
CHARLES STEELE & CO. PRINTING FACTORY (FORMER)



Former Charles Steele & Co.
Company Factory - 9-27
Michael Street, Brunswick



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Location

9-27 MICHAEL STREET,, BRUNSWICK VIC 3056 - Property No 5900

Municipality

MERRI-BEK CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO386

Heritage Listing

Merri-bek City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is significant?

This red brick Streamlined Moderne building comprises a two-storey hip-roofed office block with a single-storey sawtooth-roofed production area to the rear. Its street frontage is articulated by alternating band of graduated

brown brickwork and strip windows with rendered spandrels, punctuated by a projecting and off-centre rendered bay with a recessed entry porch. Designed by industrial specialists Alder & Lacey, it was built in 1935 for Chas Steele & Company, a well-established printing firm that occupied the premises for the next 45 years.

How is it significant?

The former Chas Steele & Company factory is of aesthetic and architectural significance to the City of Moreland.

Why is it significant?

Aesthetically, the factory is significant as a particularly fine and intact example of the Streamlined Moderne style of the later 1930s, as applied to a large industrial/commercial building (*AHC Criterion F.1*). The articulation of the facade as series of horizontal bands, and the contrasting vertical element of the entry porch, are typical of that style; the deliberate laying of bricks to create a subtly graduated tone is more unusual, and imparts a particularly distinctive character to the facade. Although the facade has been altered by extensions to the east (in a matching style) and by replacement of original multi-paned windows with larger sashes, these changes are not unsympathetic. The building remains a prominent landmark in Michael Street (*AHC Criterion E.1*).

Architecturally, the building is significant as a fine example of the work of Alder & Lacey, architects and consulting engineers, who were one of Melbourne's leading designers of modern-style factory from the mid-1930s (*AHC Criterion H.1*). Although the firm designed numerous factories in the industrial inner suburbs (eg Carlton, South Melbourne and Richmond), only one other example has been identified in the City of Moreland: the slightly earlier Lattner Hat factory at 20 Dawson Street, Brunswick. Although similar in many ways, the latter's street frontage is rather less assured in its articulation and detailing, leaving the Chas Steele & Co building as the best recorded example of the work of Alder & Lacey in the municipality.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Moreland - Brunswick MAC Heritage Analysis and Review, Context Pty Ltd, 2007;
Architect/Designer	Alder & Lacey,
Other Names	Gordon Brothers Refrigeration,
Hermes Number	104669
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The former Chas Steele & Co factory is a large brick building comprising a two-storey hip-roofed office block with a sprawling single-storey sawtooth-roofed production area at the rear. Typical of the 1930s, the office block has a streamlined expression, with a facade divided into alternating bands solid (wall) and void (window). The upper walls are of salt-glazed brown bricks, with courses laid from lighter to darker tones to create a graduated effect, and enlivened by recessed courses in a contrasting yellow Roman brick. The intervening window bands contain tripartite bays of anodised metal-framed fixed and awning sashes (which have replaced the original multi-paned steel-framed sashes), which alternate with recessed rendered spandrels. With the additions made to the eastern end of the office block, the street facade is no longer symmetrical. These additions, designed in a matching style and virtually indistinguishable from the original building, have identical fenestration and, at the ground floor, a vehicle entrance with a steel roller shutter.

The rendered entrance bay, although now off-centre, still remains the dominant element to the street frontage. As a deliberate foil to the streamlined expression of the remainder of the facade, this has a strong vertical thrust. Rising up above the parapet line, the bay is articulated as a series of stepped and overlapping planes, further enlivened by splayed mouldings. The recessed entrance porch has stepped reveals, a projecting hood and terrazzo steps and paving. While the original double entry doors have been replaced by modern metal-framed glazed counterparts, the ornate mild steel grille gates are original. Above the porch is a tall rectangular window

with elongated fixed sash windows (replacing the original multi-paned sashes) and, at the parapet line, a wallmounted flagstaff. To the left of the entrance bay, a second entrance has been cut into the wall.

While an interior inspection of the building has not been undertaken as part of this assessment, the entry foyer and boardroom of the office block are said to remain in an intact condition.

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/>