

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
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
1 Shaping the urban landscape	1.8 Expressing an architectural style 1.10 Brutalism and brickwork
8 Enjoying the city	8.3 Entertainment and socialising

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Coffee palace, temperance hall
1920s	Retail or warehouse, drapers
1960s	Retail, cinema, carpark

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

Hoyts Mid City Cinema, built in 1969-70 and designed by Bogle Banfield, is associated with the increase in leisure and tourism provided in the city centre in the 1960s, and one of several significant brutalist buildings in the City of Melbourne.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The period from 1945 to 1975 was one of radical transformation for Melbourne; from the low-rise city that still reflected its colonial origins to a bustling international centre of commerce and culture. The surviving buildings from this period are evidence of the evolving economic and social conditions in Melbourne at the time and demonstrate the city's transition from its nineteenth century manufacturing origins to its current banking, office and service industry focus. These buildings reflect the increasing commercial and cultural role of Melbourne in the international context of globalisation and postwar optimism as well as a radically altered economic environment which saw an influx of foreign capital and ideas. Collectively, these buildings represent a transformative period in the life of the city; a period that is categorised by significant change, growth and evolution across all aspects of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

Expressing an architectural style in the postwar period

Multi-storey commercial buildings made a significant contribution to postwar Melbourne, particularly from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. With the resumption of building construction in the 1950s after the hiatus of World War II, the advent of curtain wall construction – enabling the application of a non-load bearing skin to the face of a building – radically altered the appearance of the modern city commercial building.

Constructed predominantly for the financial and business sectors, there was an eagerness amongst clients to establish a dominant city presence and to project a modern, progressive and prestigious approach to commercial building design. The resulting Post-War Modernist style of multi-storey buildings, influenced particularly by steel and glass office tower design in the United States, were in stark contrast to the pre-war city buildings in central Melbourne and presented architects of the day with a completely new design challenge.

Thirty major city buildings were completed in Melbourne in four years alone from 1955 to 1958 and 22 were office buildings within, or on the fringes of, the CBD (Saunders 1959:91). Largely influenced by the American skyscraper, the earliest office buildings of the 1950s utilised innovative curtain walling, formed from continuous metal-framing filled principally with glass. The curtain wall is described by Miles Lewis as 'essentially a continuous, non-bearing skin on the face of a building' and is one of the 'leitmotifs of modernism, both in Australia and overseas' (Lewis 2012:185). The curtain walled 'glass box' aesthetic was embraced by the local architects, and many buildings followed to the extent that high-rise office buildings with curtain walling became a defining characteristic of the new buildings in the latter half of the 1950s (NTAV 2014:5-6).

Amongst the first curtain walled buildings to be constructed in Melbourne was the 13-storey glass-fronted Gilbert Court at 100 Collins Street (J A La Gerche 1954-56), which was built to the height limit of 132 feet (40m), and – perhaps the most influential – the free-standing ICI House, 1 Nicholson Street (Bates Smart & McCutcheon 1955-58). Located on the outskirts of the Hoddle Grid, ICI House was clad on all four facades with glass curtain walling and exceeded the well-established maximum building height within the Hoddle Grid. Large numbers of similarly designed city commercial buildings followed, often displaying bold horizontal contrast between alternating rows of glazing and coloured spandrels.

Brutalism and brickwork

Brutalism was another architectural style that emerged in commercial building design in Australia as early as 1959, when Harry Seidler used off-form concrete for an eight-storey office block in Ultimo, NSW. That same year, Melbourne architect Kevin Knight (from the office of Oakley & Parkes) prepared plans for the International Order of Oddfellows (IOOF) Building at 380 Russell Street, Melbourne that broke new ground with its banded façade of reinforced concrete spandrels.

Based on the work of modern architecture pioneer Le Corbusier, and largely inspired by his design for the *Unité d'Habitation* in Marseilles (1952), this architectural style became widely accepted internationally. Brutalism incorporated ideas of integrity in expression of materials (especially off-form concrete), structure and function, and often gave rise to dramatic sculptural forms (VHD Hoyts Cinema Centre).

Brutalism became more widespread in central Melbourne in the 1970s. The Mid City Centre at 194-200 Bourke Street (Bogle & Banfield, 1969-70), is a notable example, with its façade of chamfered concrete volumes.

