This reflects on its brief of accommodating two schools and also responds to issues of urbanism using a range of modern architectural references and quotations. By separating pedestrian access to each school from street level, different spatial experiences and architectural elements make each entry memorable.

Materials and colours enhance the composition of the facade which hints at the contemporary impossibility of an architecture of resolution. The form of the building pays head to its 19th century inner city streetscape. This is resolved cleverly to provide a generous sunlit first floor terrace at the street side offering an unusually pleasant and unexpected degree of amenity in the city.<sup>20</sup>

The building is currently occupied by the RMIT School of Media and Communication.

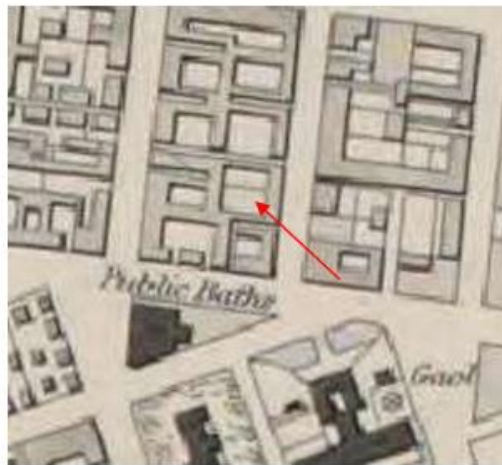


Figure 2 An indicative plan of the development of the subject site in 1866  
Source: Cox Plan, State Library of Victoria



Figure 3 MMBW 160':1" plan no. 30, 1896 with the subject site's built structures indicated  
Source: State Library of Victoria

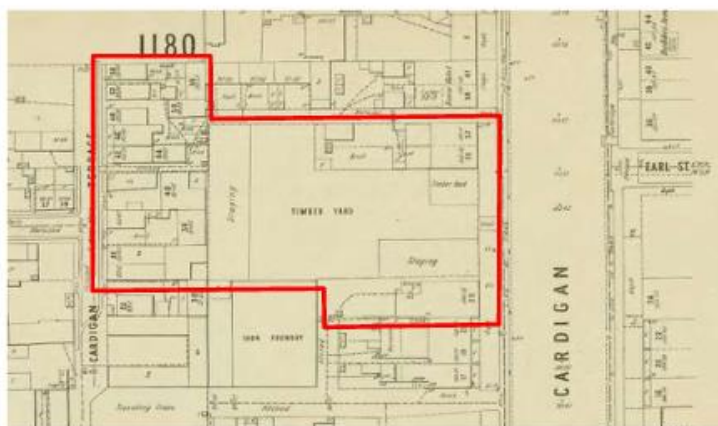


Figure 4 MMBW detail plan no. 1180, 1896 with subject site indicated  
Source: State Library of Victoria

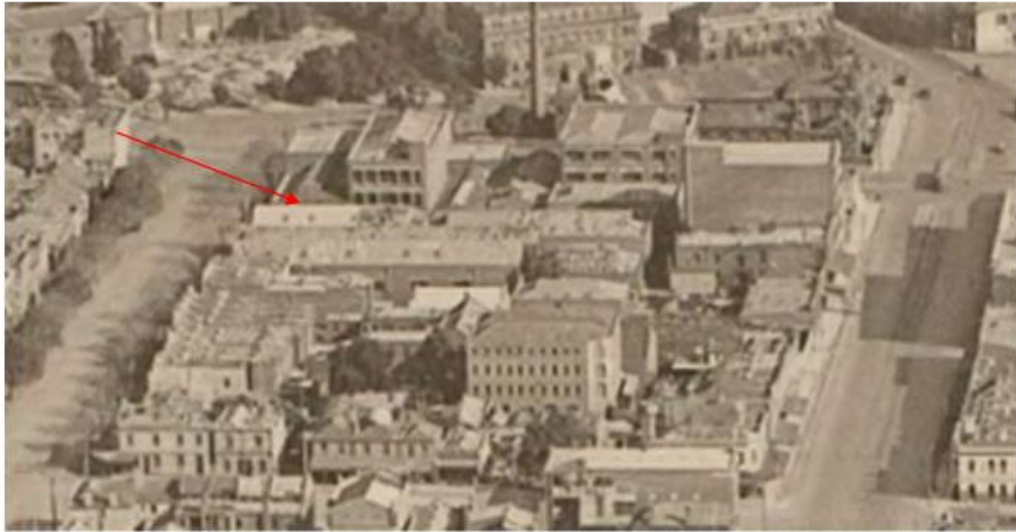


Figure 5 Aerial photograph of the subject site (indicated) and surrounds, 1927  
Source: Airspy, H2501, State Library of Victoria



Figure 6 Aerial photograph of the subject site, 1945  
Source: Land Victoria Aerial Photography Collection, Central Plan Office, Landata



Figure 7 1984 aerial photograph of the subject site (indicated in red) and surrounds  
Source: Land Victoria Aerial Photography Collection, Central Plan Office, Landata

#### SITE DESCRIPTION

RMIT Building 94, at 23-37 Cardigan Street, Carlton, was constructed in 1994-6. It is located on the west side of the street, between Queensberry Street (to the north) and Victoria Street (to the south). Essex Place in part abuts the building on its north side; and Cardigan Terrace abuts the west side. The south elevation fronts a small paved car park. The site slopes gently from north to south along Cardigan Street. External materials include tilt-slab grey concrete panels, other concrete elements, coloured and plain glass, and mosaic tiles.

