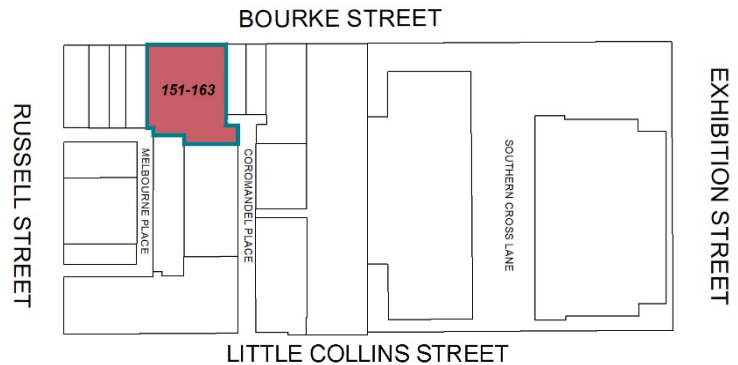


**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: Former Malcolm Reid & Co Department Store (151-163 Bourke Street, Melbourne), April 2022**

**Heritage Place:** Former Malcolm Reid & Co Department Store



**PS ref no:** HO1302



**What is significant?**

151-163 Bourke Street, Melbourne, comprising two four-storey buildings respectively completed in 1938 (151-155 Bourke Street, designed by Oakley & Parkes) and 1929 (157-163 Bourke Street, designed by W & F B Tompkins).

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

- The form and scale of the original four-storey buildings (151-155 and 157-163)
- The original patterns of symmetrical façade geometry and fenestration, including recessed spandrels, projecting mullions, terracotta faience cladding (151-155), vertical rusticated end panels (157-163)
- The original multi-paned steel-framed windows at the first, second and third levels.

Later alterations, including the Juliet balconies, openings in the parapets, awnings and alterations made to the street level shopfront are not significant.

**How it is significant?**

151-163 Bourke Street, Melbourne, is of local historical, representative, aesthetic and associative significance to the City of Melbourne.

**Why it is significant?**

The buildings at 151-163 Bourke Street are historically significant for the evidence they provide of an important phase in Melbourne's retail history; and the rise in popularity of the department store from

the 1920s in the central city. Their long use as department stores began in 1929 (for 157-163) and 1936 (151-155, in the former Empire Theatre built 1915-16). Both comprising four floor levels, 151-155 Bourke Street (built 1915-16 and extensively remodelled in 1938 in Moderne style by architects Oakley & Parkes), and 157-163 Bourke Street (built 1929 in Chicagoesque style to a design by architects H W & F B Tompkins) are representative of the small-scale wave of development in central Melbourne during the later interwar period that replaced the low scale masonry buildings dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (Criterion A and D)

The buildings at 151-163 Bourke Street are significant as small-scale examples of Chicagoesque and Moderne style buildings, two popular styles in the later interwar period. Both buildings demonstrate the key characteristics of their respective styles. 157-163 Bourke Street utilised the conservative aesthetic of the Chicagoesque style, which stands in contrast to the streamlined confidence of the Moderne style at 151-155, although the latter is a relatively restrained derivative of the style. The façades demonstrate the symmetry, strong vertical emphasis with projecting mullions and recessed spandrels that were common to both styles, while also exhibiting considerable sophistication in their attention to detail and use of materials including glazed terracotta faience cladding (151-155) and large panels of multi-pane steel framed windows. 157-163 is a modestly scaled and restrained but substantially intact example of the Chicagoesque style. It is notable as a work of the eminent firm of Melbourne architects H W & F B Tompkins, who were primarily recognised at the time for their Art Deco designs. This wave of building also utilised the engineering benefits of steel and concrete frame structures to maximise window areas and to provide flexibility for external articulation and decoration. (Criterion D)

The pair of buildings demonstrate how stylistic tastes evolved within a relatively short time frame of ten years. Between 1929 and 1938, the popularity of the conservative Chicagoesque style for new development had waned, and the non-classical Modern style had become the style of choice. (Criterion E)

The buildings are also significant for their long association with the retail businesses Malcolm Reid & Co Pty Ltd and Paynes Bon Marche Pty Ltd, which operated department stores at the site for almost 50 years and 25 years respectively. By late 1929, a new four-storey store and office building opened at 157-163 Bourke Street, built to a design by architects H W & F B Tompkins for Payne's Bon Marche drapery. Payne's drapery occupied the site for some 25 years, from 1929 to 1953. In 1936, the Adelaide furnishing company, Malcolm Reid & Co Ltd leased the building at 151-155 (built originally as the three-storey Empire Picture Theatre in 1915-16). Malcolm Reid had the building completely remodelled in 1938 to a design by architects Oakley & Parkes for use as the company's Melbourne showroom and retail store. In 1953 Malcolm Reid also occupied 157-163, and the buildings were linked. By 1960, the Malcolm Reid store occupied three interconnected buildings at 151-155 Bourke Street, 157-163 Bourke Street, and 13 Coromandel Place. The company operated from the site for almost 50 years, until c1984. (Criterion H)

### **Primary source**

---

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