

# 1 SPRING STREET (SHELL HOUSE)



1 SPRING STREET



Aerial view of Shell House



Views showing interfaces with adjacent Spring St building and Flinders St building



Views showing interfaces with adjacent Spring St building and Flinders St building



Main external plaza at corner of Spring and Flinders Streets



?Shell Mace? sculpture in main external plaza



Building pier in main external plaza



North facade of Shell House from Flinders Lane



External plaza from main Spring Street foyer



Main Spring Street foyer



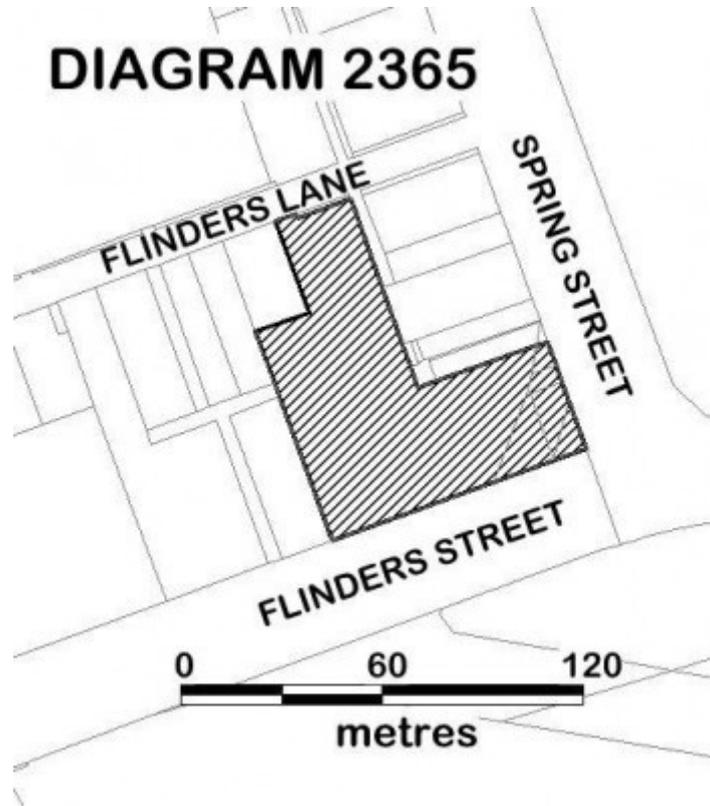
Mural by Arthur Boyd in main Spring Street foyer