The building, at its highest volume to Cardigan Street (the tilt-slab grey concrete service tower block at the south end) rises to six levels. The building then breaks down into volumes of lesser scale, including two/three level components to the street.

At the north end of the Cardigan Street frontage is a two/three level bay, the top levels of which are clad in off-white mosaic tiles, with a long horizontal band of glazing (Figure 9). The top levels project out over the recessed ground floor beneath, supported by squared columns (pilotis) clad in black glass, and tilted on an angle (Figure 13). The side walls to this northern bay are also angled slightly to the north. An entrance is located in the recessed, or undercroft, area in a glass wall façade. Student design work is displayed in glass-fronted spaces across this façade. Abutting the northern bay to its south is a wide staircase which divides the latter from the southern bay (Figure 12). The stair intersects with and rises up into the building, leading to another entrance and an open deck and outdoor seating area located above the northern bay.

The southern bay adopts a strong cubic form, clad in blue-green mosaic tiles, and poised on a single cylindrical column of concrete aggregate (Figure 10, Figure 11). Its height is approximate to the northern bay.

The six-storey service block at the south end, which has a regular pattern of small square windows, is set well back from the street, behind the southern bay and the other building volumes.

Abutting the service block to its north, and projecting forward, is a large volume with horizontal massing. This is clad in blue-green coloured glass, matching the colour and tone of the blue-green glass mosaic tiles to the southern bay, and is bisected by long strip windows and concrete sun visors to its east and north elevations. The northern bay sits forward of this volume to the street.





Figure 8 Recent aerial photograph with the subject site indicated  
Source: Nearmap, April 2019



Figure 9 Subject building, viewed from the north; the projecting northern bay at centre is clad in off-white mosaic tiles, with the large volume above clad in blue-green coloured glass  
Source: Lovell Chen



Figure 10 Subject building, viewed from the south; the grey concrete service block is at left, fronted by the southern bay clad in blue-green mosaic tiles  
Source: Lovell Chen



Figure 11 Detail of the mosaic tiled southern bay, resting on its single cylindrical column, with the staircase at right  
Source: Lovell Chen



Figure 12 Detail of staircase, with angled south wall of the northern bay at right  
Source: Lovell Chen



Figure 13 Detail of tilted column, recessed ground floor to northern bay  
Source: Lovell Chen



## INTEGRITY

The building is largely externally intact to its original state.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

RMIT Building 94, as noted above, was designed by Allan Powell in association with Pels Innes Nielson Kosloff (PINK); and Powell, together with the RMIT Major Projects Unit, was also the principal interior designer. Also as noted, the building was one of the first wave of significant new buildings commissioned under the (then) RMIT Dean of Architecture, Leon Van Schaik. The building, and the School of Design which it housed, was regarded as a major asset of the institution, with the architecture recognised on completion of the building when it won a Merit Award of the Australian Institute of Architects (1996).<sup>21</sup>

Van Schaik's new programme of building, while as outlined above was intended to architecturally revitalise the RMIT landholdings, was also a reaction to the old 1965-69 Bates Smart McCutcheon Master Plan. The latter, while never fully implemented, had proposed construction of 12 large-scale grey concrete buildings on Swanston Street, although by 1976 only three had been built.<sup>22</sup> These buildings were regarded as somewhat daunting, in their plain expression and scale, with vast expanses of concrete and concrete block alternating with slit windows. Sydney architect John Andrews was subsequently commissioned to design another RMIT building – the Library/Union building - in concrete framing and glass bricks (1976-82), purportedly to add some variety to the campus buildings.<sup>23</sup> Leon Van Schaik, paraphrased by Harriet Edquist, later described his approach to educational buildings:

(Education is) a transformative process with universities responsible for the rituals of intellectual change and their architecture, therefore, should spatially reinforce these rituals.<sup>24</sup>

The best known of the buildings which resulted from the new programme are Building 8, by Edmond and Corrigan with Demaine Partners, (1991-94, Figure 14);<sup>25</sup> and Ashton Raggatt McDougall's (ARM) work on Storey Hall (1992-95, H1498 and HO482, Figure 15).<sup>26</sup> These two buildings, and the slightly later subject building in Carlton by Allan Powell, were all by seasoned architects, although Edmond and Corrigan and ARM at the time, were relatively new to large institutional building design.

