

# YULE HOUSE



Yule House\_KJ\_Oct 09



Yule House\_shops\_KJ\_Oct 09



Yule House\_interior second floor\_KJ\_Oct 09



Yule House\_interior first floor\_KJ\_Oct 09



Yule House\_west shop exterior\_KJ\_Oct 09



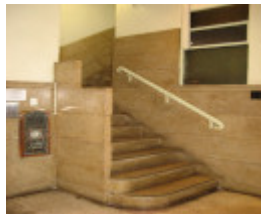
Yule House\_east shop exterior\_KJ\_Oct 09



Yule House\_exterior\_KJ\_Oct 09



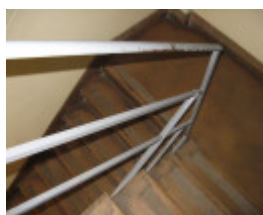
Yule House\_entrance\_KJ\_Oct 09



Yule House\_ground floor stairs\_KJ\_Oct 09



Yule House\_lift lobby ground floor\_KJ\_Oct 09



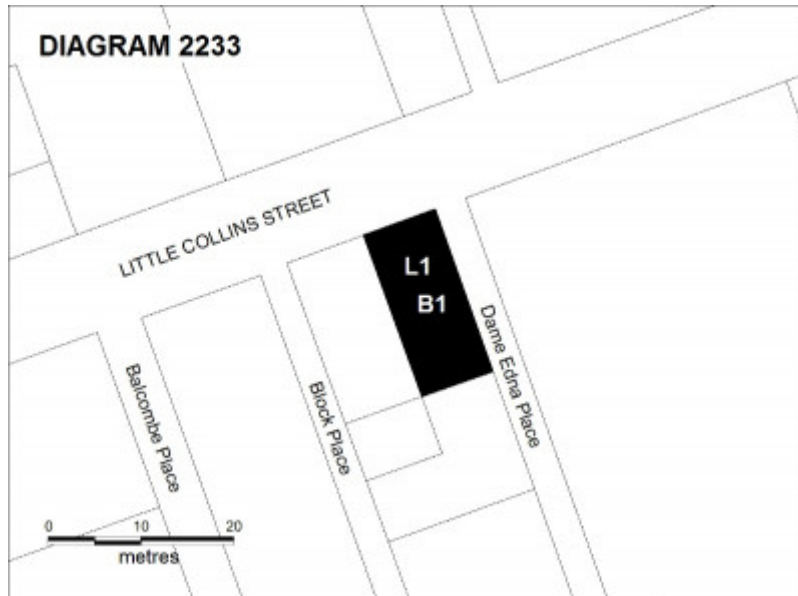
Yule House\_stair well upper level\_KJ\_Oct 09



Yule House\_tenants directory ground floor\_KJ\_Oct 09



Yule House\_fire extinguisher  
ground floor\_KJ\_Oct 09



yule house plan.jpg

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## Location

309-311 LITTLE COLLINS STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

## Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2233

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO703

## VHR Registration

February 11, 2010

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 18, 1993

What is significant?

Yule House was designed by the Melbourne architectural firm of Oakley & Parkes and built in 1932. The site had been owned since the early 1900s by William Yule, a wealthy Melbourne businessman, and later by his estate, but the original building on the site was destroyed by fire in 1931. Percy Oakley had been known to William Yule and his firm was commissioned to design a modern and fireproof replacement. The building was constructed during the Depression and, according to Parkes, economy was a major influence on the design, which was a joint effort of Oakley, his partner Stanley Parkes and their young employee Rae Featherstone. It was Victoria's first example of a commercial building in the new Moderne style, which became the fashionable commercial style in the city in the late 1930s. The building was intended to house retail shops on the ground floor and workrooms above, with long windows across the front to let in maximum daylight. The single span across each of the floors meant that no columns interrupted the interior spaces, each of which accommodated a single tenant. The building was owned by the Yule estate until 1985.

Yule house is a small five storey reinforced concrete Streamlined Moderne style office building. Its principal facade is clad in light-coloured terracotta faience tiles made by Wunderlich Ltd. On the front facade the floors are divided by protruding horizontal banded spandrels between horizontal strips of multi-paned steel-framed windows. An important feature of the main elevation is the elegant flat plate-metal lettering, highly evocative of the Moderne period. The name YULE HOUSE appears above the entrance and is also attached to the first floor spandrel, the street number is incised into the second spandrel, and the date 1932 is inscribed into the top spandrel. The parapet is crowned by an off-centre castellated coping. At the ground floor level are two shops, one on each side of the central entrance. These have large metal-framed display windows, originally with curved glass, one of which has been altered. The entrance hall and lobby have beige-coloured terrazzo flooring with a contrasting pink edging. There is dado of terrazzo panels around the walls of the lobby and the lower staircase. Glass-fronted display cases, a tenants' directory and the original fire alarm in a brass case line the walls of the entrance hall and lift lobby.

How is it significant?

Yule House is of architectural significance to the state of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Yule House is of architectural significance as the first commercial building in Victoria to demonstrate the principles of the emerging Moderne style, which in the late 1930s was to become the most fashionable style for buildings such as office blocks, department stores, car show-rooms and cinemas. It is a fine example of the work of the prominent Melbourne architectural firm of Oakley & Parkes.

