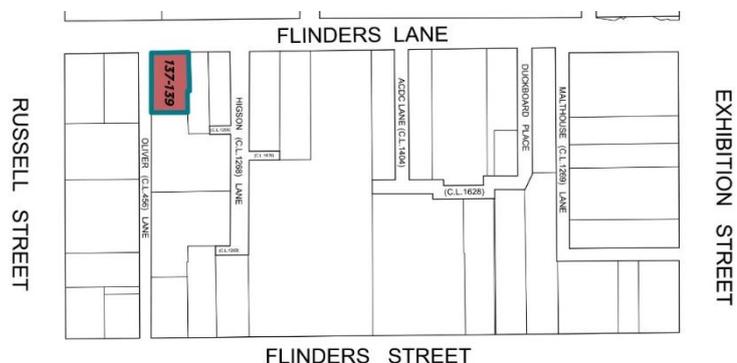


STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Bank of New South Wales



PS ref no: HO1292



What is significant?

137-139 Flinders Lane, the former ES&A Bank, constructed in 1924.

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 very high level of integrity to its original design;
- The recessed entrance porch, concrete reveals, spandrels and mouldings;
- The pattern and size of fenestration and large multi-paned windows with continuous hood moulding;
- The gothic window arches on the upper levels and square window heads on the middle level;
- Central door with hood moulding and gothic arch;
- The industrial style metal frame windows and pavement level windows on the Oliver Lane façade; and
- The timber parquetry floor, marble steps, central handrail, and highlight window in the entry foyer.

Later alterations are not significant.

How it is significant?

137-13 Flinders Lane is of local historic, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The former ES&A Bank at 137-139 Flinders Lane is historically significant as a demonstration of the recovering city economy after the depression of the 1890s. It is clearly associated with this period which saw many banks close, followed by a sustained recovery period from the early 1900s until the late 1920s, helped by Melbourne's brief role as the nation's capital until 1913. (Criterion A)

137-139 Flinders Lane is a notable example of an interwar bank building. Like many other banks of the period it adopts a revival style, though unusually it employs the Gothic rather than the more common Greek or Renaissance revival styles. While it is conservative in adopting a nineteenth century idiom, the design is expressed through the medium of reinforced concrete, a relatively new construction material at the time. (Criterion D)

137-139 Flinders Lane is aesthetically significant for its contribution to the Flinders Lane East Precinct and its contribution to Oliver Lane. It is aesthetically significant for the manner in which reinforced concrete is moulded and articulated to form features of the Gothic style. This is evident in the windows and their hood mouldings and the moulded spandrel panels beneath the top floor windows. Other attributes of aesthetic value include the generous recessed entry with marble steps. (Criterion E)

Primary source

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