Allan Powell graduated in architecture from the University of Melbourne in 1974,<sup>27</sup> and later, along with Steve Ashton, Howard Raggatt, Ian McDougall and a group of significant others, gained a Master's degree in Architecture from RMIT in 1992. Earlier, he had worked for Guilford Bell before establishing his own practice in 1976. As Philip Goad observes, Powell had 'a fondness for mass, colour and shadow in architectural form', that revealed his 'deep interest' in contemporary art, including the 'brooding urban scenes' in the paintings of Rick Amor and Geoffrey Smart.<sup>28</sup> This interest in mass, colour and shadow is clearly evident in Building 94. Further, and again according to Goad, Building 94 allowed Powell to explore these interests at a larger scale, in a building with 'a powerful collection of mute forms'.<sup>29</sup>

Building 94 also draws on Powell's other contemporary work at Monash University's Clayton campus, including his Campus Centre additions (Figure 16) and the Performing Arts building, completed in 1995.<sup>30</sup> Pels, Innes, Neilson and Kosloff (PINK) also joined Powell on the Monash projects. After Building 94, Powell designed, with Irwin Alsop, the much celebrated TarraWarra Museum of Art near Healesville (1999-2003, Figure 17). The museum was the initiative of philanthropists Eva and Marc Besen, and provided a venue for displaying and sharing their collection of Australian art. Five Melbourne architects were invited to prepare concepts for the museum, with Powell being successful. The building is located atop a rise at the TarraWarra vineyards, and Powell's '...use of clean lines and minimal materials, predominantly rammed earth, against the organic, soft surrounding landscape' has been described as achieving a 'pure aesthetic composition'.<sup>31</sup>



Building 94 was described by Powell as 'a hovering mosaic tile element on Cardigan Street standing on black legs; the main body of the building rising full height; the service core to the south; and an intersecting stair rising between the other three elements'.<sup>32</sup> Elsewhere it has been described as 'intentionally unresolved',<sup>33</sup> and with a façade composition that 'hints at the contemporary impossibility of an architecture of resolution'.<sup>34</sup> The four masses fronting the street appear to be separate and unrelated, even 'unstable' with the angled northern bay appearing to pull away. Within this compositionally diverse facade, however, the building still displays an elegant balance of Modernist forms, with striking materials and distinctive details such as the long strip windows and concrete sun visors on the glass-clad horizontal volume. The latter recall the earlier work of architect Stuart McIntosh, as with his E S & A Bank in Malvern (1958-60, on the Victorian Heritage Register, H1691, Figure 18).

There is also, in Building 94's four-mass grouping, a hint of renowned architect, Frank Gehry's, treatment of multiple massed forms. His design for the Loyola Law School in Los Angeles (1980, Figure 19), dramatically inserts a staircase into the boldly coloured building masses, and places large scale cylindrical columns in the foreground. Echoes of these elements can be seen in Building 94.

Examples referred to above, including comparative examples comprise the following places:

- Building 8, by Edmond and Corrigan with Demaine and Partners, 360 Swanston Street, Melbourne (1991-94)
- Storey Hall by Ashton Raggatt McDougall, 344-346 Swanston Street, Melbourne (1992-95, H1498 and HO482)
- Monash University Campus Centre additions (1990s)
- Monash University Performing Arts building (1995)
- TarraWarra Museum of Art, 313 Healesville-Yarra Glen Road, Healesville (1999-2003)
- Former ES&A Bank, 1284-1286 High Street, Malvern (1958-60, VHR H1691, HO58 – City of Stonnington)
- Loyola Law School, Los Angeles, USA (1980)



Figure 14 RMIT Building 8, 360 Swanston Street, Melbourne  
Source:  
<http://architecture.rmit.edu.au/projects/r>



Figure 15 Storey Hall, 336–348 Swanston Street, Melbourne, H1498 and HO482  
Source: The Red and Black Architect



Figure 16 Monash University Campus Centre  
Source:  
<https://www.realcommercial.com.au/property-retail-vic-clayton-502899734>



Figure 17 TarraWarra Museum of Art, 313 Healesville-Yarra Glen Rd, Healesville  
Source:  
<https://www.big4.com.au/caravan-parks/vic/greater>



Figure 18 E S & A Bank, Glenferrie Road, Malvern, VHR H1691, HO58, City of Stonnington  
Source:  
<http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/pictoria/gid/slv>



Figure 19 Loyola Law School, Los Angeles  
Source: ijnicholas, Flickr



**ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA**

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

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE****WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT**

RMIT Building 94, at 23-37 Cardigan Street, Carlton, constructed in 1994-6, is significant.