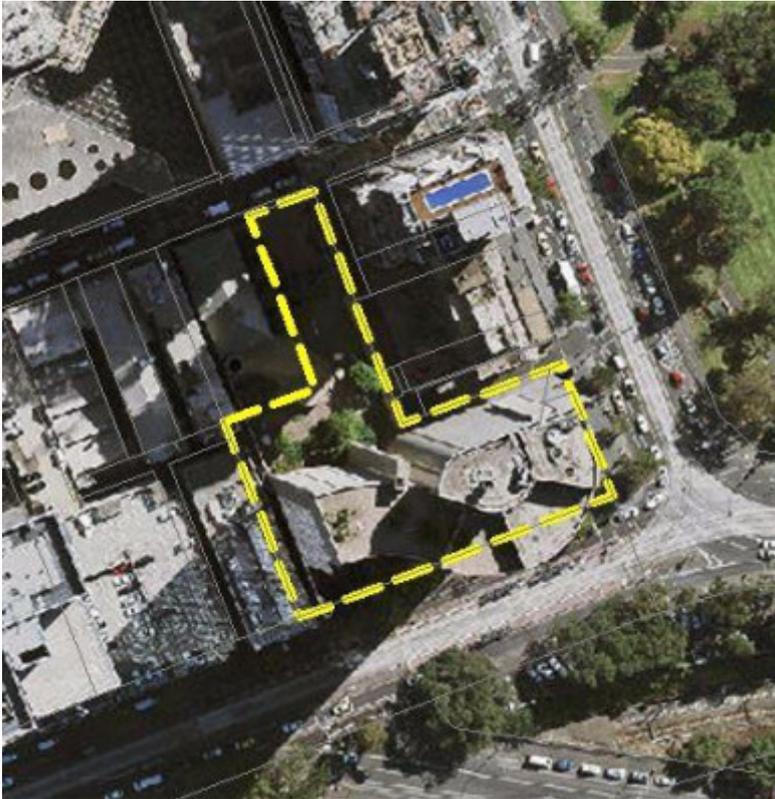
Main Spring Street foyer from escalator



Aerial view of Shell House



1 SPRING STREET EXTENT DIAGRAM 2365



Aerial photograph showing extent of registration

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### **Location**

1 SPRING STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

### **Municipality**

MELBOURNE CITY

### **Level of significance**

Registered

### **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H2365

### **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO1235

### **VHR Registration**

June 29, 2017

### **Heritage Listing**

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 7, 2021

What is significant?

1 Spring Street, Melbourne comprising an office tower and northern podium, main foyer with Arthur Boyd mural 'Bathers and Pulpit Rock' and external plazas including a large external plaza at the Spring Street corner containing the Charles O Perry sculpture 'Shell Mace'. The building was originally known as Shell House, and is referred to as such below.

### *History Summary*

Shell House was the third headquarters building erected for the Shell Company of Australia Ltd in Melbourne. Constructed in 1985-89, the building replaced earlier headquarters constructed in 1933 and 1958 and was occupied by Shell until 2003-2004. The company commissioned the highly regarded commercial architect and leading Australian modernist, Harry Seidler, to design Shell House. Seidler was trained by Modernist architects in the United States before arriving in Australia in 1948 and throughout his career his work continued to display the ideals of this movement. This included the use of basic geometric shapes, sculptural and simple form, visual expression of structure and generous civic spaces. Seidler continued to explore skyscraper design from the 1960s to the 1990s, producing a series of office buildings in Australia and overseas. Shell House is the only example of these built in Victoria. Shell House won a number of awards including the Royal Australian Institute of Architects Victoria Merit Award in 1991 and the National RAIA Award in the same year.

### *Description Summary*

Located on a sloping L-shaped site at the south-eastern corner of the Melbourne city grid, Shell House is a late twentieth century International style office tower with side podium, basement carpark and external plazas. The building is a concrete structure with granite-faced lower facades and a repetitive floor construction system of clear span beams of equal length. With an interest in geometry, simplicity of form and clear expression of structure, Harry Seidler designed the building using two counterpoint curved sections to maximise views to the south and east, to accommodate existing underground railway tunnels and to present a commanding entry point to the city. The core of the building, containing lifts and amenities, is located on the off-view north side and the office floors wrap around this core.

The building integrates dramatic level changes for public access from the south, south east and north through a central control point located in the main Spring Street foyer. This foyer is accessed via stairs from Flinders Street or directly from the primary external entry plaza at the corner of Flinders and Spring Streets. The main entry plaza contains a dominant structural and sculptural building pier and a specially commissioned sculpture, 'Shell Mace' by American sculptor and architect, Charles O Perry (1989). The foyer has soaring ceilings, with a mural, 'Bathers and Pulpit Rock' by Arthur Boyd (1988) and sets of escalators which lead to the mezzanine and conference centre level. The conference centre provides access to meeting rooms arranged around a circular light well, an auditorium and a narrow secondary pedestrian plaza entry from Flinders Lane. The mezzanine level provides access to a former cafeteria space, with built in seating arranged around the base of the light well, a servery and adjoining commercial kitchen.

The office tower uses a repetitive floor construction system of clear span beams of equal length, resulting in a uniform 15 metre wide column-free space from the services core to the external windows. This, along with the concealment of computer cabling and electrical wiring under a 250 mm access floor, creates an interior aesthetic which is open, light and spacious. All office floors have expansive views to the south and east of the city. The top two floors of the office tower contain an executive suite with external terrace garden, garden court and spiral granite staircase between levels. A variety of quality finishes have been used throughout the building for paving, floor and wall cladding, including Italian granite and travertine, and much of this has been retained.

Some changes have been made to the office floor configurations and fittings, including the executive suite.

This site is part of the traditional land of the people of the Kulin Nation.

How is it significant?

Shell House is of architectural and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.

Criterion E

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

Why is it significant?

