
Former National Mutual Building



B0251 Former National Mutual Building

Location

395 Collins Street,, MELBOURNE VIC 3000 - Property No B0251

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

State

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0036

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - July 23, 2008

What is significant? The National Mutual Life Association was established in 1869 starting a new era in the business of life assurance. The company's first offices were in the Market Buildings on the corner of Collins and Market Streets, Melbourne. In 1881 the company took its first steps towards having a building of its own when a small site on the corner of Collins and Queen Streets was purchased and later the adjacent property with a frontage to Collins Street was also purchased. When the leases of the offices in the new blocks had expired, a competition was held for designs of a proposed new building. Forty-three competition entries were received with

the design of architectural firm Wright Reed and Beaver of Adelaide selected. Tenders for the new building were called in August 1890 and Robert Gamlin was selected as the contractor. The foundation stone of the building was laid 28 July 1891 and the building was completed in March 1893. This 1893 building comprises the Collins Street facade and three bays of the Queen Street facade. When an opportunity arose to purchase the property in Queen Street adjacent to the Head Office building it was gladly accepted. The remainder of the building which extends down Queens Street was erected in 1903 and designed in a similar style to the earlier section. The former NMLA building is constructed in the Federation Gothic style with a heavily moulded facade of beige freestone on a brick and concrete structure. The entry foyer has been fitted out with marble details and the main foyer ceiling is an undecorated rib and panel vault. Inside the main chamber, the ceiling is fully ornamented and consists of a plaster beam and panel system on large freestanding Corinthian columns. The office spaces of the 1893 section retain their plaster decoration and timber moulding around openings.

How is it significant? The former National Mutual Life Association Building is of social, historical, aesthetic and architectural importance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant? The former National Mutual Life Association Building is of aesthetic and architectural importance as a fine example of a Federation Gothic style building. The exterior facade contains many features distinctive to the style such as exuberant modelling, a turret, parapeted gables and masonry mullions. It has interiors to match, with features such as exotic dados of grey marble, red marble pilasters and columns, and white marble stairs in the foyer. The interior also features an elaborate banking chamber with a fully ornamented ceiling. The former National Mutual Life Association Building is of aesthetic importance as it is located diagonally opposite William Wardell's ES & A Bank, William Pitt's Melbourne Stock Exchange and Melbourne Safe Deposit Building, the building completes this precinct's homage to the mercantile associations that became attached to multi-storey Gothic Revival structures of the late 19th century.

The former National Mutual Life Association Building is of social and historical importance for its association with the establishment of financial institutions in Victoria. The establishment of NMLA in 1869 began a new era in Life Assurance in Victoria, with new policies and benefits not offered before in Australia. The building is of historical importance for its representation of the boom period in Melbourne. It was constructed at the peak of the land boom and opened just before the financial crash of 1893.

Adopted from V.H.R. Citation: 12/03/2013

Classified: 'Local' 21/06/1973

Revised: 03/08/1998

Other Names Goode House,

Hermes Number 64598

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/>