**HOW IT IS SIGNIFICANT**

RMIT Building 94, at 23-37 Cardigan Street, Carlton, is of local aesthetic significance.

**WHY IT IS SIGNIFICANT**

RMIT Building 94, at 23-37 Cardigan Street, Carlton, is of aesthetic significance (Criterion E). The building was designed by architect Allan Powell in association with Pels Innes Nielson Kosloff, and was constructed in 1994-96 to accommodate RMIT's School of Design. It was one of the first wave of new and architecturally distinguished buildings commissioned by the (then) Dean of Architecture at RMIT, Leon Van Schaik. The Dean, in the early 1990s, was influential in the appointment of architects for new buildings at RMIT, and particularly championed progressive architects whose projects, and award-winning buildings, helped to transform the

institute's campuses. Building 94 was one such building, winning the Royal Australian Institute of Architects Victorian Chapter Merit Award in the Institutional Buildings (New) category in 1996.

The building is significant for its compositionally diverse façade, and for Powell's skilful use of striking materials and colour and deft treatment of the four principal masses of the building which front Cardigan Street. The latter include the 'hovering' mosaic tiled forms, separated by the intersecting stair which rises up into the building; the bold blue-green cube at the southern end, elegantly poised on a single cylindrical column; the angling northern bay, supported by tilted black glass columns; and the blue-green glass main horizontal volume bisected by long strip windows and concrete sun visors. Powell's fondness for mass, colour and shadow is clearly on display in Building 94, a project which allowed the architect to explore these interests at a large scale.

More broadly, the building is also of aesthetic significance for being reflective of the built form changes in Carlton in the later twentieth century, when contemporary architects were responsible for some celebrated new developments which, in turn, challenged the typical building form and character of the suburb.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for individual inclusion in the Heritage Overlay, with the Schedule as follows.

### MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

|   |    |
|---|----|
| EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS   | No |
| INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS  | No |
| TREE CONTROLS   | No |
| OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES<br>(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 |
| NAME OF INCORPORATED PLAN UNDER CLAUSE 43.01-2                        | No |
| ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE   | No |

## REFERENCES

See endnotes.

## PREVIOUS STUDIES

Not identified in any  
previous studies.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> *The Argus*, 17 May 1882, p. 10.
- <sup>2</sup> Joe Rich, 'RMIT University', eMelbourne, Encyclopedia of Melbourne, <http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00767b.htm>, accessed 29 January 2019.
- <sup>3</sup> 'History of RMIT', <https://www.rmit.edu.au/about/our-heritage/history-of-rmit>.
- <sup>4</sup> Harriet Edquist and Elizabeth Grierson, *A Skilled Hand and Cultivated Mind: A Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*, RMIT University, 2008, p. 64.
- <sup>5</sup> Harriet Edquist and Elizabeth Grierson, *A Skilled Hand and Cultivated Mind: A Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*, RMIT University, 2008, pp. 92-3.
- <sup>6</sup> *The Age*, 18 September 1905, p. 9.
- <sup>7</sup> *The Herald*, 18 March 1925, p. 5.
- <sup>8</sup> *Sands and McDougall directory*, 1925.
- <sup>9</sup> *Sands and McDougall Victorian Directory*, 1930, p. 194.
- <sup>10</sup> 1931, 1945 and 1951, Land Victoria Aerial Photography Collection, Central Plan Office, Landata.
- <sup>11</sup> *Sands and McDougall Victorian Directory*, 1960, p. 251.
- <sup>12</sup> City of Melbourne Rate books, Gipps Ward, 1971, 1401, VPRS 5708. Public Records Office of Victoria.
- <sup>13</sup> Leon Van Schaik, born in South Africa and trained at Newcastle on Tyne and at the London Architectural Association (AA), succeeded John Woollett as Dean of the Architecture School/Constructed Environment at RMIT.
- <sup>14</sup> Norman Day, see <https://www.theage.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/curator-of-melbournes-architecture-20050420-ge008x.html>, 14 May 2019.
- <sup>15</sup> Philip Goad, 'Van Schaik, Leon', in P Goad and J Willis (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, 2012, p. 729.
- <sup>16</sup> Alan Powell Pty Ltd/Pels Innes Nielson Kosloff, 'RMIT Bldg 94 – TAFE School of Design', Australian School of Architects, 2013. [http://dynamic.architecture.com.au/awards\\_search?option=showaward&entryno=19963100](http://dynamic.architecture.com.au/awards_search?option=showaward&entryno=19963100).
- <sup>17</sup> RMIT University, 'RMIT Building 94 TAFE School of Design', <http://architecture.rmit.edu.au/projects/rmit-building-94/>
- <sup>18</sup> RMIT University, *Annual Report*, 1996, p. 10.
- <sup>19</sup> Philip Goad (ed.), *Judging Architecture: Issues, Divisions, Triumphs: Victorian Architecture Awards 1929-2003*, Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Victorian Chapter, Melbourne, 2003, p. 304.
- <sup>20</sup> *Architect*, 1996 Victorian Awards, p. 16.
- <sup>21</sup> Harriet Edquist and Elizabeth Grierson, *A Skilled Hand and Cultivated Mind: A Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*, RMIT University, Melbourne, 2008, p. 150.
- <sup>22</sup> Harriet Edquist and Elizabeth Grierson, *A Skilled Hand and Cultivated Mind: A Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*, RMIT University, Melbourne, 2008, pp. 63-67.