Shell House is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

Shell House is architecturally significant as an outstanding example of a late modernist office building in Victoria, designed by one of the style's most accomplished proponents, the renowned Australian architect, Harry Seidler. Late modernism, as expressed in Shell House is demonstrated principally through sculptural form, use of solid concrete and other massive materials, and a variety of textural finishes. Shell House is also significant for the clarity with which it expresses particular themes and motifs characteristic of Seidler's work. These include the use of opposing curvilinear forms and the generous planning of public areas, both externally and internally.

Shell House is one of an important series of high rise tower projects designed by Harry Seidler both nationally and internationally from the 1960s to the 1990s, and is the only one located in Victoria. Shell House is of architectural significance for its innovative design response to a difficult site and for its integration of dramatic level changes for public access from surrounding streets through a central lower foyer control point. Shell House won a number of awards including the Royal Australian Institute of Architects Victoria Merit Award in 1991 and the National RAIA Award in the same year. Seidler is considered to be one of the major talents in Australian architectural history who made a substantial contribution to Australian architecture. [Criterion D]

Shell House is aesthetically significant for the sculptural effect created by the interlocking curvilinear form of the building that is reflected in the interior planning. The quality of the interior spaces and their relationship to the extensive outdoor terraces at several levels of the building is of high aesthetic value, both visually and experientially. The location at the south-east corner of the Hoddle Grid is highlighted by elements such as the large tapered pier at the Spring Street/Flinders Street entrance.

The aesthetic qualities of the place are enhanced by the incorporation of large scale artworks which complement the architecture and were selected by Seidler for the building. Significant pieces include the foyer mural 'Bathers and Pulpit Rock' by Arthur Boyd (1988) and the external plaza sculpture 'Shell Mace' by Charles O Perry (1989). [Criterion E]

The ability to appreciate the relevant aesthetic characteristics is enhanced by the high degree of intactness and integrity of the Place, both internally and externally.

## 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](#).

### **Specific Exemptions:**

It should be noted that Permit Exemptions can be granted at the time of registration (under s.42(4) of the Heritage Act). Permit Exemptions can also be applied for and granted after registration (under s.66 of the Heritage Act)

#### General Condition 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 Condition 2

Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works 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 works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible.

#### General Condition 3

All works should ideally be informed by a Conservation Management Plan prepared for the place. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan, and permits still must be obtained.

#### General

#### Condition 4

Nothing in this determination prevents the Heritage Council from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

#### General Condition 5

Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the relevant responsible authority, where applicable.

### **Specific Permit Exemptions:**

#### *Exterior*

- Repairs and maintenance which replaces like with like.
- Removal, replacement, repair or installation of building and fire services in a manner that does not affect the cultural heritage significance of the place.
- Repair or replacement of water proofing in a manner that does not affect the cultural heritage significance of the place.
- Maintenance of plazas, walls, garden beds and other landscape elements
- Repair or replacement of existing glass including glass walling, windows and doors (revolving, fixed and hinged).

## Interior

- Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings.
- Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.
- Demolition or removal of partition walls, suspended ceilings, screens, doors, built-in cupboards, computer and office fitout and equipment and the like.
- Refurbishment of existing bathrooms, toilets and kitchens including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall tiling and floor coverings and the like.
- Removal of concrete slabs in wet areas provided there is no damage to or alteration of original structure or fabric.
- Installation, removal or replacement of all information technology, communication, security and cleaning infrastructure and equipment, including electric clocks, public address and speaker systems, detectors, alarms, lights, emergency lights, exit signs and the like.
- Installation, removal, repair or replacement of building and fire services in a manner that does not affect the cultural heritage significance of the place.
- Repair or replacement of lifts and escalators.
- Installation, removal or replacement of way-finding signage and signage relating to building security and the identification of tenants. Installation of new signage must be readily reversible without damage to original fabric of significance.
- The installation and relocation of lightweight partitioning to allow for meetings rooms, offices, staff kitchenettes and the like.
- All works in the basement excluding works to the internal structure required to support the building.

