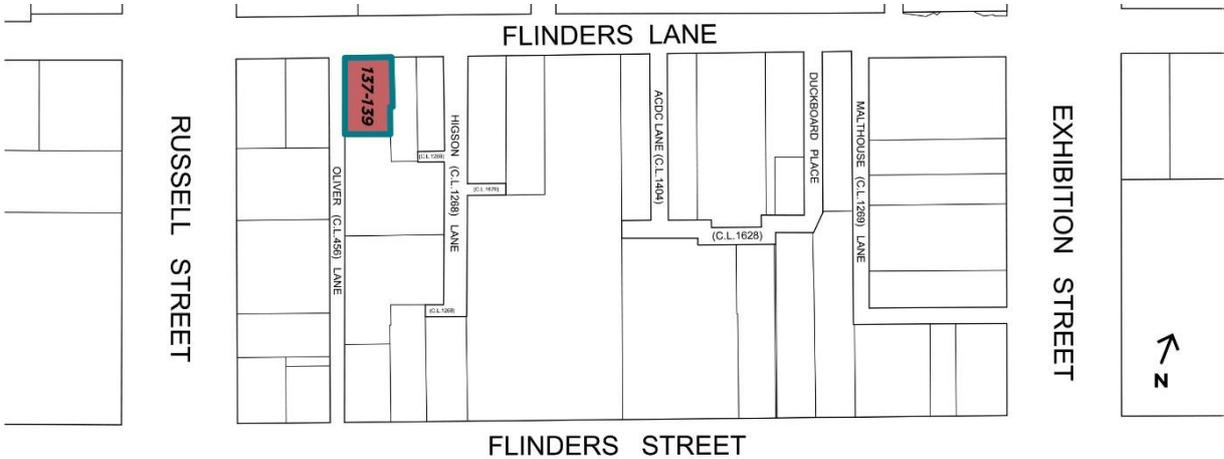


<b>SITE NAME</b>	Former Bank of New South Wales
<b>STREET ADDRESS</b>	137-139 Flinders Lane Melbourne
<b>PROPERTY ID</b>	103929



SURVEY DATE: January 2018		SURVEY BY: Context	
<b>HERITAGE INVENTORY</b>	H1822-1933	<b>EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY</b>	No
<b>PLACE TYPE</b>	Individual Heritage Place	<b>PROPOSED CATEGORY</b>	Significant
		<b>FORMER GRADE</b>	C
<b>DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:</b>	Not known	<b>BUILDER:</b>	Not known
<b>DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:</b>	Interwar Period (c1919-c1940) Interwar Period (c1919-c1940)	<b>DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:</b>	1924

## THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
HISTORIC THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
5 Building a commercial city	5.3 Developing a large, city-based economy 5.5 Building a manufacturing capacity

## LAND USE

HISTORIC LAND USE	
<b>Archaeological block no:</b> 63	<b>Inventory no:</b> 933
<b>Character of Occupation:</b> Commercial	
Fourth land sale, Block 7 Allotment 20, Thomas Walker.	
1866 Cox	Building
1877 Dove	Rudds Commercial Hotel, yards & two sheds
1880 Panorama	
1888 Mahlstedt	Three-storey hotel, Commercial Hotel
1905/6 Mahlstedt	Commercial Hotel
THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Commercial
1920s	Commercial
1960s	Commercial

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

**Extent of overlay:** Refer to map

## SUMMARY

137-139 Flinders Lane, the former ES&A and Bank of New South Wales, now Flinders Lane Gallery dates from 1924 and is a reinforced concrete building with Gothic revival styling.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### Building a Commercial City

#### *Developing a large, city-based economy*

After the discovery of gold in 1851 provided financial stability to the colony of Victoria, over the years the locality bounded by Flinders Street, William Street, Bourke Street and Elizabeth Street became the financial heart of the city. Banks, insurance companies, building societies and shipping companies were established and many of them erected substantial buildings (Savill 1987).

By the 1850s the commercial and financial district had gravitated to Collins Street, under the influence of the wharf, the Western Market and Customs House. Four banks were in Collins Street, near Bank Place, in 1850. By this time other professional and business uses were also evident, including legal chambers. Several impressive buildings were constructed in the boom of the 1880s and in the first decades of the twentieth century (MPS:50).

As well as managing locally generated income, the banks provided significant overseas capital, principally from Britain, to finance public projects and private investment. But the boom of the 1880s saw over-borrowing and overspending on building projects. Economic depression in the early 1890s saw many banks and land companies close their doors as British capital was rapidly withdrawn. The city recovered to some extent in the early twentieth century, and Melbourne underwent further development in its new role as the nation's capital. The Great Depression followed in the 1930s, which marked another period of decline. Nevertheless, during the long boom of the postwar period that followed, the bulk of Australia's leading public companies had their headquarters in Melbourne. Melbourne remained the financial centre of Australia, a role it maintained until the late twentieth century (Context 2012:33).