During the 1960s and 70s, face brickwork also made a return with the Houston Building at 184-192 Queen Street (E & G Kolle & Associates, 1964-65), the State Savings Bank of Victoria, 233-243 Queen Street (Godfrey & Spowers, Hughes Mewton & Lobb, 1967-68) and the 13-storey Nubrik House at 269-275 William Street by architects Buchan, Laird & Buchan (1972) (NTAV 2014:22).

Entertainment and socialising

The retail and entertainment precincts in Melbourne, which emerged in the early 1960s, were largely protected from consolidation and redevelopment due to lower plot ratio controls and difficulty in consolidating a sufficient number of properties to achieve a legitimate tower form. The level of redevelopment in these precincts is more modest, with fine grained, smaller sized allotments along with valued heritage fabric. During this phase, conservation of heritage buildings was not yet an intentional pursuit, but rather a residual effect of the prevailing logic of the planning system (CoM 2016:5-7).

Higher disposable income, more leisure time, and larger metropolitan populations created an increase in entertainment and tourism industries in every Australian capital city. According to Marsden, only the office and finance sector has had more impact on the physical expansion and alteration of existing places, especially in central Sydney and Melbourne. Even though increased suburbanisation from the 1950s led to the closure of entertainment venues and theatres in Melbourne's city centre, other venues opened. In 1970, for example, Hoyts Cinema Centre in Bourke Street opened the first multi-cinema complex in Australia.

Clubs have also historically been an important part of city life. The Lyceum Club for women built new premises at 2-18 Ridgway Place in 1959 while new clubrooms for the RACV Club were built at 123 Queen Street in 1961. Such places provided patrons with a space in the city to meet, network and promote cultural activities.

SITE HISTORY

Hoyts Pictures formed in 1909, commenced screenings at St. George's Hall, Bourke Street, (later, Hoyts De Luxe), and gradually built up their empire of cinemas. Initially an Australian company, their

success at creating exhibiting venues attracted Hollywood's interest and 20th Century Fox's acquisition of a controlling share meant that a cartel was formed between film exhibitor and maker.

Meanwhile, the company built up a suburban chain of over 40 outlets during the period 1920-40, which remained active until the first drive-ins in 1953 and the advent of television, in 1956. A subsequent reduction of hardtop cinema audiences caused a rationalisation of large single-screen cinemas. The original Capitol (2200 seats) was rebuilt in the 1960s, the Regent (3200 seats) and Plaza and Paris (former Lyceum) closed in 1969-70.

Mid City was not a Hoyts' project. Architect and entrepreneur, Gordon Banfield, and the company, Ralton Holdings, developed two cinemas (932 and 250 seats), a shopping arcade and a car park (entered from Little Bourke St) to the 1969 design of Bogle & Banfield, as constructed by E A Watts Pty Ltd. The Hoyts company was approached as potential lessees and after fitting out the interior, opened with a crowd of 5000 in November 1970. The Hoyts Cinema Centre had already opened the year before, almost completing the company's rationalisation of their City Cinemas from old venues to new. Expectations that a third cinema would be incorporated in the Mid City complex were realised in December 1975, when part of the once vast upper level foyer space was taken up for an 'intimate' 220 seat venue. Bogle & Banfield and Dolphin were the architects and builders.

Another phase of the Theatre's development was superficial renovations, designed by Melbourne architect, Ronald Fitch, in 1979, while the retail arcade, which had never been prosperous, was refurbished in 1977-8.



Figure 1. Mid City Cinemas, constructed 1969-70, photo date unknown. (Source: National Trust)

Bogle & Banfield Associates, architects

Bogle & Banfield Associates was a partnership formed between Gordon Douglas Banfield (1922-2007) and Alan Bogle (1902-1976). Bogle was articled to Louis Williams of North and Williams and later worked with Irwin and Stephenson. In 1945, he joined the influential practice of Harry Norris. Banfield worked in Queensland before also joining Norris' office in 1954, entering partnership with Banfield in 1959. The practice flourished until Bogle's retirement in 1968 after which Banfield became

a large player in property in the city of Melbourne. The work of the practice was characterised by bold and confident buildings including the use of Brutalism (Goad and Willis eds. 2012:95).