## Theme

### 6. Building towns cities and the garden state 9. Shaping cultural and creative life

Construction dates	1985,
Architect/Designer	Seidler, Harry and Associates,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	SHELL HOUSE,
Hermes Number	197961
Property Number	

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## History

### HISTORY

#### *History of the Shell Company*

Shell Australia Pty Ltd is the Australian subsidiary of the petroleum corporation, Royal Dutch Shell. In 1901 the Shell tanker *Turbo* sailed into Port Philip with the first cargo of bulk kerosene ever to reach Australia. In 1916 Shell commenced the bulk delivery of fuel to motor garages, and by 1933 it had established storage and distribution terminals as well as oil refineries. In this year the first headquarters for the Shell Company in Australia were constructed in Melbourne. Becoming known as 'Former Shell Corner' (demolished 1991), this building, designed by A & K Henderson, was located at 163-69 William Street.

An increase in the numbers of motor vehicles in Victoria in the 1950s and 1960s resulted in the construction of a network of service stations across the state. A range of associated infrastructure was also established, particularly in Geelong. In response to an increase in oil exploration in the 1960s, the 'New Shell Corner' headquarters building was constructed in 1958 at the corner of William and Bourke Streets. This 17 storey office tower was designed by Melbourne architects Buchan Laird and Buchan in association with American high rise

office building specialist architects, Skidmore, Owings and Merrill. Using curtain wall construction, this innovative building was totally sealed with high pressure air-conditioning and automatic temperature control.

'New Shell Corner' was demolished in 1990, after the construction of the replacement headquarters at 1 Spring Street, Melbourne in 1985-89 which became known as 'Shell House'. The aspirational nature of the new building at this time was reflected in the appointment of notable architect, Harry Seidler, for the design. At the time he was a highly regarded commercial architect and leading Australian Modernist.

In 2014 Shell sold a large part of its business in Australia, including the Geelong refinery and 870 retail sites. The remaining Australian activities comprised exploration and onshore coal seam gas. As a result the head office was moved from Melbourne to Perth, Western Australia.

## Modernism

After World War II a radical and uncompromising modern architecture, which became known as the 'International style' - a term coined in 1932 - was gaining acceptance in Europe, Britain and the United States. Also known as 'International Modern' or 'Modernism' it became the single most important philosophy of architecture and design of the twentieth century. The typical characteristics of architectural Modernism include asymmetrical compositions, the use of rectilinear, cubic or cylindrical shapes, flat roofs, the use of reinforced concrete, surfaces devoid of applied ornamentation, metal and glass frameworks resulting in large windows, and open interior spaces. The style was especially suited to skyscraper architecture, where its sleek look, absence of decoration and use of steel and glass, became synonymous with corporate modernism during the period 1955-70. It also became the dominant style of twentieth century architecture for institutional and commercial buildings.

Modernism began to appear in Australia from about 1950, particularly in domestic architecture and included the early work of Harry Seidler, such as the Rose Seidler House, Turrumurra of 1948-49. Later in the decade the influence of modernism became apparent in commercial and institutional architecture, and the first curtain-walled office buildings embraced new technology and new materials. These modern buildings, such as ICI House, East Melbourne by Bates Smart & McCutcheon (1955-58, VHR H786) were distinguished by their extensive use of steel, reinforced concrete and glass; their sleek, glossy appearance and their uninterrupted surfaces. Large corporations embraced this modernism which produced cubiform shaped buildings with frames of steel and reinforced concrete, and clad with glass curtain walls.

From the early 1960s the slick glass curtain walled buildings of the 1950s lost favour, largely due to the inappropriateness of the sheer wall to the Australian climate. In the 1960s and 1970s concrete became the favoured material and the skeletal appearance of 1950s buildings was replaced with a more solid, modelled and textural form. This can be seen in a number of city office buildings which were built in the 1960s and early 1970s, including the Victorian State Offices (1962-68, VHR H1526), Former BHP House (1969-72, VHR H1699) and Eagle House (1970-1-71, VHR H1807).

Harry Seidler was Australia's best known practitioner in the modernist style. He continued to produce a steady stream of uniformly high quality work from the 1950s through to the 1990s.

### *The Architect - Harry Seidler*

The architect of Shell House, Viennese-born Harry Seidler (1923-2006) immigrated to Australia in 1948, aged 25 years. He was educated in the United States by German refugees from the Bauhaus, Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer, at the Harvard School of Design, studied under another Bauhaus master, Joseph Albers, worked as chief assistant to Breuer in New York from 1946-48 and spent time with Oscar Niemeyer in Brazil before his arrival in Australia.

