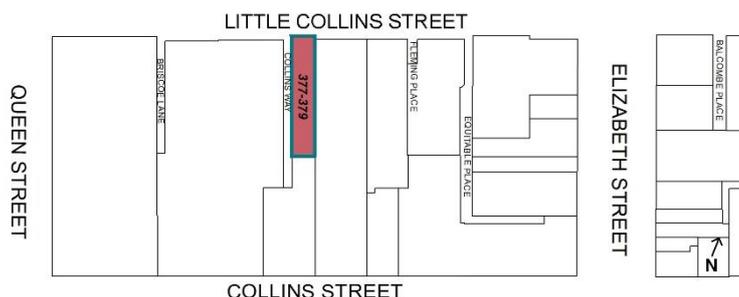


STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Collins Gate



PS ref no: HO1351



What is significant?

Collins Gate at 377-379 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, a four-storey commercial building built in 1924 to a design of Grainger, Little, Barlow & Hawkins.

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

- The original building form and scale;
- The original pattern of fenestration and decoration, including cornice and lettering;
- The external wall surfaces of cement render and paint; and
- The original multipaned steel-framed windows; and
- The decoration to the principal elevation including the original pilasters and cornice.

Later additions above the fourth level, new ground level shopfronts and other alterations such as the insertion of steel balconies are not significant.

How it is significant?

Collins Gate at 377-379 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, is of local historic and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Collins Gate at 377-379 Little Collins Street, built in 1925, is historically significant for the evidence it provides of Melbourne's post-World War One demand for office space from service sectors related to the growth of manufacturing and retail development in the 1920s. During the economic boom of the 1920s, an increasing number of commercial enterprises constructed architect designed multi-storey premises in the city. Collins Gate was constructed as an investment property for William Baillieu, who,

with others, operated businesses linked to three Broken Hill mining companies from the neighbouring building Collins House, built in 1910. The Collins House Group exercised significant financial and political power in Australian society for the following decades. Collins Gate is historically significant for its long-term association Melbourne jewelry and gallery business Koziminsky. As a tenant from 1927 to 1976, the Koziminsky business (established in Melbourne in 1851) operated from the building for almost 50 years. From this location the business sold antique jewelry and by the 1930s the business became known as Koziminky's Gallery. The Gallery exhibited works by a number of well-known artists. Australian artists shown at the Collins Gate gallery included the New Melbourne Art Club in 1941; Edith Holmes in 1943; Julius and Tina Wentcher in 1945; Arthur Boyd in 1949; Lorraine Whiting in 1949 and Geoffrey Brown in 1954 (Centre for Australian Art). (Criterion A)

Collins Gate at 377-379 Little Collins Street is significant as a largely intact example of the wave of development in central Melbourne during the early interwar period that replaced the low scale masonry buildings dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. This early wave of building most commonly utilised the interwar Commercial Palazzo or Chicagoesque styles. These styles employed the engineering benefits of steel and concrete frame structures to maximise window areas and to provide flexibility for external articulation and decoration. The use of reinforced concrete structural frames allowed these buildings to be constructed to greater heights, with larger windows and more open floor areas, than earlier load bearing building systems. The building retains key characteristics of the style. (Criterion D)

Collins Gate at 377-379 Little Collins Street is of aesthetic significance as a low scale, and (notwithstanding the 1998 additions) highly intact example of the interwar Chicagoesque style. The Little Collins Street section is particularly notable and somewhat eclectic. While similar to many other examples of the Chicagoesque style in central Melbourne, it demonstrates a greater degree of decoration and details than is usual for the style. Its use of a range of stylistic devices provides three-dimensional interest to the façade (for example pyramidal raised panels to the spandrels), rather than the simple configuration of projecting pilasters and recessed spandrels. The façade is notable for the application of lettering to the spandrel at first floor level setting out 'No. 377', 'COLLINS GATE' and 'No.379'. The rear section is more utilitarian in its minimal use of decorative detail but with large windows. Despite the irregular geometry and materiality of the 1998 additions, the original building is clearly legible and is not overwhelmed by the additional forms, and the outcome is an interesting albeit very eclectic composition. (Criterion E)

Primary source

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

