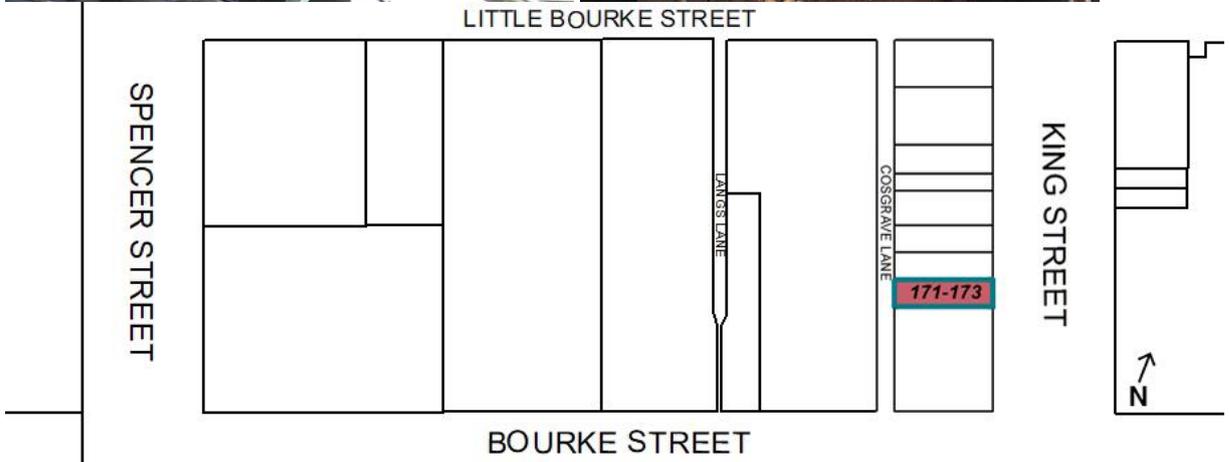


<b>SITE NAME</b>	Warehouse
<b>STREET ADDRESS</b>	171-173 King Street Melbourne
<b>PROPERTY ID</b>	105300



SURVEY DATE: October 2018

SURVEY BY: Context

<b>HERITAGE INVENTORY</b>	H7822-1413	<b>EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY</b>	No
<b>PLACE TYPE</b>	Individual Heritage Place	<b>PROPOSED CATEGORY</b>	Significant
<b>DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:</b>	Not known	<b>FORMER GRADE</b>	C
		<b>BUILDER:</b>	Not known
<b>DEVELOPMENT PERIOD :</b>	Interwar Period (c1919-c1940)	<b>DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:</b>	1922

## 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, Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here.
HISTORIC THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
5 Building a commercial city	5.5 Building a manufacturing capacity
	OTHER SUB-THEMES
	5.3 Developing a large, city-based economy

## LAND USE

HISTORIC LAND USE	
<b>Archaeological block no:</b> 25	<b>Inventory no:</b> 413
<b>Character of Occupation:</b> Residential, Government, Commercial	
In 1855 Commissariat may have extended into this area.	
1866 Cox	Building on street frontage
1880 Panorama	
1888 Mahlstedt	One & two-storey building, Lidstone, Plumber
1905/6 Mahlstedt	One & two-storey building, Lidstone, Plumber and Slin Lee, Laundry.
THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Services
1920s	Warehouses, Banks
1960s	Warehouses, Banks

## 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

171-173 King Street, Melbourne is a three-storey interwar warehouse/factory building constructed in 1922. The building was chiefly occupied by J Creffield Pty Ltd, a firm of map mounters, heliographers and printers, for whom the building was constructed, from 1923 to c1985, and the Commercial Bank of Australia from 1926 to c1970.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### Building a commercial city

#### *Building a manufacturing capacity*

From the 1850s, the Yarra River and the docks west of Swanston Street were in essence the 'lifeline' of the city. Port facilities and large warehouses were built in this area to serve shipping interests (Context 2012:39-40). The discovery of gold in Victoria in the early 1850s facilitated a boom in manufacturing in the 1860s when local firms were established to supply goods for miners and machinery and equipment for gold mining.

With the economic boom of the 1880s, the 1880s-1890s was a decade of significant expansion in Melbourne. Investment funds poured in from Britain, imposing architect-designed buildings were constructed, and speculation reached fever pitch in land and buildings (Marsden 2000:28).

