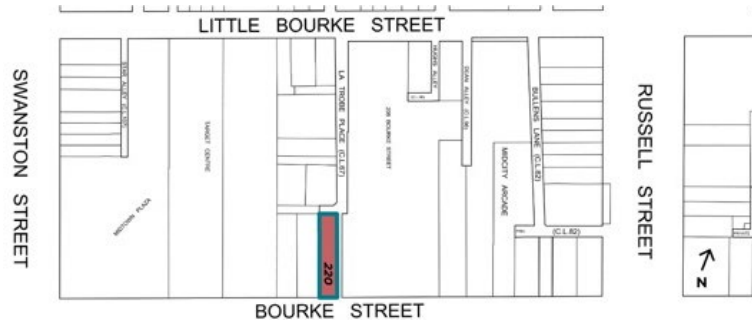


STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: Former Palmer's Emporium (220 Bourke Street, Melbourne), April 2022

Heritage Place: Former Palmer's Emporium

PS ref no: HO1243



What is significant?

Former Palmer's Emporium at 220 Bourke Street, a four-level commercial building designed by architect Harry A Norris and completed in 1937.

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
- Streamlined modern style façade defined by incised spandrels, parapet and horizontal bands of steel framed windows that run the full width of the façade and curve around the building edge
- Asymmetrical façade with a vertical pier running up the western side of the building.

More recent alterations including the ground floor shopfronts installed after 2000 are not significant.

How it is significant?

Former Palmer's Emporium at 220 Bourke Street is of local historic, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

220 Bourke Street is historically significant for its demonstration of the development of department stores, particularly after the economic depression of the 1930s. Built in 1937 as Palmer's Emporium drapery business, the building is also significant for its long term use by shoe manufacturers and retailers Smartset Shoes and the Public Benefit Bootery, later 'PB Shoes' from the late 1940s, representing part of the City of Melbourne's extensive clothing and footwear manufacturing history. (Criterion A)

220 Bourke Street is one of several commercial buildings from the interwar period designed by innovative architects of the period including Harry A Norris, Oakden and Parkes, Marcus Barlow and Stewart Calder. 220 Bourke Street combines reinforced concrete construction with moderne styling to express a progressive and modern aesthetic. (Criterion D)

220 Bourke Street is aesthetically significant for its adoption of the moderne style of the interwar period with the overall effect being a streamlined modern building. This is clearly evident and expressed in the physical fabric above the ground floor level, including the horizontal banding to the windows and their curved profile at the corner, the use of steel-framed windows and the bands of the concrete structure with incised spandrels that further emphasize its horizontal lines. (Criterion E)

Primary source

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