## SITE HISTORY

Flinders Street and Flinders Lane were named after navigator Captain Matthew Flinders who claimed the discovery of Port Phillip in April 1802 aboard the Investigator, but who later conceded the prior arrival of Acting Lieutenant John Murray on the Lady Nelson in February 1802 (RHSV). Flinders Lane was also known as Little Flinders Street until 1948 when the Melbourne City Council declared Flinders Lane the official name (*Age* 8 June 1948:2).

The subject site is located on Crown Allotment 20 of Block 7 (Fels, Lavelle and Mider 1993). By the 1880s, there was a three-storey hotel known as 'Commercial Hotel' on the site (Figure 1). By 1910, the Commercial Hotel was converted to a furnished apartment (Mahlstedt Map Section 1, no 6,1910).

In 1922, the Bank of New South Wales (NSW), then owner of the subject site, sold the building 'at a very substantial profit' of £1687, and bought a new building at 253 Flinders Lane (*Herald* 2 November 1922:22; *Daily Telegraph* (NSW) 5 June 1922:7). Following the Bank of NSW, Eastaugh Ltd, men's wear manufacturer, owned the property for about a year in 1923 (RB 1922/3).

In 1924, the former brick warehouse was demolished, and a new three-storey reinforced concrete bank with a basement was erected for the new owner, the English, Scottish & Australian (ES&A) Bank (RB 1924/5). In 1924, the Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria noted that construction was occurring on the site and by late 1924, a new branch of the ES&A Bank opened on the site (Figure 1) (S&Mc 1924). In 1925, the Net Annual Value (NAV) of the newly built building was £1100, a significant increase from the previous year's NAV of £350 (RB 1923/4-1924/5). The bank occupied

the ground floor premises and the basement was occupied by tenants A Beckett, piano importers. By 1927, the first floor was subsequently occupied by Mutual Manufacturing Co Pty Ltd, knitted goods manufacturers, and the second floor by Young & Co, mantles and robes manufacturers (S&Mc 1925-27).

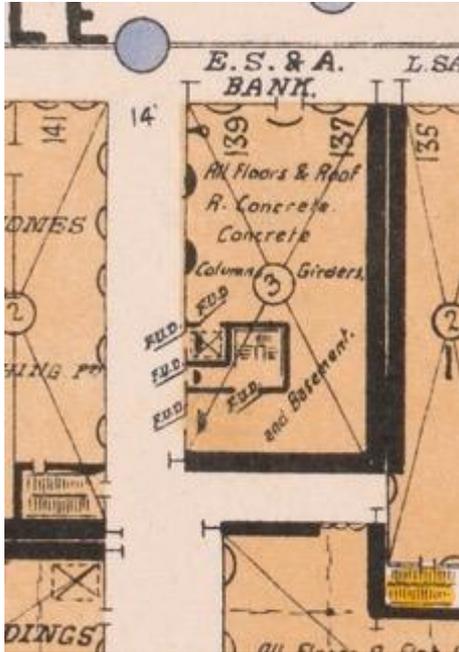


Figure 1. Showing the subject building (occupied by ES&A Bank) in 1925 shortly after the completion in 1924. (Source: Mahlstedt Map Section 1, no 6, 1925)

In April 1927, ES&A Bank left the premises, selling the property back to the Bank of New South Wales (owner of the site in 1922) at a price of £12,000 (*Herald* 20 April 1927:20). By the end of the year, the Bank of NSW, which had been occupying a small building opposite, moved in to the subject building (*Herald* 20 April 1927:20; S&Mc 1928). It is likely that the current lettering 'Bank of New South Wales' was added around this time.

137-139 Flinders Lane was known as the 'eastern branch' of the Bank of NSW, which amalgamated with the Commercial Bank of Australia to form Westpac Banking Corporation in 1982. The branch operated up until February 1984, when the branch closed (*Age* 21 March 1984:35). On 4 April 1984, the three-storey building was sold by public auction, as part of the new Westpac's rationalisation program. According to the auction notice, the ground floor banking chamber was vacant, with the basement and two upper stories occupied by businesses at that time (*Age* 21 March 1984:35).

After the property sale in April 1984, the ground floor showroom and warehouse space were advertised for long-term lease (*Age* 28 July 1984:78). It is unclear who occupied the ground floor premises during the late 1980s, as multiple businesses had been addressed as 137-139 Flinders Lane, without references to particular floor levels. In the late 1980s, Intercity Appliances, kitchen appliances sellers, D & P Manufacturers, ladies clothing manufacturers, and Holmes Commercial Printing, printers, were tenants at 137-139 Flinders Lane (*Age* 17 September 1988:241; 21 January 1989:196; 11 July 1989:5).