Seidler's Australian designs of the 1950s were influenced by the work of Gropius and Breuer. His first commission in Sydney, a house for his mother Rose Seidler at Turrumurra (1948-50), was revolutionary in both form and plan, and gained him great notoriety. His interest in geometry and technology was already evident in his early designs. The practice that he established became Harry Seidler & Associates in 1963 and this architectural firm continues to practise under this name.

Seidler continued to design houses throughout his career despite his firm becoming a large mixed practice. By the 1960s his practice had broadened to include large residential and commercial projects and Seidler-designed skyscrapers shaped Australian cities for the next 40 years. He made a large contribution to Australian architecture by continuously exploring skyscraper design. This began in Sydney with his first large scale

commission, Australia Square (1961-67) which was a 50-storey cylindrical tower complex set in a large plaza. This provided the city centre with a sunny, sheltered public square. This influential and major civic development established Seidler as a major civic architect and served as a model for Seidler's many urban towers.

Variations of this building, with its central service and lift tower, followed based on a range of basic shapes. In almost all cases basic geometric shapes account for both tower and core; sometimes echoing and other times contrasting shapes. Examples include the MLC Centre, Sydney (1978) with an overall polygonal shape with alternating wide and narrow face; Riverside Centre, Brisbane (1984), a triangle with rounded corners and QV1 Tower, Perth (1992), a fan-shaped arc bowed as a convex curve and tangent to a small segment of the arch for a service core. Further elaboration occurred with the office floors assuming independence from the core such as at Grosvenor Place, Sydney (1988) where two offset arcs were bowed in opposite directions with the core occupying the space in between; and at Shell House, Melbourne (1985-89) where a freeform service core was used to present a curved face, off which the office floor unfurled like a flag, to specifically accommodate the elongated site and the views in one direction.

The majority of Seidler's towers were constructed in reinforced concrete and the shapes he used lent themselves to easy forming. The structure was always logical but a sculptural and monumental modernism was created as Seidler increasingly explored the plasticity of curvilinear form. For example the projecting supports at the MLC Towers acted as curved buttresses at the ground and twisted as they rose to become a tapered column. Seidler was also aware of the inappropriateness of unprotected glass walls in the Australia climate and used external sun control to exclude excessive solar penetration.

Seidler also designed buildings overseas including the Australian Embassy in Paris (1973), the Hong Kong Club and Office Building (1981) and a large scale housing project in Vienna (1988). Seidler's career demonstrated a life-long commitment to the ideals, and many themes, of Modernism but his work also showed an increasing structural, sculptural and geometric innovation.

Throughout his career, Harry Seidler was also a writer, photographer, teacher and a supporter of the arts. He was an outspoken advocate of the architectural profession and was recognised both nationally and internationally for his work. Seidler's contributions were acknowledged through many honours and awards, including:

- Honorary Fellow of the American Institute of Architects (1966)
- Royal Australian Institute of Architects Gold Medal (1976)
- Companion of the Order of Australia (1987)
- Gold Medal City of Vienna (1990)
- Officer of the Order of the British Empire (1992)
- Gold Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects (1996)
- Austrian Badge of Honour for Science and Art (1996)

Noted architectural critic Jennifer Taylor concludes in her entry 'Harry Seidler' in *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*:

Harry Seidler was one of the major talents in Australian architectural history. He was a leading figure throughout his career, and the first architect in Australia to fully comprehend the lessons handed down from the Bauhaus, of which he remained a steadfast exponent. Seidler never wavered in the pursuit of excellence and he left his mark on Australian architecture in terms of culture, ethics and performance. He died in 2006 having designed some 180 buildings in Australia. These included houses, apartment blocks, office buildings and industrial structures.

