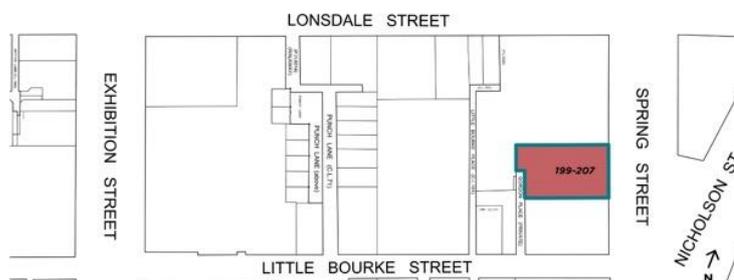


STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Park Tower



PS ref no: HO1263



What is significant?

Park Tower, 199-207 Spring Street, Melbourne, built in 1969 to a design by émigré architect Kurt Popper.

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

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing; and
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations are not significant.

How it is significant?

Park Tower at 199-207 Spring Street is of local historic, representative, aesthetic and technical significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Park Tower is historically significant as one of the first wave of high-rise residential apartments constructed in the Melbourne CBD from the late 1960s, and before the introduction of a Victorian government policy in 1971 that directed where growth in Melbourne's housing supply could take place. (Criterion A)

Park Tower is a notable and early example of a new building typology that emerged in the CBD in the late 1960s and early 1970s – the modern high-rise residential apartment building. The building demonstrates key characters of the type. It was constructed as a modern curtain walled building, with

a podium at the lower level accommodating communal, retail and commercial spaces, and luxury residential apartments located in a recessed tower section. The distinctive modern character of the building and the deliberate promotion of it as a base for a glamorous modern lifestyle are characteristics of the type, which contributes to the understanding of Melbourne as a modern city in the postwar period. (Criterion D)

Park Tower is aesthetically significant for its demonstration of modernism in apartment design. Attributes of the apartment block include a generous distribution of space for ground floor retail and a first-floor communal terrace with a sweeping curved roofline, above which is the 16-storey apartment tower. Aesthetic value is demonstrated by the combination of concrete structural frame combined with curtain walling to the long facades, forming a grid pattern. Within this regular grid, an abstract composition is achieved by the positioning of the open balconies that are integrated into the façade and visually contrasting with the sheer vertical side walls of brick. (Criterion E)

Park Tower is significant for the innovative central gas heating and cooling system that was installed in the building. Designed by the Gas and Fuel Corporation of Victoria, Park Towers was the first application of the system which was expected to have widespread usage in commercial and industrial buildings. The centrally installed system featured a high air-volume, low noise level fan and heat exchanger, as well as thermostat controls for personal comfort and billing metres to allow for recording of energy usage in each apartment. (Criterion F)

Park Tower is significant for its association with émigré architect Kurt Popper who brought European ideas about living in the city to the Melbourne CBD. Popper designed a number of residential apartment buildings in Melbourne including the six-storey 'Crossley House' (1967), which is known as the first modern residential block in Melbourne. (Criterion H)

Primary source

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