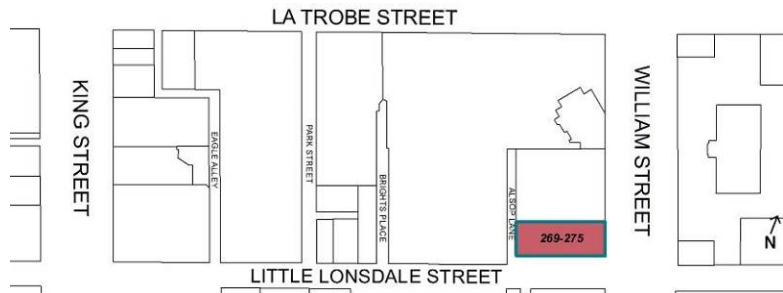


STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: Nubrik House (269-275 William Street, Melbourne), April 2022

Heritage Place: Nubrik House

PS ref no: HO1378





What is significant?

Nubrik House at 269-275 William Street, Melbourne, completed in 1972 to a design by Buchan, Laird & Buchan.

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

- The building's original external form and scale
- Original configuration of vertical panels of brickwork separating vertical bands of aluminium framed glass, with opaque panels alternating with clear glazed windows at each floor level, offset by sheer walls of face brickwork to the William Street and Alsop Lane facades
- Original aluminium framed windows.

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

How it is significant?

Nubrik House at 269-275 William Street is of historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Nubrik House, designed by Buchan, Laird & Buchan and constructed by A V Jennings Industries Australia Ltd, is historically significant for the evidence it provides of Melbourne's postwar development and rapid growth of corporate architecture of the 1950s-70s. Its development 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. Nubrik House was constructed as the national headquarters for Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd, Victoria's biggest brick makers, and one of Australia's largest brick manufacturers. The building was named after the

company's main brand, Nubrik. The building is distinguished by the extensive and prominent use of brick in the building's construction to promote the products of the building's original owner, Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd. (Criterion A)

Nubrik House is significant as a highly intact example of a Post-War Modernist commercial building constructed during the postwar period that utilised a reinforced concrete frame. This framing allowed for a variety of design approaches to the non-loadbearing façades. During the late 1960s and beyond, the style developed with a more eclectic use of materials and forms, combining glazed panels with solid sections to achieve a less repetitive, more distinctive and robust aesthetic. The principal façades of Nubrik House to both Little Lonsdale Street and William Street are demonstrative of this tendency, combining glazed panels with solid masonry sections. (Criterion D)

Nubrik House is of aesthetic significance for its distinctive design that adopted robust brick piers as one of the main design elements. While the structural masonry was used internally and designed to be exposed in the interior, the exterior design of Nubrik House consciously emphasised the unconventional use of high vertical panels of brickwork to give the appearance of supporting the building, although the external brickwork was actually supported by the internal reinforced concrete frame. While the brick piers appear to be loadbearing, they are a non-structural veneer, concealing an interior structure that is an unusual composite of a reinforced concrete column and slab frame supported on its perimeter by sections of loadbearing brickwork. Designed by Buchan, Laird & Buchan for Brick & Pipe Industries Ltd, Victoria's biggest brick manufacturer at the time, the subject building is distinguished by its design solution that consciously utilised bricks, the main product of the company, to promote this material, and in a way that visually suggests it is fulfilling a structural role. (Criterion E)

Primary source

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