In the tradition of new cinemas, Mid City struck a more adventurous note than contemporary city commercial buildings, freed from the needs of fenestration or natural light. Bogle and Banfield's core of designers and project architects (later as the firms PINK and Joyce & Nankevill) had already shown an innovative approach to design in the Japanese Brutalist Total Car park building, Russell Street, and the striking St. Vincent's Private Hospital, Victoria Parade. Bogle & Banfield had won prizes for their Sandown Racecourse Grandstand (1962) and they also designed the former City of Doncaster Municipal Offices in 1970.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Mid City Cinemas extends from Bourke Street through to Little Bourke Street. Opening to Bourke Street is the cinema and retail frontage, whilst Little Bourke Street was designed as a carpark entrance, now partially infilled by a retail frontage. The building is designed in the brutalist style that emerged in the 1950s. Brutalism might loosely be characterised as a desire to achieve aesthetic effect through the deliberately frank expression of building construction, materials and technology,

Mid City Cinemas has a sculptural form and uses an exposed off-form concrete finish. An early use of the now ubiquitous trowelled-on aggregate finish, the architects used a red oxide applied front and back in a rich burst of colour in contrast to the natural concrete of the side walls. Where needed, windows are recessed behind concrete louvres at the top and bottom of each elevation, forming a deliberate contrasting element.

The Bourke Street awning is supported on two deep paired cantilevered beams. Of a similar scale to adjoining buildings and neutral in a fenestration sense, the rich colouring and bold forms of Mid City are a marked contrast within the commercial streetscape.

INTEGRITY

Unusually smart for a car park entrance, the Little Bourke Street elevation originally had large areas of curved butt-glazing and, as a focal point, a space-age yellow bubble Cashier's Office guarded car park entry and exit (now gone) which was also used at the Total Carpark. Fashionable fittings and materials like Pirelli rubber were used here and in the arcade beyond (now demolished).

At the Bourke Street end of the lobby, for a brief period, there was an unusual group of interlocked mushroom coloured cylinders which served as offices, (now demolished), while the Theatres themselves were austere, if comfortably, finished.

The glazed balustrade is an addition to the cantilevered verandah, as is the glazing that has replaced concrete louvres. Inside there were the spacious lobby areas where the 'floating' roof plane hovered with lights dotted like stars, however these lobbies are since altered. Signs have been added and details altered on the exterior and interior.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

There are currently two State-listed brutalist buildings in the City of Melbourne, one of which is also a cinema complex.

Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-144 Bourke Street, 1966-69 (VHR H2335; HO1094)

Designed by architect Peter Muller, the Former Hoyts Cinema Centre introduced the first multi-cinema complex to Victoria and consequently has an important association with the development of the cinema industry in the State. The Former Hoyts Cinema Centre is of architectural significance as a highly innovative and individualistic building with a distinctive tower which dominates the overall design. It is unique in Victoria (Victorian Heritage Database Place ID 196067).



Figure 2. Hoyts Cinema Centre, 134-144 Bourke Street constructed 1966-69. (Source: VHD)

Total House, 170-190 Russell Street, 1964-65 (VHR H2329; HO1095, HO507 Little Bourke Street Precinct)

Total House is a landmark of post-World War Two modernist design and is one of the earliest and best expressions of Brutalist architecture in Victoria built in 1964-65 to a design by architects Bogle & Banfield Associates. Brutalism incorporated ideas of the integrity of expression of materials, structure and function. Total House reflects these ideals in differentiating the functional parts of the building and the 'honest' display of its materials and structure. Total House is also an outstanding example of Japanese influence on architecture in Victoria in the postwar period (Victorian Heritage Database Place ID 194652).



Figure 3. Total House 170-190 Russell Street constructed 1964-65. (Source: VHD)

Hoyts Mid City Cinemas is a later building than the two examples provided, however it is a representative example of brutalism and its external integrity is still regarded as fair. Mid City Cinema has been identified as significant in three heritage reviews of the Capital City Zone over a 20-year period.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>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).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H 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	Yes
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

Paint controls should be applied to the areas now painted in red-oxide.

REFERENCES

Contextual History references contained within City of Melbourne Hoddle Grid Heritage Review: Postwar Thematic Environmental History 1945-1975

Marsden, Susan 2000, *Urban Heritage: the rise and postwar development of Australia's capital city centres*, Australian Council of National Trusts and Australian Heritage Commission, Canberra.

National Trust of Australia (Victoria), 2014, Melbourne's Marvellous Modernism, a Comparative Analysis of Modern Architecture in Melbourne's CBD 1955-1975.

The following sources and data were used for this assessment (Graeme Butler, 2011). Note that the citation prepared in 2011 did not provide in text referencing.

