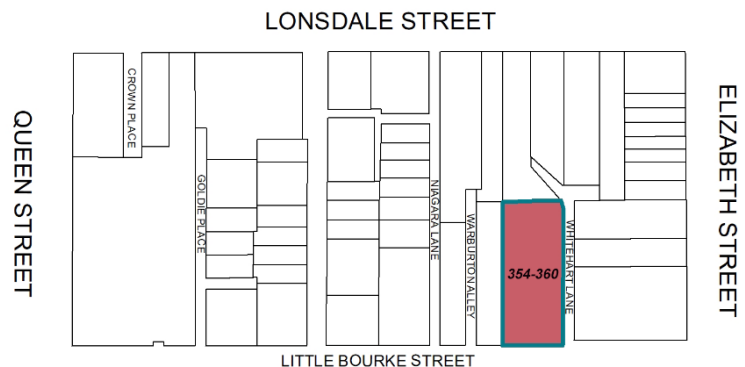


STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Melbourne House

PS ref no: HO1345



What is significant?

Melbourne House at 354-360 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne, a six-storey commercial and manufacturing building of reinforced concrete built in 1923.

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

- The original building form, materials and detail;
- Pattern and size of original fenestration;
- External wall surfaces of painted cement render; and
- Decoration to the lintel at the base of the first floor.

Alterations at the street-level shopfront and replacement of glazing at the principal and side elevations are not significant. They have not resulted in a major adverse impact on the integrity of the place.

How it is significant?

Melbourne House is of local historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Melbourne House at 360 Little Bourke Street is historically significant as a relatively intact example of the first wave of tall buildings constructed between World War One and World War Two that replaced the low-scale buildings dating from the nineteenth and early twentieth century. This wave of development evidences the rapid expansion of Melbourne's business and manufacturing sector. (Criterion A)

Melbourne House at 360 Little Bourke Street is historically significant as a purpose-built building for the business A G Healing & Co. Alfred George Healing established a wholesale motorcycle and bicycle trading business in Richmond in 1896, moving to Niagara Lane by 1902 and to 354-360 Post Office Place (the subject site), by 1910. The commissioning of 360 Little Bourke Street in 1923, corresponded with an interstate expansion of the company, which by the 1930s, had made A G Healing & Co into the largest motorcycle manufacturer and retailer in Australia. A G Healing & Co moved from Melbourne House in 1927. (Criterion A)

Melbourne House is significant as a relatively intact, competent and representative example of the interwar Chicagoesque style, which demonstrates the exploration of building styles that adapted classical traditions to the new taller forms. The building exhibits a strong vertical emphasis resulting from projecting pilasters and mullions and a substantial cornice. Articulated spandrels at each floor separate the horizontally proportioned windows. In spite of changes to upper level window joinery and glazing the building retains its original pattern of fenestration and the broad character of the original building. Built in 1923 to a design by well-known commercial architects Sydney Smith, Ogg & Serpell, Melbourne House is significant as a modest example of the widespread adoption of reinforced concrete structural frame technology which allowed buildings to be constructed to greater heights, with larger windows and more open floor areas than earlier load bearing building systems allowed. Its use of the patented Monier system of reinforced concrete construction, promoted by the Reinforced Concrete & Monier Pipe Construction Co. from 1905, is a relatively late example. It (Criterion D)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)