By November 1989, Flinders Lane Galley was established on the ground floor of the subject building and continues to operate today (*Age* 10 November 1989:35; CoMMaps).

## SITE DESCRIPTION

137-139 Flinders Lane is located in the Flinders Street East Precinct.

137-139 Flinders Lane occupies a corner site to Oliver Lane and has two frontages. The building comprises three storeys and a half basement to Flinders and Oliver Lanes. The half basement is lit from windows at pavement level along Oliver Lane. The side of this building contributes to the character of Oliver Lane. To Flinders Lane the front elevation is symmetrical, with a central door with hood moulding flanked by a pair of Gothic arch-headed windows. The windows have mullions above the transom and plate glass below. Mullions may have been removed from these panes. To the side elevation the same type of windows have industrial style metal frames with obscure glazing.

In the nineteenth century the gothic revival was deemed one of the highly appropriate styles for banks and this continued into the twentieth century with an entirely new construction material. Rather than being constructed from stone or brick, 137-139 Flinders Lane is of reinforced concrete walls with all the reveals and mouldings formed from concrete. The façade is enlivened by the way in which the large multi-paned windows form the predominant feature. A continuous hood moulding links these together visually. Upper floor windows have additional framing as gothic arches whilst the middle floor has square window heads. Spandrels of moulded concrete form a feature under the top floor windows.

137-139 Flinders Lane was built to accommodate a bank on one level with offices above, formerly occupied by various small manufacturers associated with the textile trade in Flinders Lane. There is a basement level that was/is also separately tenanted. There are steps of marble that have a curve profile with a central handrail. The entry is a notable feature of the building. The main room on the ground floor has a timber parquet floor.

## INTEGRITY

No.137-139 Flinders Lane is highly intact. External doors to the recessed entrance porch have been replaced by a roller shutter and the airlock with high level glazing around the entry doors appears to be a recent addition. The building interior has not been inspected but online images show that the entry and main banking area appear to remain as the gallery space.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The interwar bank forms a prominent part of the landscape of the Hoddle Grid. Amongst the examples below are several State listed banks and some with Heritage Overlays. Banking buildings of the early 1920s were generally three to four storeys but by the 1930s had grown to ten storeys or more. The styles deemed appropriate included the Greek and Renaissance revival styles whilst employing concrete structures and sometimes terra cotta faience as facing. Later buildings in the 1930s started to express themselves through modernism.

The following examples are comparable with 137-139 Flinders Lane being of a similar original use, scale, style and/or construction date. The images and descriptions are provided by CoMMaps unless stated otherwise, with images dating from c2000 or later.

*Former State Savings Bank, 615-623 Collins Street, 1923-1924 (HO1013)*

615-623 Collins Street is a five-storey rendered brick former State Savings Bank building, designed in the Neo-Renaissance style by Peck & Kemter.



Figure 2. 615-623 Collins Street constructed 1923-24.

*Former Union Bank, 351-357 Elizabeth Street, 1926-1927 (HO1019)*

351-357 Elizabeth Street, a five-storey rendered brick bank building, was built for the Union Bank by Thompson & Chalmers in 1928, to a design by Butler & Martin in the Commercial Palazzo style.



Figure 3. 351-357 Elizabeth Street constructed 1926-27.

*Former ES&A Bank, 219-225 Swanston Street, 1928 (VHR H0390; HO749)*

The Former ES&A Bank at 219-225 Swanston Street was built in 1928 to a design by Hare, Henry & Hare. It is of architectural significance as a notable example of the popular 1920s Greek neo-Classical revival style. The Greek Revival style was favoured by the ES&A Bank and a number of its branches were built in this style in the 1920s. This appears to be the most intact example of the style. The style emphasises solidity in its classical references, a characteristic no doubt valued by a bank.



Figure 4. 219-225 Swanston Street constructed 1928. (Source: VHD)

*Former Bank of New South Wales, 190-192 Bourke Street, 1929 (VRH H799; HO540)*

The former Bank of New South Wales building by Godfrey & Spowers is architecturally significant for exemplifying the architectural eclecticism and exoticism of the late 1920s and early 1930s. It is very unusual in its application of Egyptian motifs. It is an excellent example of the use of decorative terracotta faience, which was a popular cladding material in the interwar years.



Figure 5. 190-192 Bourke Street constructed 1929.

*77-89 William Street Western House, 1939 (HO753)*

Nine-storey concrete office building with a sandstone faience. It contains a ground floor banking chamber. It was designed by Meldrum & Noad in the Neo-Renaissance Modernist style and built in 1939. It received the Victorian Institute of Architects Street Architecture Medal in 1942.