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- <sup>23</sup> Harriet Edquist and Elizabeth Grierson, *A Skilled Hand and Cultivated Mind: A Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*, RMIT University, Melbourne, 2008, p. 69. Andrews had been responsible for several dramatic designs for Scarborough College at Toronto and Gund Hall for the Harvard Graduate School of Design.
- <sup>24</sup> Leon Van Schaik, as quoted in Harriet Edquist and Elizabeth Grierson, *A Skilled Hand and Cultivated Mind: A Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*, RMIT University, Melbourne, 2008, p. 135.
- <sup>25</sup> Conrad Hamann, *Cities of Hope Remembered: Australian Architecture by Edmond and Corrigan 1962-2012*, Thames and Hudson, Melbourne, 2012, pp. 16-41; Leon Van Schaik (ed., contrib.), *Building 8: Edmond and Corrigan at RMIT*, Transition, Melbourne, 1995, 3 vols.
- <sup>26</sup> See Steve Ashton, Howard Raggatt, Ian McDougall and others, *Mongrel Rapture, The Architecture of Ashton Raggatt McDougall*, Uro, 2015, p. 1590.
- <sup>27</sup> Philip Goad, 'Allan Powell', in P Goad and J Willis (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, 2012, p. 556.
- <sup>28</sup> Philip Goad, 'Allan Powell', in P Goad and J Willis (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, 2012, p. 556.
- <sup>29</sup> Philip Goad, 'Allan Powell', in P Goad and J Willis (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, 2012, p. 557.
- <sup>30</sup> See Conrad Hamann, 'Performing Arts centre, Monash University', *Music and the Teacher*, 1997.
- <sup>31</sup> <https://thelocalproject.com.au/tarrawarra-museum-of-art-feature-vic-australia/>, 14 May 2019.
- <sup>32</sup> RMIT University, 'RMIT Building 94 TAFE School of Design', <http://architecture.rmit.edu.au/projects/rmit-building-94/>.
- <sup>33</sup> Edquist and Grierson, p. 150.
- <sup>34</sup> *Architect*, 1996 Victorian Awards, p. 16.

#### 4.1 My Response to the Citation for Building 94

##### *Historical Context*

78. This section includes some of the same material as was included in the Citation for Buildings 51, 56 and 57 and this has been discussed above. The additional material is footnoted as coming from Edquist and Grierson and some of it as been canvassed by Frederick Campbell. It appears to be sound.

##### *Site History*

79. The earlier history of the site i.e. 1866 - 1984 (p. 3 of the place citation) is background information only as the structures referred to are no longer extant and indeed none of them are referred to in the Statement of Significance. The relevant part of the site history insofar as Building 94 is concerned commences at 1994 - 1996 with relevant precursor events occurring from 1991 when Professor Leon Van Schaik "commissioned a series of bold architectural projects for RMIT, including the subject development".(p.4). The citation states that the commissioning of Building 94 "was part of a larger plan to revitalise both the city campus and other RMIT campuses, including the institution's presence in Carlton". From my personal knowledge this is factually correct. In the past RMIT has shown interest in expanding beyond the main city campus and at one time purchased the former Carlton United Breweries site at the top of Swanston Street but was ultimately forced to divest it or allowed it to be developed by others. Presently RMIT owns or has a significant interest in numerous sites on the west side of Swanston Street between LaTrobe and Franklin Streets. As RMIT grew and/or needed updated facilities it expanded and Carlton was an obvious location, similarly to the University of Melbourne. In my opinion expansion of the original campus is more a practical necessity or a stage, or stages, in RMIT's history which is not significant of itself.

##### *Leon Van Schaik*

80. Architect Norman Day wrote columns in *The Age* almost weekly on various architectural topics and to my recollection his columns were variously agreed with or criticised by readers. In one article entitled "Curator of Melbourne's Architecture" which is quoted in the citation, he stated that

Leon Van Schaik has changed the culture of Melbourne architecture, not by designing great buildings, but by empowering architects, helping them learn more, and by influencing project appointments.

He has assumed the mantle of curator of our architecture. That role encompasses many responsibilities – those of protector, supervisor, supporter, persuader and promoter.. (p. 4 and endnote 14).

