

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: Henty House (499-503 Little Collins Street, Melbourne), April 2022

Heritage Place: Henty House

PS ref no: HO1354



What is significant?

Henty House at 499-503 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, an eight-storey Commercial Palazzo building built in 1923 to a design by W & R Butler.

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

- The original built form and scale
- The external configuration of Little Collins Street facade demonstrating aspects of the interwar Commercial Palazzo style and wall surfaces of painted cement render
- The original multipane and other steel framed windows

- The rusticated engaged columns with a balcony above sitting on large console scrolls flanking the recessed entry to the building
- The original or early details in the lobby including the marble cladding, glazed timber entry door ensembles with hardware, letterboxes and lift surround.

Later alterations, including balconies added to the Little Collins Street elevation, are not significant.

How it is significant?

Henty House at 499-503 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, is of local historic and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Henty House at 499-503 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, built in 1924, is historically significant for the evidence it provides of Melbourne's post-World War One demand for office space from service sectors related to the 1920s' growth of manufacturing and retail development. During the economic boom of the 1920s, an increasing number of commercial enterprises constructed architect designed multi-storey premises in the city. Henty House is historically significant for being the first multi (nine) storey building in Little Collins Street, obtained under the 1916 height regulations by setting the top storey back from the front facade of the building. It is historically significant as one of only a few merchant houses constructed in the city at the time. (Criterion A)

Henty House at 499-503 Little Collins Street is significant as a largely intact example of interwar commercial development in central Melbourne, utilising the interwar Commercial Palazzo style that (along with the Chicagoesque style) characterised the early phase of this wave of development. It demonstrates key characteristics of the style, such as a strong vertical emphasis resulting from the projecting pilasters dividing the façade into three vertical bays sitting above a strong base separated from the upper levels by a pair of simple spandrels and finishing with a modest but interesting coved cornice. While overall, the principal elevation is quite understated in the degree to which it demonstrates the key characteristics of the style its elaborate entry porch and lobby provide evidence of its importance as the headquarters of the influential James Henty & Co. Significant fabric includes the rusticated engaged columns supporting a balcony above sitting on large console scrolls, flanking the recessed entry to the building with its use of quality materials including marble cladding, glazed timber entry door ensembles with hardware, letterboxes and lift surround. (Criterion D)

Primary source

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