The fringes of north and west Melbourne developed as a mixed area of residential, commercial and industrial uses. Small, sometimes substandard workers' housing was built among the factories that provided employment. Manufacturers expanded in the late nineteenth century, often absorbing the adjacent housing. The city's west end manufacturing progressively expanded north to encompass the blocks between Adderley Street and King Street (MPS:34).

As the Municipal Planning Scheme notes, 'With the local impact of Sands & McDougall at the north end of Spencer Street, a printing, publishing and paper goods district was established in West Melbourne by the end of the nineteenth century'. The city's west end manufacturing progressively expanded north to encompass the blocks between Adderley Street and King Street (MPS:34).

Although affected by World War One in the period 1914-1918, by the end of the 1920s Melbourne's population had reached one million people. In the first decades of the twentieth century, the demand for residential development declined in central Melbourne as many residents moved out of the city to the suburbs, and the booming retail and manufacturing sectors rapidly took up available city properties (Marsden 2000:29-30). Multi-storey workshops, factories and warehouses, many designed by architects, increasingly took over the city centre.

Development in the city slowed with the widespread economic depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s. Because of a lack of finance over this period, instead of new construction, some city buildings were substantially remodelled to create new commercial and industrial spaces.

The printing industry in the city's west was further consolidated in the area with the opening of the Argus Building, from where the Argus newspaper was printed and published, on the corner of La Trobe and Elizabeth streets in 1926.

From the 1930s, like the rest of Australia, an increasing proportion of the city's workforce took up jobs in manufacturing, an industry that led Australia's recovery from the economic depression, when, the *Encyclopedia of Melbourne* notes, a

*steep rise in tariffs, devaluation of the Australian pound, falling wages and electricity costs all made local producers far more competitive internationally. Textiles benefited first, then the metals industries and engineering took over as pacemakers* (Dingle 2008).

After being the centre of manufacturing in Australia in the 1930s, Melbourne's importance in this regard began to decline (Context 2012:35).

From the end of World War Two to the beginning of the 1970s, Melbourne underwent the most sustained growth in its history, mostly based on the manufacturing industry (Tsutsumi and O'Connor:80.3-80.4, 80.11).

*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).

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 2012:41).

## **SITE HISTORY**

The subject site is located on part of Crown Allotment 17, Block 8, offered for sale in 1839 ('Plan of Melbourne' 1838). By 1888, a one- and two-storey building were located on the subject site, and occupied by a Mr Lidstone, plumber. In 1905, the same premises were occupied by Lidstone and Slin Lee; the latter operated a laundry from one of the buildings (Fels, Lavelle and Mider 1993, Inventory no 413).

In 1920, T Gardiner and D J Pemberton & Co advertised a shop and brick building at 171 and 173 King Street, Melbourne for removal, after which a factory for J Creffield Pty Ltd was built in 1922 at a cost of £2,500 (*Age* 23 August 1920:2; MBI 3887). Prior to this, J Creffield Pty Ltd, map mounters, heliographers and contractors to the federal and state governments, operated its business from premises at 493-495 Collins Street, Melbourne (*Argus* 24 August 1916:4). J Creffield Pty Ltd was operating from their new premises at 171 King Street by January of 1923 (*Argus* 4 January 1923:3). The subject building in 1925 can be seen in Figure 1.

J Creffield Pty Ltd was the occupier of 171-173 King Street for over 60 years between 1923 and c1985 (see Figure 3 ) (*Age* 11 May 1985:112). J Creffield Pty Ltd commenced business as map mounters and lithographers in Melbourne in 1888 (CDP 2019). In 1919, the company occupied premises at 493 Collins Street (*Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* 4 December 1919:1815). By 1987 the firm moved its operations to West Melbourne (*Commonwealth of Australia Gazette. Purchasing and Disposals* 19 August 1987:1386).

As map makers, the company held a number of government contracts from 1919 to 1987, including for the production of maps for the Allied forces during World War One (see Figure 3) (*Argus* 24 August 1916:4; CDP 2019; *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* 4 December 1919:1815; *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette. Purchasing and Disposals* 19 August 1987:1386).

The company was able to produce maps and plans from tracings, and sepia copies from original documents (*Argus* 23 April 1921:5). The company also produced maps and plans for education purposes, manufactured to adhere to contemporary school curricula (*Argus* 3 February 1934:4). J Creffield noted in a 1934 advertisement that the company's maps were 'specially recommended by educational authorities for use in all schools' (*Argus* 3 February 1934:4). Architect plans were also produced by the firm.