81. Norman Day and Leon Van Schaik were not without their critics and it is hard to ascertain how independent and objective Day's comments are. Van Schaik was certainly a persuader and a promoter and he certainly set out to commission what might have been seen as progressive architects and buildings but has this resulted in a worthy heritage legacy in respect of Van Schaik or is it the case that some buildings have won awards and the like because of the skill of the architects involved in the same way that other architects and buildings have?

##### *Allan Powell*

82. Turning to Allan Powell, presumed architectural designer of Building 94. "Presumed" because the commission was undertaken in association with Pels Innes Neilson Kosloff (PINK). The citation, and all of the literature to which I have referred, do not indicate which firm was responsible for what although it would be reasonable to assume that Powell was generally responsible for the design and PINK for documentation, resolution of details and the like. In my opinion this should be researched further and clarified. Further, the RMIT Major Projects Unit is identified as the principal interior designer. (p.



4) The building was one of six to win an Award of Merit in the Institutional New category of the RAIA Victorian Chapter Awards in 1996 together with the Monash Performing Arts centre and Information Services Building on the Monash University campus at Clayton. This was also the work of Powell and PINK. Professor Philip Goad in his *Judging Architecture* (passim.) makes numerous observations on the judging of architectural awards.<sup>41</sup> Amongst others, he quotes Neil Clerehan who commented on the "bitterness it caused in the profession" i.e. the "top award" going "to the Southland Shopping Centre rather than the National Gallery of Victoria. The Gallery received a citation". The Gallery "had never received acceptance from the profession" since its opening in 1961. "Eventually it was to achieve iconic status and become a metropolitan hallmark but in 1969 it had few admirers including the working press."<sup>42</sup> Kerstin Thompson observed that "In 2028 what will our future peers remember of this moment, the awards of 2003? Can we predict what will endure, if not materially then in or [or in?] architectural memory?"<sup>43</sup>

83. In the *Architect*, awards issue, Peter Elliott, Chair, RAIA Awards juries noted that "the results of the awards is as much a reflection on the quality of the work submitted as it is disposition of the juries. This year a great spirit of generosity and enthusiasm has prevailed with what must be a record 45 Award winners across all categories". 1996 was the year that named awards were introduced for the best entry in each category. Next in the pecking order was the Award of Merit "where more than one can be given and is encouraged followed by commendations". It was also the year that one non-architect member was included in each panel. These members were drawn from friends and promoters of architecture. Elliott noted that the awards process was "already self-serving, architects giving architects accolades" and the fresh blood was seen as "expanding the horizons". Jury chairs recommended other members of their panel. This raises some questions as to the objectivity of the final decisions. Professor Philip Goad also noted that the "nature of the awards ... [was an] inward looking egotistical tendency".<sup>44</sup> Importantly this raises the question of whether winning an award automatically signifies that a building is of heritage significance. In my opinion it does not.
84. In 2002, 23 prominent architects and two architectural historians submitted lists of 30, ultimately 35, buildings which in their opinion were "the best" in Victoria.<sup>45</sup> None of them, including Allan Powell, mentioned Building 94 and only Neil Clerehan and Peter Corrigan and Maggie Edmund and Randal Marsh nominated buildings of their own.<sup>46</sup> The only nomination for Powell was from John Gollings, photographer, for Di Stasio vineyard (Yarra Valley, 1998).<sup>47</sup> Norman Day mentioned Powell and Leon Van Schaik by name only.<sup>48</sup> Powell's list was somewhat idiosyncratic, and focussed on buildings as reference points for designers and building types and included *inter alia* the Richmond Railway Station, the old Dental Hospital in Grattan Street (demolished) and the ANZ bank on the corner of Glenferrie Road and High Street, Malvern. The latter is included in the place citation as a comparative example.
85. Powell by his own admission was something of a maverick. In an interview by Emma Telfer, Powell describes his attitudes to the teaching of architecture and architecture which were at odds with the mainstream. "I ... began to recognise more and more what

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<sup>41</sup> Goad, Philip. *Judging Architecture*. passim.

<sup>42</sup> Goad, Philip. *Judging Architecture*. pp. 38 and 47.

<sup>43</sup> Goad, Philip. *Judging Architecture*. p. 40.

<sup>44</sup> Goad, Philip. *Judging Architecture*. p. 54.

<sup>45</sup> I am listed as having inputted into Peter Lovell's list.

<sup>46</sup> Goad, Philip. *Judging Architecture*. pp. 59 – 60 and 67.

<sup>47</sup> Goad, Philip. *Judging Architecture*. p. 62.

<sup>48</sup> Goad, Philip. *Judging Architecture*. p. 61.

I like in architecture and what interested me and by that stage I was starting to be more emphatic and enunciate what I cared about and what mattered to me".<sup>49</sup>

86. There was a fundamental link between art and architecture in his thinking and some of his designs have the characteristics of art (paintings). When asked which projects he was most proud of, he nominated Di Stasio House, Tarra Warra (Healesville), considered by Goad to be his "most significant public work to date,"<sup>50</sup> and Crigan House (St Kilda). Powell's focus was mostly on houses, restaurants and hotels.

