

FORMER PORT OF MELBOURNE AUTHORITY BUILDING



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1 former port of melbourne authority building market street melbourne front view sep1978



former port of melbourne authority building market street melbourne side view mar1980



former port of melbourne authority building market street melbourne detail of entry



h00965 former port of melbourne authority building exterior she project 2003



h00965 plan h0965

Location

29-31 MARKET STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0965

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO723

VHR Registration

July 27, 1977

Amendment to Registration

June 17, 1993

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - December 20, 1999

What is significant?

The Former Port of Melbourne Authority Building is a nine storey structure erected by Hansen and Yuncken in 1929-1931 to a design by Sydney Smith, Ogg and Serpell. The base and entrance surrounds are of polished Harcourt Granite, while the rest of the building was constructed of Stawell Stone on a steel frame. Arched windows extend through the first and second floors and are topped with a fanlight treatment and decorated with diagonal steel mullions and a bronze spandrel panel at first floor level. The second floor functions as a plinth for the next four ionic-ordered storeys. There are four columns, passing through the four floors, to each of the Market Street and Flinders Lane facades. The eighth floor facade is represented as a frieze with alternating windows and decorative panels representing metopes and triglyphs. The refined detailing of the exterior is replicated in the interior, which features Doric columns and extensive use of marble. The building was occupied by the Port Authority until 1982, when the former State Electricity Commission took over. It was converted to a hotel in 1999-2000.

How is it significant?

The Former Port of Melbourne Authority Building is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Former Port of Melbourne Authority Building is of architectural significance as one of the most accomplished examples in Melbourne of 20th century Beaux-Arts-influenced Greek revival architecture. The Beaux-Arts style was relatively uncommon in Australia, tending to be reserved for large, monumental commissions, often of government buildings. The monumental elements characteristic of the style 'the giant order, strongly expressed base storey, and expertly executed classical motifs and details' are all clearly evident in this building. It is also rather unusual in that it is a stone faced building, in comparison to more common brick and stucco examples. The former Port Authority Building is also architecturally significant as one of the best finished buildings in Melbourne, with the internal and external detailing demonstrating particularly outstanding craftsmanship and the notable application of decorative schemes and materials in construction. This particularly includes the elaborate use of marble and wood panelling in the ground floor entrance, lift lobby and office area, and on the first floor, including the Board Room and Commissioner's Office, along with the external use of polished granite and Stawell stone. The building's architectural worth was recognised soon after its completion, when it won the 1933 Royal Victorian Institute of Architects' Street Architecture Medal.

The Former Port of Melbourne Authority Building is of architectural significance as a distinguished example of the work of Sydney Smith, Ogg and Serpell, one of the leading exponents of the Beaux-Arts style in Australia, but also designers of a diverse range of buildings between 1910 and 1936. The firm's partners also had productive careers individually and in other partnerships.

The Former Port of Melbourne Authority Building is of historical significance as an important element in the old centre of Melbourne's maritime industry. The building is adjacent to the Old Customs House, their location a reminder of the fact that Melbourne's port facilities originally extended much further upstream than they do now. The grand and imposing character of the building reflects the importance of the Harbour Authority and the port that it managed to Melbourne's commercial and maritime development. This importance was accentuated during the building's construction, during the Great Depression, when projects of such scale were valuable contributors to economic activity and employment.

Permit Exemptions

General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must [notify](#) the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

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|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Construction dates | 1929, |
| Architect/Designer | Sydney Smith, Ogg & Serpell, |
| Heritage Act Categories | Registered place, |
| Other Names | PORT AUTHORITY BUILDING, |
| Hermes Number | 787 |
| Property Number | |

History

Contextual History:History of Place:

This site was occupied for about fifty years, until 1913, by the head office of the Melbourne Savings Bank. It was purchased by the Melbourne Harbour Trust in 1913 and the former bank building was used by the Trust until the construction of the present building.

Australian materials and craftsmen were used wherever possible in the construction of the building. It was one of 17 buildings erected between 1922 and 1933 that reached the 132 foot Melbourne City Council height limit. The height limit was breached in 1955 by the ICI building in East Melbourne.

Associated People: Owner PORT AUTHORITY; Assoc.People PORT AUTHORITY

Extent of Registration

AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 965.

Former Port Authority Building, 29-31 Market Street, Melbourne.

To the extent of:

1. The whole of the building known as the former Port Authority Building marked B1 on Plan 6026293 (A), endorsed by the Chairperson, Historic Buildings Council and held by the Director, Historic Buildings Council.
 2. All of the land contained in Certificate of Title Volume 9481, Folio 849 marked L2 on Plan 6026293 (A), endorsed by the Chairperson, Historic Buildings Council and held by the Director, Historic Buildings Council.
- [*Victoria Government Gazette* No. G23 17 June 1993 pp.1561-1562]

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>