The ground floor of 171-173 King Street was occupied by the Commercial Bank of Australia for around 44 years between 1926 and c1970 (S&Mc 1926, 1940, 1970). The Commercial Bank of Australia was established in Melbourne in 1866, and by 1891, the Commercial Bank was the largest bank in the colony of Victoria (Cannon 1967:17). At the bank's height in 1893, it occupied large offices at 30 Collins Street, boasted 35,000 customers and operated more than 100 branches throughout Australia (Cannon 1967:109). However, with the depression and banking scandals of the 1890s, the bank became increasingly unstable (Cannon 1967:114). After almost closing twice in ten years, it took over 30 years for the bank to regain financial security (Cannon 1967:114). The opening of the Commercial Bank of Australia branch at the subject site in 1926 coincides with this period of renewed security for the bank.

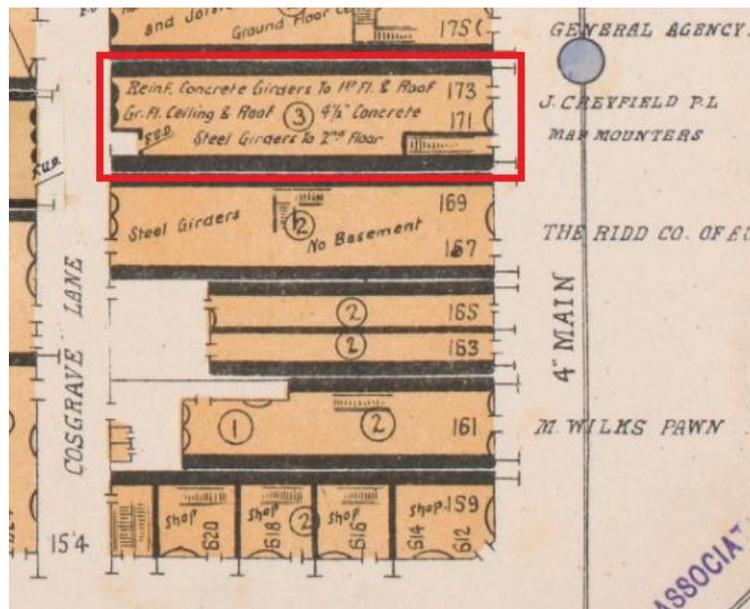


Figure 1. The site as it appeared in 1925. (Source: Mahlsted Map Section 1, no 22, 1925)

After Joseph Creffield died in 1953, his executors advertised the property at 171-173 King Street for sale. Described in a sale notice as a 'substantial three-storey brick building', in that year the ground floor was let to the Commercial Bank of Australia Ltd (addressed as 173 King Street) with J Creffield Pty Ltd occupying the top two floors (addressed as 171 King Street) (*Argus* 7 February 1953:21). This division of tenancies is indicated by the two openings to King Street as seen in Figure 1; 171 King Street was accessed by a staircase while 173 was accessed from street level (Mahlsted Map Section 1, no 22, 1925). The building sold for £14,000 in March 1953 (*Age* 4 March 1953:5).

The Commercial Bank of Australia vacated the building c1970. In 1974 the subject building was occupied solely by J Creffield Pty Ltd (S&Mc 1970, 1974), indicating the proposed sale in 1953 either

did not proceed or Creffield leased the building from the subsequent owner. The subject building was converted to offices in 1974 (CoMMaps).

Four adjoining properties at 171-183 King Street were auctioned in 1982 and purchased by Melbourne Scope Holdings Pty Ltd, a member of the Malaysian-based Garden City group of companies (*Age* 28 April 1982:26; *Age* 23 March 1983:22).

In addition to its occupation of the subject building, the firm operated a showroom in the near vicinity at 165 King Street between 1935 and c1970-74 (S&Mc 1935, 1970, 1974). The company still operates today as Creffield Digital Print, with its business primarily focused on digital printing technologies. The company operates out of West Melbourne, South Melbourne and Geelong (CDP 2019). The entire building at 171-173 King Street was advertised for lease in 1991 (*Age* 27 July 1991:69).

In 1992, the ground level was refurbished and converted into a restaurant, at a cost of \$25,000, and in 2003 the upper levels were converted to a commercial art gallery and studios (MBAI 70670; CoMMaps). The site currently houses one shop and one food outlet (CoMMaps).



