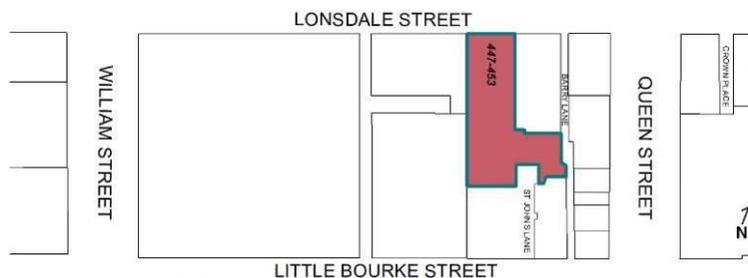


## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

**Heritage Place:** Lonsdale  
Exchange Building



**PS ref no:** HO1361



### What is significant?

The Lonsdale Exchange Building at 447-453 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, built in 1969 by PDC Construction to a design by the Commonwealth Department of Works is significant.

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

- Original building form and scale;
- Unpainted face brick cladding and expressed metal perimeter frames, original pattern of fenestration and window openings;
- Recessed ground level entry, black granite tiled cladding, British Coat of Arms, Royal Cypher and *'Lonsdale Exchange Building 447-457 Lonsdale Street'* lettering at street level; and,
- Original aluminium frame windows and louvres.

Later alterations, particularly at street level, are not significant.

### How it is significant?

The Lonsdale Exchange Building at 447-453 Lonsdale Street is of historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

### Why it is significant?

The Lonsdale Exchange Building is historically significant for its ongoing civic function and association with the longer civic use of the site. From 1911 to the present day, the site has been used for the provision of telephone services to the city, and is located within an area which encompassed

government, administration and communication services. Construction of the Lonsdale Telephone Exchange demonstrates the breadth of Commonwealth powers in the decades that followed World War Two, a shift that occurred in the postwar period and resulted in increased construction of buildings in city centres by the Commonwealth Department of Works. As a large-scale purpose-built building completed in 1969, replacing the earlier 1911 exchange building and supplementing other earlier postwar telephone exchanges in the city, it also demonstrates the growth and changes in telecommunications by the mid to late 1960s. (Criterion A)

The Lonsdale Telephone Exchange is significant as a highly intact and refined example of postwar Commonwealth government development in the City of Melbourne. The Lonsdale Exchange Building utilises the Post-War Modernist style that characterised this wave of development, but with aspects of the Brutalist style that are commensurate with its very specific function. It is representative of the modern purpose-built telephone exchange buildings designed by the Commonwealth Department of Works in the 1960s and 1970s to store large technical equipment and switchboards as well as accommodating an expanded workforce. (Criterion D)

The Lonsdale Exchange Building is aesthetically significant as a well-executed design by the Commonwealth Department of Works. It is a substantial, disciplined, refined and highly intact example of a Post-War Modernist style multi-storey building incorporating features of the Brutalist style, such as large areas of solid masonry walling and a lack of large areas of glazing. These characteristics are overlaid with the repetitive modularity of the Post-War Modernist style. In the subject building, this external expression of its utilitarian interior functions contributes to its rigid, minimalist design aesthetic. (Criterion E)

#### **Primary source**

---

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