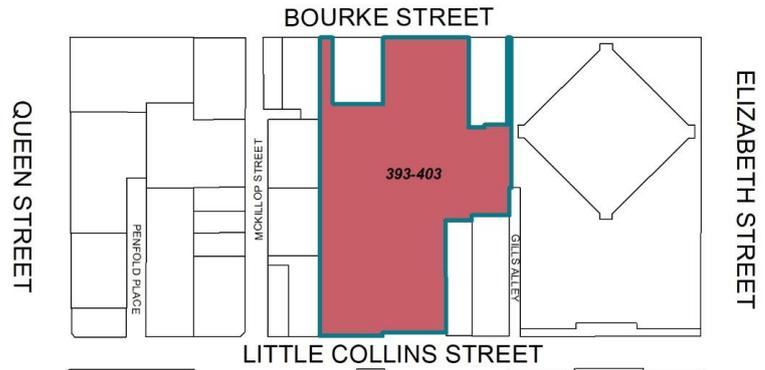


STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former John Danks & Son

PS ref no: HO1307



What is significant?

The Foundry (former Danks & Son) building at 393-403 Bourke Street, Melbourne, a six-storey steel and reinforced concrete building built in 1915-18 to a design by Sydney Smith & Ogg.

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

- The original building scale and form; and
- The original painted render principle façade and pattern of fenestration, including cornices, semicircular arches, brackets, rusticated end bays, decorative floral garlands, pattern of window openings and curved oriel windows at the second, third and fourth levels.

Later alterations made to the street level façade are not significant.

How it is significant?

393-403 Bourke Street, Melbourne, is of local historic, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The Foundry (former Danks & Son) building, a six-storey commercial warehouse built in 1915-18 as a retail outlet for hardware manufacturers John Danks & Son Ltd is historically significant. It exemplifies a key phase in Melbourne's development when, in the first decades of the twentieth century during recovery from the economic depression of the 1890s, an increasing number of investors constructed multi-storey premises in the city to house the growing retail industry. The site is historically significant for its long association with and use for, in part and whole, hardware retail. It operated virtually uninterrupted for 148 years from c1859 to 2007 as a retail and wholesale outlet firstly as John Danks

& Sons Ltd, retail and wholesale hardware, from the 1890s to 1957; then McEwans Ltd, retail hardware, from 1965 to 1993. (Criterion A)

The former Danks & Son building at 393-403 Bourke Street, constructed in 1915-18, is significant as a largely intact example of the first wave of early twentieth-century mid-rise warehouse building development in central Melbourne. Through its architecture, the building demonstrates the confidence of companies such as John Danks & Son in early twentieth-century Melbourne in constructing a substantial and richly detailed building for retail and warehouse use. Its detailing is characteristic of the Federation Free Style while utilising the new materials of structural steel and reinforced concrete to allow for larger windows and increased building heights. (Criterion D)

The building is aesthetically significant for its well-executed use of eclectic Art Nouveau and earlier Victorian details, including cornices, semicircular arches, brackets, rusticated end bays, decorative floral garlands, pattern of window openings and oriel windows. The aluminium replacement windows replicate the configuration and leadlight sashes of the original windows, thereby maintaining the repetitive pattern of the windows and their compatibility with the articulation of the façade. The building is notable as having been designed by architects Sydney Smith & Ogg, who were influential during the Edwardian period, designing houses, shops, banks, hotels and churches. (Criterion E)

Primary source

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