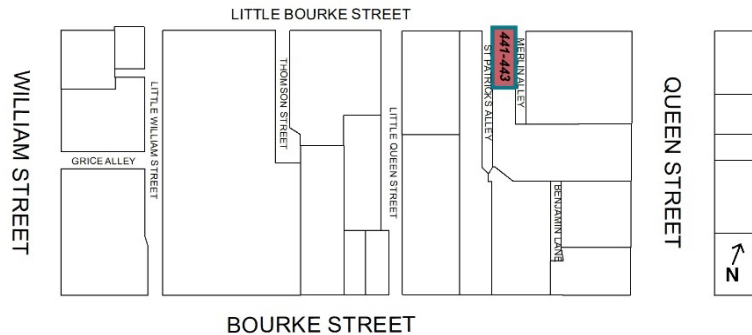
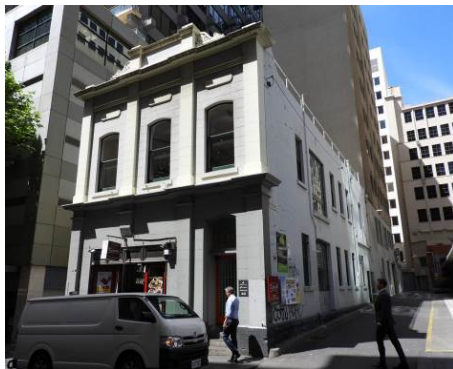


STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: Downs House (441-443 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne), April 2022

Heritage Place: Downs House

PS ref no: HO1347



What is significant?

Downs House at 441-443 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne, built in 1884 to a design by architect Norman Hitchcock.

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

- The original building form and scale
- The original painted render and face brick walls and pattern of fenestration including pilasters, cornice, cornices and pediment and pattern of window openings
- Original timber frame multi pane windows.

Later alterations made to the street level façade, such as the insertion of a wider shopfront, are not significant.

How it is significant?

Downs House at 441-443 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne, is of local historic and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The two-storey warehouse building at 441-443 Little Bourke Street, designed by architect Norman Hitchcock and built in 1884 for coppersmith J M Anderson, is historically significant as an early example of a factory building in Melbourne. Manufacturing firms occupied the building from the 1880s through to the late 1950s, evidencing the rise of manufacturing in the city in the 1880s and the boom years of the 1920s when manufacturing led the recovery from the economic depression of the late 1920s to the early 1930s. (Criterion A)

The building is historically significant for its association with printing firms that occupied the premises from 1892 to the late 1930s: the Victorian Printing Works from 1892 to c1925; F W & F A Tucker, printers and lithographers, from c1925 to the mid-1930s, and the Victorian Printing Works Pty Ltd again in 1935 to 1937. It provides important evidence of the long-term industry concentration in this part of the city which, by the interwar period, saw many printing and linotype companies established in the northwest part of the city. (Criterion A)

Downs House at 441-443 Little Bourke Street is significant as a largely intact example of a late Victorian warehouse/factory building constructed in 1884 as a component of Victorian-era industrial expansion in central Melbourne before the economic depression of the 1890s slowed manufacturing development. The building is an example of the many low scale warehouse/factory buildings of a simple utilitarian character constructed in central Melbourne, and commonly located in minor streets and laneways with rear or side lane access to facilitate the movement of goods and materials in and out of the building. Designed by architect Norman Hitchcock, Downs House exhibits key characteristics of its type, which are generally low scale using simple construction of loadbearing painted render and/or face brick walls with a heavy timber or iron post and beam internal structure., These buildings demonstrate a refined yet highly functional aesthetic with their symmetrical façades with simple pilasters, cornices and parapets and a regular pattern of windows. The lack of superfluous decoration reinforces this simple and disciplined industrial aesthetic. (Criterion D)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020) (updated March 2022)