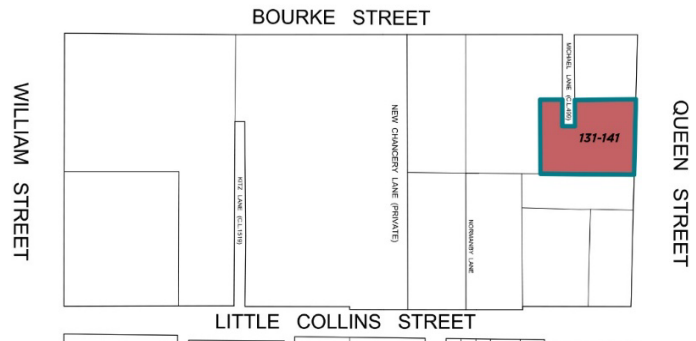


**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: Former Victoria Club building (131-141 Queen Street, Melbourne), April 2022**

**Heritage Place:** Former Victoria Club building

**PS ref no:** HO1258



**What is significant?**

The former Victoria Club at 131-141 Queen Street, built as a three-storey building in 1927 and extended in 1956 with an additional seven storeys.

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
- The original pattern and size of fenestration; arch head openings and blind arches
- The entrance door surrounds, entablature, scrolled egg and dart stone relief, double timber doors with medallion motif

- The granite cladding, balconette, columns, wreath motifs and cornice on the Queen Street elevation
- Original decorative interior features in the barrel-vaulted lobby, the ground floor chamber, and the boardroom.

Any later alterations are not significant.

### **How it is significant?**

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131-141 Queen Street is of local historic, representative, aesthetic and associative significance.

### **Why it is significant?**

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Historically the Victoria Club demonstrates the tradition of private member clubs in the central city.

131-141 Queen Street is of historic significance for its association with the Victoria Club and with the history of horse racing in Victoria. The Victoria Club, founded in 1880 by a group of bookmakers who split away from Tattersalls Subscription Betting Rooms, was set up for the purpose of calling cards and settling bets. A seven-storey addition to the building in 1956 demonstrates the growth of the club after World War Two. 131-141 Queen Street is of historical significance as the clubrooms, from 1927 to 1986, of one of the earliest and longest running clubs in the state. It is of historical significance as the location in 1976 of the 'great bookie robbery', an event which attracted widespread public attention and ultimately contributed to the demise of the Victoria Club. (Criterion A)

131-141 Queen Street is a notable example of interwar neo-Classicism. This is evident in the highly elaborate first three levels that are articulated through manipulating floor to ceiling heights and giving importance to the first floor in the form of a 'piano nobile'. The building also demonstrates the practice of extending low rise buildings of two or three storeys to meet the 40-metre height limit, once this became possible in the 1950s. (Criterion D)

The Victoria Club is aesthetically significant for its exterior and interior to the extent of its 1920s features designed by Joseph Plottel, Ernest Bunett & George Alsop. Attributes of aesthetic significance include the first three floors as expressed on the exterior and the interior spaces of the entrance with its barrel-vaulted ceiling, ground floor chamber and first floor board room. The granite half basement and grey and red granite surrounds to the entrance doorways are highly decorative as are the timber double doors to the northernmost entrance. Other attributes include the windows, doors and balconette to the Queen Street elevation. (Criterion E)

The Victoria Club Building is of significance for its long association with the Victoria Club, an organisation established by and for bookmakers, and an important part of Victoria's racing history. The Victoria Club building was designed for and built by the Victoria Club and was 'home' to club members – bookmakers – for nearly 60 years; it was their first permanent clubrooms and the location of the event that brought them notoriety, and that may have ultimately impacted the ability of the club to survive. (Criterion H)

### **Primary source**

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