

# FORMER VICTORIA CAR PARK



FORMER VICTORIA CAR PARK SOHE 2008



H02001 1 former victoria carpark little collins



H02001 former victoria carpark russell st1



H02001 former victoria carpark interior



h02001 former victoria carpark skyline



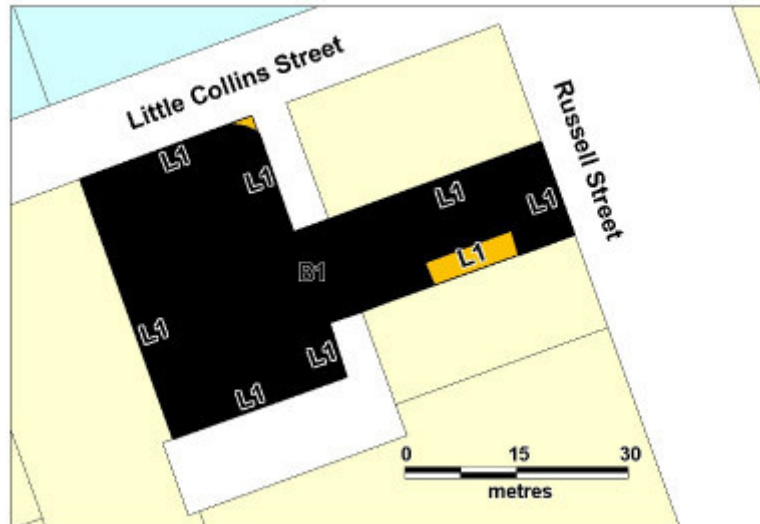
Former Victoria Carpark



H02001 former victoria carpark little collins



h02001 former victoria carpark



H02001 former victoria carpark plan

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## Location

103-107 RUSSELL STREET and 181-191 LITTLE COLLINS STREET MELBOURNE, Melbourne City

## Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2001

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO919

## VHR Registration

October 17, 2002

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - October 16, 2002

What is significant?

The Former Victoria Car Park was constructed in 1938 in reinforced concrete to a design by noted Melbourne architect Marcus Barlow for the Victoria Car Park Investments Ltd. Built in two distinct sections of four storeys, one facing Russell Street, the other facing Little Collins Street, the facades are in a restrained streamlined style, designed to look like an office or warehouse. The Russell Street facade has strip windows, contrasted with a vertical element, capped by a small square tower, and the car entry/exit at the ground level. The rear section, facing Little Collins Street, has horizontal windows, with a vertical curved corner element, includes long ramps with quarter-circle ends to access each floor. The painted off-form concrete interior includes space for 400 cars. On the ground floor there are two shops facing Russell Street and five facing Little Collins Street.

It was used as a car park until 1944. During World War II, the building was used by the Department of Labour and National Service and the Australian Women's Land Army and by a number of other government departments and agencies. Its conversion into office space for government presumably resulted from wartime demand for office accommodation and a reduced need for car parking in Melbourne because of petrol rationing. The building was later known as the State Government Annex, and included the architectural office for the Public Works Department, the Housing Commission and the Council of Adult Education. A car servicing and washing space remained on the ground floor, with car parking space in the basement used as the Public Works Department garage. The conversion of the building, which became known as the State Government Annex, for office space with a caretaker's flat, was designed by Percy Everett, Chief Architect of the Public Works Department in 1949.

When built, the car park was located in a small precinct very much given over to the motor car. The south-west corner of of Russell and Little Collins Street was occupied by Standard Motors, motor car agents. The south east corner was taken up by Preston Motors, and there were ground level parking allotments in Little Collins Street. The car sales industry was still predominantly a luxury trade and these businesses and the new car park were strategically located in the central business district close to the top end of Collins Street. The place was therefore in one of the heartlands of wealthier Victorians who were more likely to be car owners and who frequented the quarter with its private clubs, theatres and cinemas, consulting rooms for leading medical specialists, exclusive shops and department stores, Town Hall and prominent churches. It was within easy reach of Bourke Street and Parliament House.

Its early demise as a car park may be attributed to several factors, including the possibility of design shortcomings and poor commercial judgement, but more particularly to the great reduction in car usage from early in the war, which failed to make the building profitable to its owners. The building was leased to the government and most of it was converted into office accommodation (the ground floor and basement of the Little Collins Street remaining as a garage and car servicing areas).

The Former Victoria Car Park is the earliest multi-storey car park constructed in Melbourne. In other States, multi-storey car parks came later. In Sydney, the first multi-storey car park in the central city was under construction in 1955. All the other capital cities had yet to construct multi-level car parks in the 1950s, relying on off- street ground-level parking lots and street parking.

How is it significant?

The Former Victoria Car Park is historically and architecturally significant to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Former Victoria Car Park is historically significant in the history of motoring in Victoria as the first building purpose-designed as a multi-storey commercial car park in Melbourne, different in kind to previous garages and pre-dating the next multi-storey example by fifteen years. Its construction was a direct commercial or speculative response to an emerging need and opportunity for large scale parking facilities in the city area prior to World War II. Its construction marks a point that had been reached where motor car traffic had outgrown the capacity of the city to deal with it efficiently. It was for Melbourne a precursor of the post-war period when commercial provision of large volumes of off-street parking became essential to economic well being and growth of the Central Business District and the wider city area. At the same time, in its original conception and design, it demonstrated some clear differences between motoring before and after the war.

