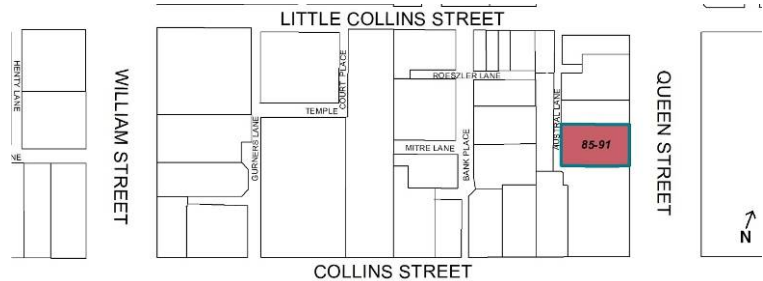


STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch (85-91 Queen Street, Melbourne), April 2022

Heritage Place: Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch

PS ref no: HO1366



What is significant?

The Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch at 85-91 Queen Street, Melbourne, completed to a design by Meldrum and Partners in 1973.

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

- The building's original external form and scale

- Original nonloadbearing precast concrete curtain wall cladding including recessed window openings to its principal (Queen Street) façade
- Original nonloadbearing curtain walls to its secondary facades facing Austral Lane and the rear of 394 Collins Street
- Original aluminium frame windows set deep into the panels.

Later alterations, particularly at street level, are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch at 85-91 Queen Street is of historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch building, opened in 1973 and designed by Meldrum & Partners, is historically significant as evidence of the postwar development and rapid growth of corporate architecture of the 1950s-1970s that reflected the expansion of large national and international companies opting for construction and naming rights of new city office buildings as a form of promotion and fund investment. Located in the financial and commercial precinct of Queen Street, the former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch building is significant historically as it reflects the growth of banks in Victoria following deregulation of the financial sector from the mid-1960s, cementing Melbourne's pre-eminent role for financial institutions. (Criterion A)

The former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch building is significant as a highly intact example of postwar commercial development in central Melbourne that utilised the Post-War Modernist style, which characterised this wave of development. These buildings represented the new modernism in their modular, industrial, Bauhaus inspired aesthetic incorporating features such as consistent access to daylight and open floor plans to meet new standards for commercial office accommodation. The former National Bank of Australasia Stock Exchange Branch is a substantial example of the later development in curtain wall design during the 1960s and into the 1970s and beyond when precast concrete was used to create moulded and curved façade modules incorporating window openings while maintaining the rigid modular Bauhaus inspired aesthetic. The building retains its original form and scale, as well as the key characteristics of its original design, including the distinctive free form or organic nonloadbearing precast concrete panels as the principal façade element. The western and southern elevations are highly intact retaining original structural precast concrete mullions, spandrel panels clad in face brick inlay panels below fixed windows with projecting precast concrete sills and ground level detailing to the western façade, and the same applied spandrel panels and precast concrete sills to the southern facade. (Criterion D)

Primary source

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