

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: Sanders and Levy Building (149-153 Swanston Street, Melbourne), April 2022

Heritage Place: Sanders and Levy Building

PS ref no: HO1294



What is significant?

The three-storey shops and studios at 149-153 Swanston Street, Melbourne, built in 1900 by Sanders & Company and designed by Reed Smart & Tappin.

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

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing (first and second floors)
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design (first and second floors)
- Banded brick and render to the façade
- Pattern and size of original fenestration, and original window joinery
- Giant order arches framing the windows
- Parapet and signage panel
- Decorative spandrels and ornamental Art Nouveau style stucco detailing around upper floor windows.

Later alterations made at the ground level are not significant.

How it is significant?

149-153 Swanston Street, Melbourne, is of local historic, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The Sanders & Company building at 149-153 Swanston Street is historically significant for its demonstration of retailing and other commercial activity at the turn of the century. Historically the building is associated with the Levy family of Lewis Sanders, Abraham Levy and Joseph L Levy who as Sanders & Company, established stores from the 1850s, culminating in the nearby Leviathan Stores at 271-281 Bourke Street. (Criterion A)

The three-storey building at 149-153 Swanston Street is a notable example of an Edwardian commercial building in the Romanesque revival style. The present buildings share characteristics with other larger and more prominent retail buildings by Reed Smart & Tappin such as the Mutual Store and the Ball and Welch building, both in Flinders Street. 149-153 Swanston Street is distinguished by its relatively high integrity compared with the Ball and Welch building and 93 Little Bourke Street that have been incorporated into contemporary developments. (Criterion D)

149-153 Swanston Street is aesthetically significant for its contribution to the Swanston Street South Precinct. Characteristics that contribute to its individual significance include the masonry arches banded in face brick and render (now overpainted but just visible), the elaborate windows to first and second floor levels, each with their original or early timber joinery and the ornate stucco decoration around the upper floor windows in Art Nouveau style. (Criterion E)

Primary source

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