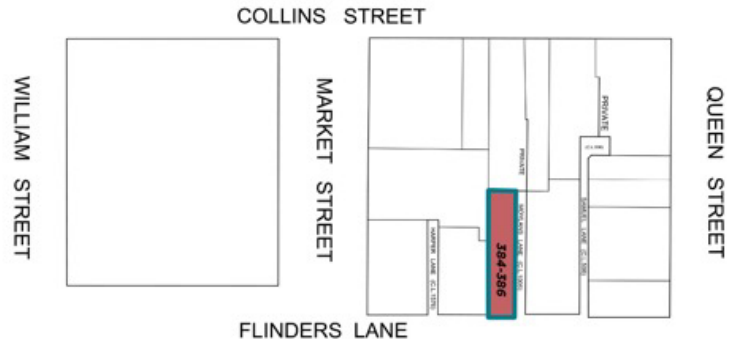


STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: Former Gordon Buildings (384-386 Flinders Lane, Melbourne), April 2022

Heritage Place: Former Gordon Buildings



PS ref no: HO1271



What is significant?

The former Gordon Building at 384-386 Flinders Lane, completed in 1885 (with additions completed in 1888) and designed by architect Frederick Williams.

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

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing

- The building's high level of integrity to its original design
- Consistent 'Italianate' style detailing to all levels across the Flinders Lane façade and short section of Moylans Lane, including the street level squared openings with corner scroll arched niches on side walls; major bracketed cornice and minor deep cornices both with scroll details at each end; all arched window openings to the upper levels including key stones, string courses, timber framed sash windows and bracketed sills and; parapet with dentil course and flat name plate.

Later changes to the basement and first floor windows, lettering to the parapet and the new entry door and highlight window to the entry porch are not significant.

How it is significant?

The former Gordon Building is of local historic, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The former Gordon Building at 384-386 Flinders Lane is historically significant for its association with office accommodation in the City of Melbourne. The building clearly demonstrates an association with the 1880s boom period, when the value of land in parts of central Melbourne was comparable with London and there was a dramatic increase in the construction of opulent office buildings. Built by biscuit manufacturer, Swallow & Ariell, the Gordon Building was constructed in 1885 to house offices. The Gordon Building is historically significant for its association with prominent Australian Impressionist painters Arthur Streeton, Charles Conder and Charles Douglas Richardson, who had studios in the building and invited private viewings of their work prior to a major exhibition of their work in 1890. Artists Clara Southern and Luigi Boldini continued the painters' association with the Gordon Building by renting studios there until 1893. (Criterion A)

384-386 Flinders Lane is a fine example of an Italianate/Renaissance Revival style building from the late Victorian era, comparing well to former warehouses at 392-396 Little Collins HO1056) Street and 130-132 Flinders Street (HO1036) in terms of its scale and stylistic expression. It is a notable and early example of an office/residential typology in the central city. (Criterion D)

The building is aesthetically significant for its integrated 'Italianate' façade resulting from an additional two levels designed by the original architect Frederick Williams, and its scholarly interpretation of elements such as the decorated parapet, the arched window openings, and the moulded cornices that also extend to the Moylans Lane façade. Aesthetic significance is demonstrated by the building's fine quality Italianate render work to the cornices, window mouldings and scrolls, and the unusual recessed ground floor with semi basement configuration and side stair. 384-386 is aesthetically significant for its high level of integrity. (Criterion E)

Primary source

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