
1 Collins Street

Location

5-9 Collins Street, 53-57 Spring Street MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

State

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 1, 1900

What is significant?

1 Collins Street is a complex of buildings made up of a 1984 office tower, the retained frontages of Victorian terraces at 5-7 and 9 Collins Street, and the 1877 Campbell House on the corner of Spring and Collins Streets (listed separately on the VHR H1945 and not part of this registration).

The 1984 tower is massed to emphasise the corner site and address a city vista. The two main faces step forward slightly in three successive sections, and each section rises up one floor creating a corner tower effect, topped by an open belvedere above the 17th floor. The tower has an 8 storey portion built to the Spring Street frontage, topped by a roof garden, while the main tower is setback about 15m on Spring Street and 9m on Collins Street. The tower is clad in pre-cast grey rough faced cement panels incised with a square grid of scored lines and inset with square mirror-glass windows. The windows along each of the top levels, and up the corner bay of the tower for most its height, are recessed, while the rest are flush.

Entry to the tower is through a vestibule made by opening up the ground level of the terraces at 5-7 Collins Street, then through an atrium space under a portion of the tower, to reach the central lobby. The atrium is partly open though a space between the tops of the retained buildings and the underside of the 6th level of the tower. All surfaces of the lobby feature square grid-lines, including panelled walls and ceiling, the columns, and the mottled white marble floor, where nine central marble stools cast a diagonal 'shadow' in darker grey marble. There is a second entry via stairs on Spring Street in a gap between the Campbell House and the lower portion of the tower, which features a central inset convex glass-walled bay. The ground floor of 9 Collins Street is occupied by a shop with a 1984 reproduction of the original Victorian shopfront. The retained frontage of the terraces at 5-9 Collins Street is a series of self-contained office spaces at the first and second floors, accessed from curved

stairs off the atrium.

The development, designed by the emerging firm of Denton Corker Marshall, in association with Robert Peck YFHK (Yuncken Freeman Hong Kong), was announced in 1981 and completed in 1984.

The Campbell House, was built in 1877 to a design by architect Leonard Terry, purchased in 1901 by the Commonwealth Government in 1901 and housed Australia's first Prime Ministers (VHR H1945). The ornate arcaded three storey terraces at 5-7 Collins Street were built in 1884, designed by Lloyd Tayler, and used as professional suites and residences. The building at 9 Collins, Grosvenor Chambers, built in 1888, was designed by Oakden Addison & Kemp for C S Paterson, of the famed Patterson Brothers interior decorators, whose office was located in the ground floor in the 1890s. The top floor contained purpose-built artists's studios, which were home to many notable Victorian artists such as Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton, James Condor, Sir John Longstaff and Charles Summers, and in the 1950s, the home and studio of Mirka Mora and family.

In 1971, the State Government swapped Tasma Terrace for the Campbell House, which was then bought by Colonial Mutual Life, whose demolition permit in 1972 was thwarted by a 4

Union ban. In 1975, the south wing of the Campbell House was demolished, and a plan for an office tower replacing occupying that area and replacing 5-9 Collins Street was proposed, generating protests from the National Trust and others. In 1980 the site was bought by Singaporean developer Jack Chia, who announced a development retaining the Campbell House and a 9m (or one room) depth of the Collins Street terraces, with a tower rising behind, a compromise accepted by the major stakeholders. 1 Collins Street, as it became known, was completed in 1984, and has undergone few alterations to the exterior or the foyer since then.

The development was soon hailed as a significant work, garnering a number of awards from the Victorian Architects Institute. In 1985 it won the Victorian Architecture Merit Award for new commercial buildings, and the next year it won the inaugural William Wilkinson Wardell Medal for the best building of the last three years, and in 2011 won the Enduring Architecture Award from the Australian Institute of Architects (Victorian Chapter).

How is it significant?

The building known as 1 Collins Street is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The 1984 part of 1 Collins Street is significant architecturally as a fine example of Postmodern design, and was one of the first large-scale commercial buildings in Victoria designed using the principles of Postmodernism. In a distinct break from the principles of modernism, it is a well-mannered intervention into a sensitive historic context, by using traditional features such as grey textured wall material, deep set windows, and a subtly stepped plan and boldly stepped profile building up to a prominent corner tower element, addressing an important city vista. The use of square grids as an ordering and decorative device is a leitmotif of Postmodernism and especially the work of DCM. All of these attributes were in stark contrast to the prevailing expressed structural grids or glassy curtain walls of late 1970s/ early 1980s Melbourne office blocks. It is widely regarded as an innovative and influential project, which received considerable attention in the architectural press and was the recipient of several major architectural awards at the time and more recently. (Criterion A, E and F)

It is also significant as the first in a number of ever larger and more prominent commissions for the firm of Denton Corker Marshall, then at the forefront of architectural experimentation, and which became a highly regarded international firm by the 2010s. (Criterion H)

The facade of 5-7 Collins, designed by noted architect Lloyd Tayler, is architecturally significant for the variety and inventive use of finely executed architectural ornament, executed in artificial stone. (Criterion E)

Historically, 1 Collins Street is important as the final result of a long campaign to preserve the historic architecture of the site, and the character of the precinct, part of a wider campaign to save what was left of historic Collins Street that was waged in Melbourne from 5

the mid-1970s to the early 1980s. It was amongst the very first developments to introduce the concept of the preservation of the front portion of heritage buildings, while allowing for new high-rise construction behind. While not seen as ideal by all parties, this was a seminal compromise approach that was subsequently used on many CBD projects. (Criterion A)

The retained portion of 9 Collins Street is historically significant as the only remaining part of a building that included a whole floor of purpose-built artist's studios, occupied by many notable Victorian artists from the 1880s into the 1960s. The preserved top floor studio is significant for retaining its south-facing sawtooth roof. (Criterion H)

EXTENT:

All of the building known as 1 Collins Street, incorporating the whole of the interior and exterior of the retained portions of 5-7 Collins Street and 9 Collins Street, and the exterior and ground floors lobbies of the 1984 construction.

Other Names Grosvenor Chambers, No. 1 Collins Street, One Collins Street, 9 Collins Street, 5-7 Collins Street,

Hermes
Number 205547

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/>