#### *Building 94*

87. Powell is widely regarded as an important architect and designer. Professor Philip Goad described Building 94 as "a powerful collection of mute forms that in composition echoes the surrealist action designs of 1950s architect Stuart McIntosh".<sup>51</sup> RMIT describes the building in Powell's own words as being able to be read "as a composition of four distinct elements – a hovering mosaic tile element on Cardigan Street standing on black crystal legs; the main body of the building rising full height; the service core to the south; and an intersecting stair rising between the other three elements".<sup>52</sup> The RAIA Awards citation describes it viz.:

Powell gives this large building with a narrow street frontage a contemporary diverse façade. This reflects its brief of accommodating two schools and also responds to issues of urbanism using a range of modern architectural references and quotations. By separating pedestrian access to each school from street level different spatial experiences and architectural elements make each entry memorable.

Materials and colours enhance the composition of the façade which hints at the contemporary impossibility of an architecture of resolution. The form of the building pays heed to its 19<sup>th</sup> century inner city streetscape. This is resolved cleverly to provide a generous sunlit first floor terrace at the street side offering an unusually pleasant and unexpected degree of amenity in the city.

88. Edquist and Grierson state that "The composition of the building is open and intentionally unresolved, a landscape of urban fragments, that sits easily within the heterogeneous context of Cardigan Street".<sup>53</sup> This is opposite to the view expressed in the RAIA citation. I agree with Edquist and Grierson's critique, however no information has been advanced or source cited to substantiate that the lack of resolution was intentional or not. The place citation states "The four masses fronting the street appear to be separate and unrelated, even 'unstable' with the angled northern bay appearing to pull away. Within this compositionally diverse façade, however, the building still

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<sup>49</sup> Heritage Council Victoria. Modern Melbourne: Allan Powell Interview by Emma Telfer <https://heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/get-involved/watch-heritage-videos/modern-melbourne-videos/allan-powell/>  
Accessed 30/08/2022

Van Schaik, Leon. "Vale Allan Powell". <https://architectureau.com/articles/vale-allan-powell/>  
Accessed 30/08/2022

Van Schaik, Leon. *Mastering Architecture: Becoming a Creative Innovator in Practice*. p. 143 - 145.

<sup>50</sup> Goad, Philip. "Powell, Allan". *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*. p. 556. The citation states that Tarra Warra Museum of Art was designed by Powell "with Irwin Alsop". The sources of this information is not indicated.

<sup>51</sup> Goad, Philip. "Powell, Allan". *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*. p. 556.

<sup>52</sup> "RMIT BUILDING 94 TAFE School of Design". RMIT University Architecture & Urban Design <http://architecture.rmit.edu.au/projects/rmit-building-94/>

<sup>53</sup> Edquist, Harriet and Grierson, Elizabeth. *A Skilled Hand and a Cultivated Mind: a Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University*. p. 174.

displays an elegant balance of Modernist forms, with striking materials and distinctive details such as the long strip windows, and concrete sun visors on the glass-clad horizontal volume” and a comparison with Stuart McIntosh’s Malvern bank is then made and also with Frank Gehry’s Loyola Law School (1980), in Los Angeles.

#### *Comparative Analysis*

89. *Planning Practice Note 1. Applying the Heritage Overlay (PPN1)* states viz.

To apply a threshold some comparative analysis will be required to substantiate the significance of each place. The comparative analysis should draw upon other similar places within the study area, including those previously included in a heritage register or overlay.

90. The comparative analysis includes RMIT Building 8, Storey Hall, Monash University Campus Centre, Tarra Warra Museum of Art, the Malvern bank and the Loyola Law School as comparators. Building 8 (Edmond & Corrigan, 1991 - 94) and Storey Hall (Ashton Raggatt McDougall, 1992 - 95) emanated from Van Schaik’s new approach and are also in the study area and are acceptable as comparators because of their similar, or common, history. The Malvern bank and the Loyola Law School may well be precedents but they are not comparators according to PPN1. The Monash Campus Centre additions (1990s) and the Performing Arts building (1995) may well have been influences or previous or different iterations of design elements given the commonality of architects and dates but they are not comparators according to PPN1, rather they demonstrate part of Powell’s oeuvre as does the Tarra Warra Museum of Art (1999 – 2003) which in any event post-dates Building 94.