Figure 6. 77-89 William Street constructed 1939.

*Royal Banking Chambers, 287-301 Collins Street, 1939-41 (HO597)*

A 10-storey brick office building with a ground floor banking chamber. Designed by Stephenson & Turner in the Moderne style and built for the ES&A Bank in 1941. It features a very fine stone facing finish of Stawell Freestone. It is thought that the building was the first air-conditioned commercial building built in Melbourne.



Figure 7. 287-301 Collins Street constructed 1939-41.

*Former Commonwealth Bank of Australia, 219-225 Bourke Street, 1939-41 (VHR H2264; HO990)*

The former Commonwealth Bank of Australia building is architecturally significant as an outstanding and substantially intact example of the Commercial Palazzo type which also reflects the progressive styles of the 1930s: the abstraction of classical elements of the Stripped Classical style, and the dominant vertical expression of the Streamlined Moderne style.



Figure 8. 219-225 Bourke Street constructed 1939-41. (Source: VHD)

137-139 Flinders Lane is an example of an interwar bank, built at a time when new construction materials were favoured but scale and styling was not yet modern. It is unusual in its Gothic revival style amongst a group of classically derived buildings and is of a high integrity in terms of form and scale, like the examples above. It is comparable to both 615-623 Collins Street and 351-357 Elizabeth Street, (examples of interwar bank buildings) both of which are included in an HO.

**ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA**

✓	<p><b>CRITERION A</b> Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p><b>CRITERION B</b> Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p><b>CRITERION C</b> Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p><b>CRITERION D</b> Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
✓	<p><b>CRITERION E</b> Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p><b>CRITERION F</b> Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p><b>CRITERION G</b> Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p><b>CRITERION H</b> Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

**MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME**

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

**OTHER**

137-139 Flinders Lane is also contributory to the Flinders Lane East Precinct.

## REFERENCES

*Age*, as cited.

City of Melbourne Maps (CoMMaps), <http://maps.melbourne.vic.gov.au/>, accessed 20 February 2018.

City of Melbourne Municipal Rate Books (RB), as cited.

Context 2012, *Thematic History: A History of the City of Melbourne's Urban Environment*, prepared for the City of Melbourne.

Fels, M, Lavelle S, and Mider D 1993, 'Archaeological Management Plan', prepared for the City of Melbourne.

*Herald*, as cited.

Mahlstedt, G 1910, *Index to City of Melbourne detail fire survey*, Mahlstedt, Melbourne.

Mahlstedt's Pty Ltd 1925 *City of Melbourne detail fire survey. Section 1*, Mahlstedt Pty Ltd, Melbourne.

Mahlstedt's Pty Ltd 1948 *City of Melbourne detail fire survey. Section 1*, Mahlstedt Pty Ltd, Melbourne.

Melbourne Planning Scheme (MPS), 'Melbourne and its Heritage Precincts', reference document to Clause 22.06 Heritage Precincts Policy of the Melbourne Planning Scheme, <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/heritage-precincts-history-significance.pdf>, accessed 2 February 2018.

*Sands and McDougall, Melbourne and Suburban Directories (S&Mc)*, as cited.

Savill, Barbara 1987, 'First land owners in Melbourne', Royal Historical Society of Victoria, <http://www.historyvictoria.org.au/Early%20Melbourne/First%20Melbourne%20Settlers.html> accessed 23 January 2018.

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**PREVIOUS STUDIES**

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**Central Activities District  
Conservation Study 1985**

D

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**Central City Heritage  
Study 1993**

C

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**Review of Heritage  
overlay listings in the  
CBD 2002**

Ungraded

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**Central City Heritage  
Review 2011**

Ungraded

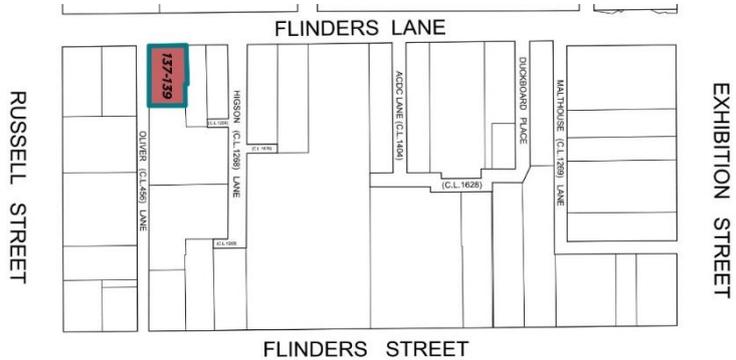
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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**Heritage Place:** Former Bank of New South Wales



**PS ref no:** Interim 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**

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