The architecture and fabric of the building, while undistinguished in the broader context, are of sufficient quality and intactness to demonstrate the historical significance. They were appropriate in scale and design to complement the quality of neighbouring buildings while the structure on Little Collins Street was able unambiguously to proclaim its purpose. The original design, which had some cubersome and impractical elements and was soon outmoded by developments in car park architecture, nevertheless seemed appropriate to the

needs of the time and contained some ingenious solutions to a confined and irregular space.

## Permit Exemptions

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.

General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.

General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.

General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

Building Exterior:

- \* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- \* Painting of previously painted surfaces (but not signs), in the same colour.
- \* Treatments to stabilise and protect timber, masonry and metal structures.

Building Interior:

- \* Painting
- \* signage
- \* Maintenance and emergency works to electrical, mechanical and hydraulic services.

Construction dates	1938,
Architect/Designer	Barlow, Marcus,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	Calder Car Park, State Offices, State Offices Annex, Scots Church Car Park, Victoria Car Park,
Hermes Number	12496
Property Number	

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## History

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY:

The motor car, invented at the end of the nineteenth century, began to appear in greater numbers in the first decade of the twentieth century. Ownership of a motor car was at first restricted to the very wealthy. Cars did not become a common sight in Melbourne until after World War I. A massive growth in car ownership occurred in the 1920s, from 99, 270 registrations in 1921 to 571,471 in 1930. (The Motor Garage and Service Station in Victoria; A Survey. 1997, p. 8)

The construction of structures to cater for the motor car, such as roadways and freeways, bridges, flyovers, domestic garages, car manufacturing plants, car showrooms, petrol stations, service stations and car parks, attests to the enormous societal changes brought by the motor car in the twentieth century.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENTS

The Garage Ponthieu in Paris designed by Auguste Perret in 1906 was constructed in reinforced concrete with vast panels of glass covering the facade. (Architecture, p. 101)

PARKING STATIONS

Parking garages were a new architectural challenge in the 1920s and 1930s, particularly in the crowded cities of Europe and New York. This led to basement parking in new developments and the development of structures built solely for the purpose of parking cars.

A multi-level garage in Berlin was built in 1925 in which lifts took the cars to the upper floors where they were driven to their boxes. At about the same time a ramp garage was constructed in Stuttgart. In the United States the first multi-level ramped car park was constructed in Winston-Salem, North Carolina in 1926. The systematic construction of parking stations began shortly after World War II when the car industry flooded the market.

In the 1940s, underground car parks were being constructed in the United States, as at Union Square in San Francisco in 1942.

Australia

Kerbside parking was free in Melbourne until the introduction of parking meters in the 1950s (Miles

Lewis. Melbourne: History and Development not found). Pressure on these places was sufficient to induce those prepared to pay to press for off street car parking.</p><p class="c1">In other States, multi-storey car parks came later. In Sydney, the first multi-storey car park in the central city was under construction in 1955. All the other capital cities had yet to construct multi-level car parks, but relied on off- street ground-level parking lots and street parking. (Car Parking in the City of Melbourne. Melbourne, City Development Association, 1955. p.19)</p><p class="c2">HISTORY OF PLACE</p><p class="c1">Former Victoria Car Park was constructed in 1938 to a design by noted Melbourne architect Marcus Barlow for the Victoria Car Park Investments Ltd. Built in two distinct sections, one facing Russell Street, the other facing Little Collins Street, the facades are in a restrained streamlined style, designed to look like an office or warehouse. The Russell Street facade has strip windows, contrasted with a vertical element, capped by a small square tower, and the car entry/exit at the ground level. The rear section, facing Little Collins Street, has horizontal windows, with a vertical curved corner element, includes long ramps with quarter-circle ends to access each floor. The painted off-form concrete interior includes space for 400 cars.</p><p class="c1">By August 1938 the first two floors were being used for parking and the rest opened in early 1939. The building was used as a car park for 400 cars until 1944 when it was converted into office space for the Commonwealth and State Government, presumably because of wartime demand for office accommodation and a reduced need for car parking in Melbourne because of petrol rationing. At first the building was used partly as office space for the Department of Labour and National Service, the State Emergency Services and storage for the Australian Women's Land Army. It was later known as the State Government Annex, which included the office for the Architects' Department of the Public Works Department under the Chief Architect Percy Everett. The conversion to office space was designed by Everett c. 1949. A car servicing and washing space remained on the ground floor and car parking in the basement as the Public Works Department garage. In 1949 as part of the conversion to the State Offices, Everett designed a three bedroom caretaker's flat for the building under the ramps with an entrance from the third floor and a roof garden. (Australian Home Beautiful, March 1950, pp.27, 77) In 1964, the building was refitted to accommodate the Mining Museum. The caretaker's flat was presumably removed when the building reverted to a car park in 1988.</p><p class="c1">The building was used as accommodation for various government departments and bodies from 1944 to 1988. </p>

## **Extent of Registration**

1. The building marked B1 on Diagram Number 2001 held by the Executive Director.
- 2.All the land marked L1 on Diagram Number 2001 held by the Executive Director

*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/>*