91. The Comparative Analysis Methodology used in the *Carlton Heritage Review* states, *inter alia*, viz.:

In undertaking the comparative analysis for this study, similar places were referred to in order to better understand how the place under review compared. (Refer to para. 18)

92. Only two places which are similar because of their similar or common history, have been included.
93. A careful reading of the Comparative Analysis section indicates that it contains a wide-ranging collection of historical information which is in part repeated elsewhere in the citation and some of it e.g. that which specifically relates to Building 94 (last paragraph on p. 11 and first paragraph on p. 12) might better be included variously in the Site History and Site Description sections. Above I have discussed the Comparative Analysis Methodology used in the *Carlton Heritage Review* and I have set out some questions which the authors claim to have asked when comparing similar places. I cannot see any qualitative comments which might have been identified as part of this interrogation process.
94. In my opinion the Comparative Analysis section does not accord with PPN1. Historical comparison between Storey Hall, Building 8 and Building 94 (Van Schaik’s new programme) are factually correct but neither of the first two have been considered to be significant for this aspect alone – there are other attributes which also lend significance.

#### *Conclusions*

95. In summary, my opinion is that Von Schaik’s programme was an episode in the history of RMIT similarly to the Demaine master plan and the Bates Smart McCutcheon master plan before it. While introducing a big change into RMIT it is not of such significance of itself as to warrant a Heritage Overlay over any buildings which emanated from this programme. The Heritage Overlay is about a place being significant to a municipality not simply an institution.

96. Building 94 was the work of Allan Powell in association with Pels Innes Neilson Kosloff (PINK) however, there is no information as to the roles which they played although it would be reasonable to assume that Powell was generally responsible for the design and PINK for documentation, resolution of details and the like. In my opinion this should be researched further and clarified.
97. Building 94 won an Award of Merit in the Institutional New category of the RAIA Victorian Chapter Awards in 1996 but according to Goad and Elliott there is some doubt as to how objective the awards juries have been. In my opinion winning an award does not of itself automatically signify that a building is of heritage significance. While the RAIA citation refers to "contemporary impossibility of an architecture of resolution" and clever resolution, Edquist and Grierson state that it was intentionally unresolved. This needs clarification. In any event in my opinion the design is architecturally unresolved but may represent the composition of a painting.
98. Building 94 was not nominated in 2002 by any of the group of peer "architects" who put together a list of the 30 (finally 35) best buildings in Victoria. When interviewed for the Heritage Council of Victoria, Powell did not mention Building 94 as being a project of which he was most proud.
99. Building 94 received some attention by Edquist and Grierson, but I note the limits of the space available in their wide-ranging tome. Building 94 has been briefly mentioned by Professor Goad, illustrated by Von Schaik, mentioned by Ed Glenn, past employee of Powell and later in partnership, as being important to the practice; and it was not mentioned by Norman Day who mentioned Building 8 and Storey Hall.
100. Last in my opinion the comparative analysis is inadequate and not in accord with PPN1.
101. A careful consideration of the documentation available raises some fundamental questions, throws up inconsistencies and is silent on some aspects which I would consider to be fundamental to know in order to make a critical judgement about any heritage merits which Building 94 might have. In my opinion a strong case for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay has not been made and further research needs to be undertaken to fill in the blanks and to sort out inconsistencies in the information now to hand. I would recommend that inclusion in the Heritage Overlay should not proceed at this time. I note also that Building 94 is only 24 - 26 years old and it is generally accepted that approximately 50 years is the minimum effluxion of time in order to make an objective assessment of the heritage significance of a place and in my opinion the present time is too soon.

### *Statement of Significance*

102. This contains factual information which has been discussed above. It also offers the author's critique on the design. It is somewhat at odds with Edquist and Grierson's comments; takes one point from the RAIA Award citation i.e. "compositionally diverse façade" and is otherwise factual information couched as opinion.
103. A similar comment as was made in relation to Buildings 51, 56 and 57, that somehow the RMIT buildings are aesthetically significant as a reflection of "built form changes in Carlton in the later twentieth century...". As commented on in relation to Buildings 51, 56 and 57 it is not substantiated. No examples of the buildings or architects have been provided and without them this comment is unhelpful.

### *Assessment Against Criteria*

104. The detailed commentary relating to the Heritage Victoria *Guidelines* has not been repeated here even though it is relevant.
105. Building 94 has only been considered to satisfy Criterion E: Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance). Given the contradictory comments about the design of the building and the limited material available and the

lack of clarity as to how the association between Powell and PINK worked. I am not of the opinion that a strong case has been made to satisfy Criterion E. Further, too much reliance has been placed on the building receiving an award to strengthen a case for aesthetic significance and as stated above receipt of an award at a particular time does not automatically translate into a building subsequently having heritage value.

*Building 94: Justification for a Heritage Overlay?*

106. As discussed above, a case which substantiates significance at the local level has not been established and I see no justification to include the place in the Heritage Overlay to the Melbourne Planning Scheme.

## **5.0 Declaration**

107. I have made all the inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate and no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Panel.

## **APPENDIX A *Curriculum vitae***