Seidler made a strong and influential contribution to architecture in Australia, particularly through his continual exploration of skyscraper design. Seidler is considered to be one of the major talents in Australian architectural history and a leading figure in Australian architecture throughout his long career from the late 1940s until his death in 2006. His contribution has been acknowledged by the receipt of a number of awards for his work. Shell House remains highly intact to clearly indicate the association between the architect and the place. *The Original Design of Shell House*

Shell House office tower, opened in April 1989, was constructed on a site at the south-eastern corner of the Melbourne city grid. This site had railway tunnels running underneath the corner of the site and had outlooks to the south across rail yards and east down Wellington Parade. Views to the north were restricted and the west orientation was climatically undesirable. These site characteristics formed the basis for the design of Shell House by Harry Seidler. In addition to these geographic conditions, the design was driven by Seidler's commitment to the aesthetics of Modernism; in particular the minimalism of essential geometric structure and the expression of structure.

Seidler's resulting design was composed of two counterpoint curved sections. The creation of the main curvilinear, organic south-eastern facade maximised views over the rail yards to Port Phillip Bay to the south, and to the Treasury Gardens and distant eastern vistas. It optimised outlooks for the office space and created a commanding entry point to the city. The core of the building, containing lifts and amenities was placed on the off-view north side. The office floors wrapped around the core of the building and maximised the length of building facing toward the full sweep of the panoramic view. The building was designed to not exceed the heights of adjoining buildings to the west and to the north where the north wall is stepped back at Spring Street.

Harry Seidler's design concept for the building was conceived very quickly and developed into a complex and sophisticated design. It combined a difficult location with an ongoing commitment to the Modernist ideals that dominated his work. These ideals included geometry, simplicity of form without unnecessary adornment, sculptural form, visual expression of structure and generous civic spaces. The latter included the controversial setting of the building back from the street edge, defying City of Melbourne policy for active street frontage. As a result public plazas were provided at the main corner entrance at the corner of Flinders and Spring Streets, in Flinders Lane and on Flinders Street.

The design for the L-shaped site incorporated a tall office tower and a side podium. The latter provided secondary pedestrian entry to the building from Flinders Lane and contained facilities such as a theatre for two hundred people, a cafeteria for three hundred people and eleven conference rooms of varying size. These spaces were connected to the main foyer by escalators and both the cafeteria and the conference rooms were placed around a fountain court. Security screening in the Spring Street foyer was designed to protect the upper floors of the tower which were reached by two six-car lift banks. Executive suites and meeting rooms were positioned on the top floors of the building, opening onto landscaped roof gardens.

Despite the curved plan form, a repetitive floor construction system of clear span beams of equal length created a uniform 15 metre wide column-free depth from core to glass. Thermal efficiency and low operating costs were important design considerations with external sun control and anti-glare aluminium blades placed on the north and south facades as part of the design. The open south east facade was flanked by sheer walls to the west and north, blocking the harsh sun. The building included energy efficient daylight sensors that monitored the sunlight and motion detectors to activate office lights. Each floor was equipped with an access floor to a height of 250 mm containing all the computer cabling and electrical wiring. It was also designed with the most extensive access control in Melbourne at the time, with card key access to floors. These design features relating to energy efficiency, security and services were innovative for their time.

External areas included a main entry plaza from the corner of Spring and Flinders Streets, and plazas facing Flinders Street and Flinders Lane. The main entry plaza at Spring Street is an open space with a structural and sculptural tapered pier which stands proud of the foyer glazing behind. This pier takes the load of three columns in a structurally expressive way.

Typical of Seidler's buildings, a large scale modern artwork was incorporated in the main entry plaza of Shell House. 'Shell Mace' is a 8.5 metre high aluminium work designed specifically for Shell House in 1989 by American sculptor and architect Charles Perry who had studied under Bauhaus architect Joseph Albers in the 1950s. Perry created over 100 major commissions throughout the world, drawing inspiration from the geometry of natural forms.

The Spring Street foyer was designed with soaring ceilings, banked escalators and a crowning mural by Arthur Boyd. This mural is entitled *Bathers and Pulpit Rock* (1988) and is a work of vitreous enamel on steel, 3.8 x 100 metres, based on a painting of the same name (1984-85) held by the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane. The mural is based on themes of metamorphosis with humans and beasts changing from one state to another.

In addition to the sculpture and mural, a number of art works once adorned the building. These included a wall sculpture by Hilaire Mais, weavings by Jenny Turner, paintings by John Firth-Smith, David Aspen, Jenny Watson,

Mandy Martin and John Beard. These moveable art works belonged to Shell and were removed from Shell House when the company moved to Perth.

