

---

## Commonwealth Offices



B2692 Commonwealth  
Offices

---

### Location

4 Treasury Place,, EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002 - Property No B2692

### Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

### Level of significance

National

### Heritage Listing

National Trust

---

### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - October 9, 2006

The Commonwealth Offices building designed by J.S. Murdoch and built in 1912-14, is of aesthetic, architectural, historical, technical and social significance at a NATIONAL level.

The Commonwealth Offices building is aesthetically and architecturally significant as an outstanding example of Edwardian Baroque design in Victoria, and an important early Commonwealth work by John Smith Murdoch, Australia's first Commonwealth Government Architect. The six storey Renaissance palazzo composition of the building, together with the distinctive Baroque details including the ruptured pediments, interrupted entablatures, oversized keystones, Gibb's surrounds, oriels, broad rusticated arches, giant blocked columns, cartouches (on the east facade of the north wing), scrollwork, blocked consoles, and the bay window (recessed in the projecting spatial mass of the east facade) are especially notable.

The Commonwealth Offices building is historically and socially significant for its close association with the

foundation of the Commonwealth of Australia, and particularly as a physical legacy as the primary home of the Commonwealth Government until the establishment of Canberra in 1927. The building is of interest for its associations with the application of Labor principles by the Minister for Home Affairs, King O'Malley through the establishment of day labour conditions which led the Master Builders Association to protect itself under the onslaught of 'modern unionism'. The building is also socially significant for its continued use as a centre of Federal Government operations, and the offices of several former Governors-General.

The Commonwealth Offices building is technically significant as it demonstrates an early application of reinforced concrete frame construction. This construction system and the Treasury vault are notable as a legacy of the building's function for the storage of bank notes and gold reserves.

Classified: 'Regional' 06/06/1994

Revised: 04/10/1999

Hermes Number 65745

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/>*