### 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:**

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 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 Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan endorsed by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable. Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works may submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

Construction dates	1932,
Architect/Designer	Oakley & Parkes,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	2628
Property Number	

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## **History**

[all information taken from the 2009 nomination report for Yule House written for the Art Deco & Modernism Society by Simon Reeves of Built Heritage Pty Ltd]

## CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The architects: Oakley & Parkes

The firm of Oakley & Parkes was formed in 1922 by Percy Oakley (1883-1955), formerly in partnership with Alec Eggleston as Eggleston & Oakley, and Stanley Parkes (1895-1986), previously employed as the firm's Chief Draftsman. Initially the office concentrated on domestic projects, achieving considerable acclaim when it in 1923 it won a competition for the layout of a residential area in Canberra to accommodate senior public servants, which became the suburb of Forrest. This led to further Canberra commissions, notably Calthorpe House (now a house museum) at Red Hill and the Prime Ministers' residence The Lodge.

The firm began to move towards non-residential projects, including a number for the Victorian government, such as additions to the Titles Office (1929) and the State Government Offices (1933), and the construction (1929) and the extension (1933) of the Taxation Offices. Commercial buildings soon became a mainstay of the office, and amongst other multi-storey buildings they designed Kodak House in Collins Street (1934) (as well as the Kodak laboratory in Abbotsford in 1936). The partners were both residents of Brighton (Oakley was mayor in 1923), designing several houses in the area, and from the 1930s the firm undertook several local municipal projects, including the remodelling of the Town Hall (1933) and of the Royal Brighton Yacht Club (1934) and the erection of new sea baths (1935). They also designed a number of factories, in Lang Lang (1934), Corryong (1935), Cobden (1934) and on the Geelong Road (1939). In the post-war years the firm designed a number of celebrated buildings, notably the Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired IOOF building in Russell Street (1959-63) and the new City of Brighton Municipal Offices (1959-61).

The Streamlined Moderne style

The Streamlined Moderne style in either faience or cement-rendered reinforced concrete became the fashionable commercial style in the city in the 1930s, for buildings such as office blocks, department stores and car showrooms, and in the suburbs for cinemas such as the Rivoli, Camberwell (1940), and the Astor, St Kilda. The style adopted either a vertical or horizontal format, and was intended to express movement and speed.

## HISTORY OF PLACE

William Yule (1843-1909) was a wealthy businessman, whose fortune was derived largely from real estate, including the future site of Yule House. At the time of Yule's death the site was occupied by a four storey brick building, leased until c1923 to a bookseller and later to a succession of short-term tenants. The Yule estate was under the control of Yule's daughter, Mrs Stella Hastings, in 1931, when the building was partially destroyed by fire. Percy Oakley had been personally known to William Yule, which is presumably why the architectural firm of Oakley & Parkes were commissioned to design a modern, and fireproof, replacement.

The architectural drawings for Yule House are dated January 1932. According to Stanley Parkes the design of the building represented a joint effort between himself, Percy Oakley and their young employee Rae Featherstone (1907-1987), a keen champion of the new modern architecture and later the first Staff Architect at the University of Melbourne. In an unpublished memoir (in HV file 602713) written much later in his life Parkes stated that the principal influence on the minimalist design of Yule House was economy:

Yule House was designed in 1932 during the Depression when finance was greatly restricted and costs had to be rigidly controlled. It was designed on the basis of minimum construction cost and maximum lettable space for retail shops and workrooms, with a reasonable street appearance, commensurate with costs, to attract tenants.

Regarding the design for the upper floors of the building, natural daylight to this very narrow site was available only from the street front, and the necessity to provide maximum lighting to meet the requirements of the Melbourne City Council and the *Factories & Shops Act* dictated the pier and beam construction with large windows.

The location of the building, crowded in by adjoining city-grimed buildings, called for an impervious light-coloured veneer to the concrete pier and facades, terracotta faience being the most practical material available at that time for appearance and at a reasonable cost.

The reinforced concrete and terracotta faience was also chosen because the Yule Estate had requested a fireproof building.

A report in the *Argus* (13 October 1932, p 5) stated that

The narrowness of Little Collins Street and the presence of buildings on three sides of the site . made it necessary for the architects to obtain as much natural light as possible from the front. This they did by carrying the windows without structural interruption, across the full face of the building. Good internal lighting was assured and a distinctive external appearance was given to the build by the windows.

The application to the MCC for a permit for a building to cost £8500 was made on 16 February 1932. The terracotta facade cladding was made by Wunderlich Pty Ltd, and was used in an advertisement by the company in the *Journal of the RVIA* in March 1933. A month later a fuller description of the building appeared in the property columns of the *Argus*, which noted that the building was almost ready for occupation. A brief article on Yule House appeared in the Sydney-based trade journal *Building* in March 1933.

Yule House appeared in the *Sands & McDougall Directory* in 1933, with a single occupant, the Misses Milson, frocks. The following year this was joined by seven others: a pawnbroker, an art needlework establishment, a florist, a jeweller, a ladies' hairdresser, a blouse maker and a mantle maker. Tenants over the years tended to be engaged in similar activities, such as hosiery, lingerie, shoes and jewellers. After the death of William Yule's daughter, Mrs Stella Hastings, the management of the Yule Estate passed onto her children, Ronald Yule Hastings and Mrs Stella Lidgett, who were owners until 1985.

Few alterations have been made to the building since its completion. One of the facade tiles fell off in 1947, and was replaced by cement mortar blocks in a matching colour. In 1958 the original steel-framed sash windows on the fifth floor was replaced by a new three-bay counterpart in galvanised steel. The ground floor shopfronts were subject to minor alterations in 1964 (no 311), 1966 (no 309) and again in 1967. These works included the replacement of the original curved shop window at no 309 with a new splayed corner doorway.

## Plaque Citation

Designed by the architects Oakley & Parkes with Rae Featherstone, this was Victoria's first commercial building in the new Streamlined Moderne style. It is also notable for its shopfront and its Art Deco features.

## Extent of Registration

1. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 2233 held by the Executive Director, being all of the land described in Certificate of Title Volume 03077 Folio 383
2. All the building B1 on Diagram 2233 held by the Executive Director

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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/>*