General sources

Historic Buildings Preservation Council reports on the Melbourne Central Business District from the 1970s;

Melbourne City Council on-line i-Heritage database;

Mahlstedt fire insurance map series held in the State Library of Victoria collection and Melbourne University Archives;

Daily newspaper reports such as 'The Argus';

Australian Architecture Index (AAI), prepared by Professor Miles Lewis and others;

Melbourne City Council building application drawings and files held at Melbourne City Council and the Victorian Public Records Office.

Building Permit Applications

18/7/1969 40693 New Building \$1,309,000

14/4/1975 45610 est. \$120,000 'A Cinema' (194-200)

26/2/1976 46540 \$6000 alterations to ground floor (200)

Peter Wallace, 1986, Hoyts Corporation Pty. Ltd. Letter to Graeme Butler: Opening 26/11/1970 (see 'The Age' 27/11/1970: 2) 5000 attend opening

National Trust of Australia (Vic)

File Number B6566 File only

'Venue' web site, <http://caarp.flinders.edu.au/venue/424/view>

References

Goad, P. and Wills, J., 2012, *The Encyclopaedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press

Cinema & Theatre Historical Society 1997, Cinema index: Melbourne cinemas, suburban cinemas, Victorian drive-ins. CATHS, Victoria.

Kilderry, D: <http://www.driveinsdownunder.com.au/projectionbooths/midcitybox.htm>

Walters, T 2009, *The Picture Palaces of Melbourne*, p. 235¹

Sands & McDougall Melbourne

Where required directory extracts were obtained chiefly from *Sands & McDougall Melbourne* or Victorian Directories dating from the 1850s to 1974.

1974

194-204 Mid-City Pharmacy

194-204 Mid-City Cinemas 4 & 5

194-204 Mid-City Shopping Centre: lists numerous retailers in centre.

(D1961 200-204 Sharpe Brothers Pty. Ltd. drapers)

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** B

**Central City Heritage
Study Review 1993** C

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

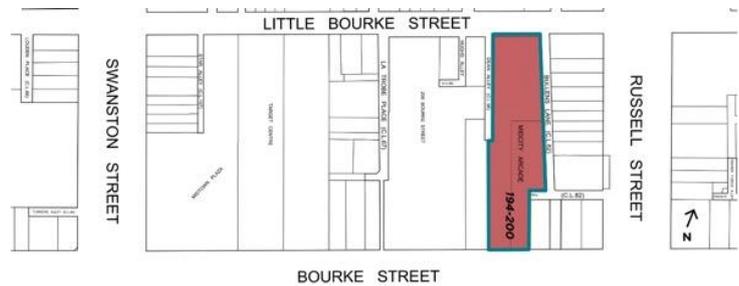
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** B

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Hoyts Mid City
Cinemas



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

Hoyts Mid City Cinemas at 194-200 Bourke Street, Melbourne, built 1969-70 and designed by Bogle & Banfield architects.

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 made to the street and first floor levels are not significant.

How it is significant?

Hoyts Mid City Cinemas at 194-200 Bourke Street is of historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

Hoyts Mid City Cinema is historically significant as part of the increase in leisure and tourism provided in Melbourne, as the city became a place of entertainment made possible by higher disposable incomes and more leisure time from the 1960s. The establishment of Mid City and the Cinema Centre marked a turning point to more modern and intimate cinemas, following the closure of the large picture theatres of the interwar period. The Bourke Street location of the cinema followed over 120 years of the traditional siting of theatres in Melbourne. (Criterion A)

Hoyts Mid-City Cinemas is a representative example of a small class of brutalist buildings in the City of Melbourne. Popularised by architects in the mid-1960s, brutalism as a movement persisted until the late

1980s. Architects Bogle & Banfield Associates provided two of the best examples of brutalism in Melbourne with Total House and the Mid City Cinemas. With Peter Muller's Hoyts Cinema Centre as an early and particularly large-scale example, these three buildings provide an excellent record of this movement. Both the Mid City and the Hoyts Cinema Centre are stylistically distinctive designs among the small number of new cinemas built in the postwar period. (Criterion D)

Hoyts Mid-City Cinemas is significant for its sculptural form that is highlighted by the red-oxide colour that contrasts with the off-form concrete of the side walls. As a building requiring little natural light, the brutalist architecture of the cinema complex relies primarily on an articulation of solid form. The slim concrete vertical louvres in front of the glazing are a contrast to the solid mass of the main part of the building. (Criterion E)

Primary source

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