Figure 2. The subject site as it appeared in 1984. 'J Creffield' can be seen in gold lettering across the front window, indicating the firm's presence. (Source: Butler 1984 [copyright](#))



Figure 3. A map of European countries during World War One produced by J Creffield Pty Ltd in 1915 (left) and a map showing Australian climatic zones also produced by J Creffield Pty Ltd, in the 1950s, during the operation in the subject building (right). (Source: CDP 2019; J Creffield Pty Ltd 1950s, 'Australian climatic zones', NLA copyright)

## SITE DESCRIPTION

Located on the western side of King Street between Bourke Street and Little Bourke Street, with a rear frontage to Cosgrave Lane, 171-173 King Street, Melbourne comprises a narrow three-storey factory/warehouse building, which was constructed in 1922.

The principal elevation to King Street is of painted (originally unpainted) and partially rendered loadbearing brickwork. The principal elevation is symmetrical, comprising three vertical bays with the prominent central bay substantially wider than the two flanking bays. The style of the building is restrained, but exhibits Free Classical or Romanesque Revival style detailing, which was popular in the early twentieth century, including a strong vertical emphasis with brick columns terminating in semicircular arches constructed with three rows of brick on edge voussoirs, and set back rendered transoms at the first and second floor levels. The building also features other classical motifs such as moulded circular garlands on the spandrels to the flanking bays at the second-floor level, strongly detailed and over scaled brackets supporting a decorative moulded cornice, and a central projecting curved pediment above the low parapet.

The original timber framed windows are extant at the upper levels. The windows to the central bay comprise three sets of vertically proportioned sashes, and the top (second floor) window is in the Diocletian pattern with a semicircular head. The flanking bay windows are narrow timber frame double hung windows, also original. At street level, a contemporary aluminium framed shopfront has replaced the original windows, and the masonry columns have been clad with ceramic tiles. The timber entry door and toplight to the stair appears to be an early element.

The rear elevation to Cosgrave Lane is of plain face brickwork, with a simple horizontal parapet surmounted by what a later plant room structure. This elevation is unusual in that it mirrors in simplified form the three-bay geometry of the King Street elevation terminating in a wide arch. Most of the window openings appear to be original and retain original timber frames and glazing. Some substantial exhaust ducting, air conditioning units and machinery have been fixed to the rear wall.

## INTEGRITY

171-173 King Street is highly intact with few changes visible to the original or early fabric of the building. The building retains its materials and key stylistic details, including pilasters terminating in semicircular arches, original pattern of fenestrations, moulded circular garlands, brackets supporting a

cornice with projecting pediment, recessed transoms at the first and second floor levels, and original timber framed windows. The face brickwork has been overpainted; however, this is reversible. The building also retains original built form and scale. Overall the building has high integrity.

### COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Modestly scaled factory/warehouse buildings constructed in the early interwar period, immediately before reinforced concrete became the preferred material for warehouse construction, were typically built of loadbearing brick, with a minimum of ornamental detailing and classical influences, like their Victorian or Federation period precursors. Many of these early twentieth century buildings have been adapted to house businesses or offices with retail at ground level, resulting in changes at street level.

The following examples in Melbourne are comparable with the subject building at 171-173 King Street, Melbourne, being of a similar use, scale, location or construction date. The images and descriptions are provided by CoM Maps unless stated otherwise, with images dating from c2000 or later.

#### *337-339 La Trobe Street, 1923-24 (HO1208)*

A three-storey face brick warehouse building with classical derived detailing including bricked pilasters and a dentil cornice. It was built for stationers John Dickson & Co. Contrasting lintels topped with squared corbels make features of these wide factory windows.



Figure 4. 337-339 La Trobe Street, built in 1923-24.

*Former Printcraft House, 428-432 Little Bourke Street, 1923 (Recommended as significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review)*

428-432 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne, formerly Printcraft House, was built in 1923 for the Melbourne firm of printers, Brown, Prior & Co, who operated their printing and bookbinding business there for more than 40 years, 1923-66. The four-storey factory/warehouse building was built to a design by architects Gawler & Drummond. In 1966 it was converted to offices.



Figure 5. 428-432 Little Bourke Street, built in 1923.

*Former Veall's Building, 490-494 Elizabeth Street, 1913 & 1927 (HO1150)*

Four-storey rendered brick former factory originally built as three-storey c1913. The building was altered and added with fourth level in 1927, with the ground level converted to retail (RBA 2013:D21-D22).



Figure 6. 490-494 Elizabeth Street, 1913 & 1927. (Source: RBA 2013:D21)

The 1922 brick building at 171-173 King Street is a highly intact example of an early interwar factory/warehouse building constructed in the period immediately before reinforced concrete became the preferred material for warehouse construction, replacing loadbearing brick. It exhibits some elements characteristic of the Romanesque Revival style, which was popular in the late nineteenth

century and at the turn of the century. The more restrained use of Romanesque details for the subject building reflects its later build date and interwar austerity.