The design of Shell House received both positive and negative criticism from architects, planners and the Melbourne City Council as reported in the *Canberra Times*, 26 January 1986. Some felt the S-shape design was inappropriate for a corner building, particularly a prominent site in a city which essentially followed a grid pattern and is regular in its design. The council was concerned about the effect the building would have on pedestrians with proposed plazas described as wind traps. They voiced their preference for buildings placed up to the street frontage and preferred shops at pavement level for visual interest and pedestrian protection. Melbourne architects such as Norman Day and John Denton generally supported the design, stating that it was superior to many recent Melbourne towers.

Shell House won the Royal Australian Institute of Architects Victoria Merit Award (commercial category) in 1991 and the National RAI Award in the same year. It was the dual winner of the 1989 Building Owners and Managers Association award for design and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers and Association of Consulting Engineers of Australia awards for mechanical design.

#### KEY REFERENCES USED TO PREPARE ASSESSMENT

HLCD Pty Ltd. 'Shell Headquarters Heritage Assessment Report'. October 2015  
K Frampton & P Drew. *Harry Seidler. Four Decades of Architecture*. London 1992

P Goad. *Melbourne Architecture*. Sydney 1999

J Taylor. *Australian Architecture since 1960*. Sydney 1986

J Taylor in P Goad & J Willis. *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*. Melbourne 2012

R Apperley et al. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture*. Sydney 1989

#### Plaque Citation

Shell House is a significant example of a late modernist office building designed by internationally renowned architect Harry Seidler. Completed in 1989, this award winning building demonstrates a curvilinear sculptural form and generous civic spaces.

#### Assessment Against Criteria

##### Criterion

Shell House is of architectural and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

##### Criterion D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.

##### Criterion E

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

##### Why is it significant?

Shell House is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

Shell House is architecturally significant as an outstanding example of a late modernist office building in Victoria, designed by one of the style's most accomplished proponents, the renowned Australian architect, Harry Seidler. Late modernism, as expressed in Shell House is demonstrated principally through sculptural form, use of solid concrete and other massive materials, and a variety of textural finishes. Shell House is also significant for the clarity with which it expresses particular themes and motifs characteristic of Seidler's work. These include the use of opposing curvilinear forms and the generous planning of public areas, both externally and internally.

Shell House is one of an important series of high rise tower projects designed by Harry Seidler both nationally and internationally from the 1960s to the 1990s, and is the only one located in Victoria. Shell House is of architectural significance for its innovative design response to a difficult site and for its integration of dramatic level changes for public access from surrounding streets through a central lower foyer control point. Shell House won a number of awards including the Royal Australian Institute of Architects Victoria Merit Award in 1991 and the National RAI Award in the same year. Seidler is considered to be one of the major talents in Australian architectural history who made a substantial contribution to Australian architecture. [

#### Criterion D]

Shell House is aesthetically significant for the sculptural effect created by the interlocking curvilinear form of the building that is reflected in the interior planning. The quality of the interior spaces and their relationship to the extensive outdoor terraces at several levels of the building is of high aesthetic value, both visually and experientially. The location at the south-east corner of the Hoddle Grid is highlighted by elements such as the large tapered pier at the Spring Street/Flinders Street entrance.

The aesthetic qualities of the place are enhanced by the incorporation of large scale artworks which complement the architecture and were selected by Seidler for the building. Significant pieces include the foyer mural 'Bathers and Pulpit Rock' by Arthur Boyd (1988) and the external plaza sculpture 'Shell Mace' by Charles O Perry (1989). [

#### Criterion E]

The ability to appreciate the relevant aesthetic characteristics is enhanced by the high degree of intactness and integrity of the Place, both internally and externally.

## Extent of Registration

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 1995**, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the following place in the Heritage Register:

Number: H2365

Category: Heritage Place

Place: 1 Spring Street (Formerly Shell House)

Location: 1 Spring Street, Melbourne  
Melbourne City

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2365 encompassing part of Lot 1 on Title Plan 800196 and all of Lot 1 on Title Plan 841342 (but not E-8).

Dated 29 June 2017

TIM SMITH

Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G 26 29 June 2017 1389]

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*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/>*