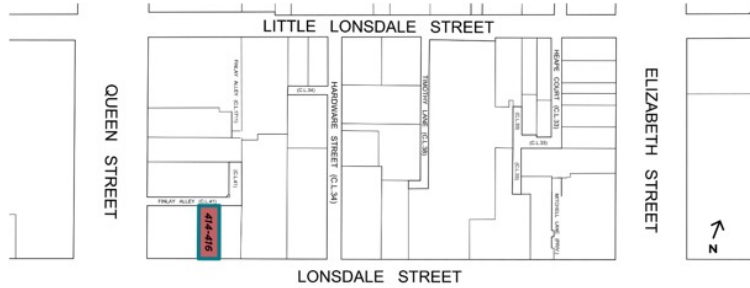


STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: Laurens House (414-416 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne), April 2022

Heritage Place: Laurens House

PS ref no: HO1254



What is significant?

Laurens House, a modernist office building at 414-416 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, completed in 1956.

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.

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

How it is significant?

Laurens House at 414-416 Lonsdale Street is of local historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Laurens House built in 1956, is of historic significance for its demonstration of the surge in office development at the time, which reflected not only the adoption of modern architecture, but also widespread economic and political change. From 1949, significant increases occurred in commercial enterprise in Australia in the areas of mining, finance, commerce, and industry, a process facilitated by speculative investment after the Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings in 1947. This contributed to an increase in the development of city offices. (Criterion A)

Laurens House is a representative example of an early curtain-walled office building of the early postwar era (1950s-60s). The building is one of a group of commercial buildings built for insurance and finance companies in the city centre during this period. The modernist aesthetic expressed the ambition and corporate image of these companies. (Criterion D)

The eight-storey office building known as Laurens House is distinctively modernist with visual interest derived from the arrangement of building elements across the asymmetrical façade. The lightweight glazed curtain wall contrasts with the more solid masonry elements to one side of the building. This use of solid and void in façade composition distinguishes the early multi-storey curtain wall offices from later examples where glazing was used across the whole façade. Laurens House retains a high level of integrity, comparing favourably with the other examples that have often been refaced or altered significantly at ground level. (Criterion E)

Primary source

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