As a utilitarian factory/warehouse constructed in the interwar period, it compares well to several examples in central Melbourne. These utilitarian buildings were generally built of loadbearing face brick, with more restrained decoration compared to their Victorian or Federation period precursors, but still retaining some stylistic references to classical motifs generally seen in the parapet details.

The most closely comparable examples are the three-storey building at 337-339 La Trobe Street (HO1208), originally built as a stationery factory in 1923-24, and the four-storey printing factory building at 428-432 Little Bourke Street (recommended as significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review), originally built as a printing factory in 1923. The four-storey factory building (altered to its present form in 1927) at 490-494 Elizabeth Street (HO1150) shares some stylistic features, in terms of the overall configuration of three vertical bays, all terminating in Romanesque styled semicircular arches.

171-173 King Street and all three examples, built in the same period, are indicative of the industrial development during the early interwar period, stimulated by the increased demand for manufacturing premises in central Melbourne after the end of the World War One.

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**ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA**


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✓ **CRITERION A**  
Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

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**CRITERION B**  
Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

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**CRITERION C**  
Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

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✓ **CRITERION D**  
Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

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**CRITERION E**  
Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

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**CRITERION F**  
Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)

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**CRITERION G**  
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).

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✓ **CRITERION H**  
Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

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**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**

N/A

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## PREVIOUS STUDIES

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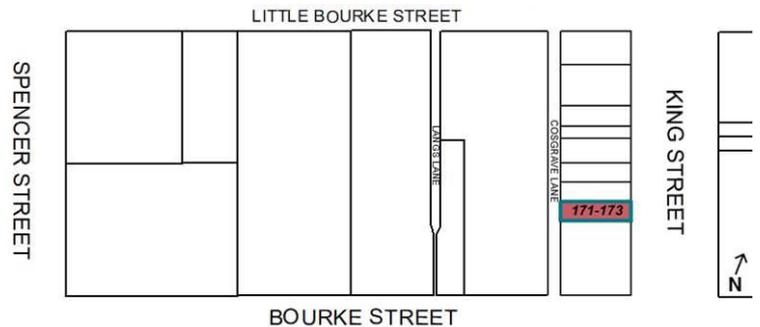
<b>Central Activities District Conservation Study 1985</b>	D
<b>Central City Heritage Study 1993</b>	C
<b>Review of Heritage overlay listings in the CBD 2002</b>	Ungraded
<b>Central City Heritage Review 2011</b>	Ungraded

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Warehouse

PS ref no: HOXXXX

**What is significant?**

171-173 King Street, Melbourne, a three-storey factory/warehouse building built in 1922.

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

- The original building form and scale;
- The original fenestration, including brick pilasters, semicircular arches (King Street and Cosgrave Lane elevations), recessed spandrels, cornice, parapet and pattern of window openings; and
- The original timber frame windows.

Later alterations made to the street level façade, such as the aluminium framed shopfronts, are not significant.

**How it is significant?**

171-173 King Street, Melbourne is of local historic, representative and associative significance to the City of Melbourne.

**Why it is significant?**

The three-storey warehouse building at 171-173 King Street, Melbourne, constructed in 1922 for J Creffield Pty Ltd, map mounters, heliographers and printers, and occupied by that firm until c1985, is historically significant for representing key phase in Melbourne's manufacturing development: the 1920s recovery period (after the 1890s economic depression) when factory and warehouse premises were in increasing demand in the city to house the growing manufacturing industry. 171-173 King Street

demonstrates the historical concentration of businesses connected to the printing, publishing and paper goods industry in the west of the city. (Criterion A)

171-173 King Street is of representative significance, being a highly intact example of an early interwar period factory/warehouse building. Its restrained use of classical and Romanesque details and loadbearing brick construction demonstrate typical characteristics of the early interwar factory/warehouse building constructed in the period immediately before reinforced concrete became the preferred material for warehouse construction, replacing brick. Modestly-scaled factory/warehouses constructed during this period were typically built of loadbearing brick, with the restrained architectural detailing exhibiting classical influences. (Criterion D)

The building is significant for its long association with J Creffield Pty Ltd (1923 to c1985), a prominent firm of map mounters, heliographers and printers, established in Melbourne 35 years earlier in 1888. J Creffield Pty Ltd held a number of government contracts and produced maps for the Allied forces during World War One, as well as maps and plans for educational purposes and for architects. (Criterion H)

#### **Primary source**

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