
Former BP House

Location

1 - 29 Albert Road,, MELBOURNE VIC 3004 - Property No B6314

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

State

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

Built from 1962 - 64, BP House, is of state significance as an example of the changing international perceptions by 1960 of the International Style tower.

Designed by architect, Anthony B Armstrong, for the Melbourne firm of R.S. Demaine, Russell, Trundle, Armstrong & Orton Pty Ltd., the twenty-one storey tower marks the move in Melbourne away from the International Style 'box' form and the thinness of the curtain wall to a more monumental, sculptural solution. The whole building follows the arc of the site, the sculptural expressiveness similar to the AMP Head Office Building, Sydney, completed in 1962 with its heavy concrete balconies and recessed fenestration. BP House clearly contrasts with the curtain wall and rectangular forms of Melbourne's notable ICI tower, completed in 1960. At the same time BP House makes a regional contribution to the tower form through the use: of balconies as sunscreening to counteract local climatic conditions: of Ballarat bricks for facing internally and externally and the extensive use internally of Australian and exotic timbers.

The building shows its acknowledged debt to the work and philosophy of Frank Lloyd Wright, and the affinity with Scandinavian architecture. The extension of the western red cedar cladding of the lobby ceiling to the soffit of the first floor balcony is unusual in a Melbourne office building of this time. The use of the lighting grid throughout the building is also of note, and contributes to the night image of the building. Of further importance is the combination of architecture and art in the building, a prominent international idea at the time, incorporating a Competition winning foyer mural by Adelaide artist, Stanislaw Ostoja-Kotkowski, and cast bronzes sculptures by noted Victorian sculptor, Norma Redpath, in the Theatre foyer and exterior facade.

The geometric balcony design and interior ornament draws strongly on the work of Frank Lloyd Wright. At the same time it reflects a more liberal attitude internationally to the inclusion of ornament in a commercial tower; although the introduction of ornament stirred international controversy, both in Australia and overseas. BP House achieved considerable contemporary national journal recognition, being described in *Building; Lighting Engineering* in 1965 as 'Melbourne's latest skyscraper'. It is also important as the first building of its size in its

area and as representative of the then current ideas of de-centralization of the central business district.

Classified; 15/04/1992

Revised: 16/09/1992

File note: Converted to apartments1995

Other Names Domain Apartments,

Hermes Number 183680

Property Number

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/>