

## RECORD CHAMBERS



RECORD CHAMBERS SOHE 2008 record chambers h38 july2000

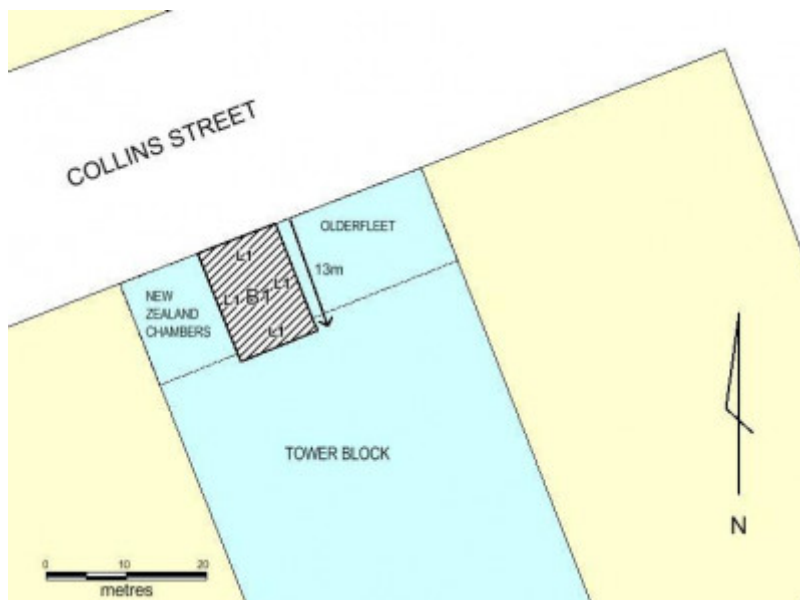


Diagram 38 amended labeling 2017

### Location

479-481 COLLINS STREET MELBOURNE, Melbourne City

### Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

### Level of significance

Registered

### Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0038

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO902

## VHR Registration

October 9, 1974

## Amendment to Registration

December 21, 2000

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 12, 2017

What is significant?

The retained front section of the Record Chambers building comprising the facade to Collins Street, and returning to a depth of approximately 12 metres and including the iron gate which gave access to the laneway leading to the rear.

History summary

The printing and publishing firm of McCarron, Bird & Co. was established in 1872 in Flinders Lane west. Among their early publications was the Australasian Insurance and Banking Record, founded in 1876. *The Record*, which later gave its name to the Record Chambers building, was pre-eminent amongst insurance and banking journals in Australia. Other publications by the company included Alexander Sutherland's *Victoria and Its Metropolis* (1888), and numerous journals, including *Australasian Trade Review*, *Manufacturer's Journal*, *Australian Brewers' Journal*, and *Temperance News*. In 1887 the partnership moved to their own purpose built premises, the Record Chambers building, designed by J A B Koch and built by G B Leith of Flemington. Koch was from Germany and many of his designs betray German Baroque roots. The new premises were constructed during the building boom of the 1880s, which transformed this part of the city from one of small warehouses in close proximity to the wharves, to one of commercial and mercantile activity. The printing works incorporated lithography, engraving and bookbinding. The ground floor served as a retail stationary shop. The Record Chambers was threatened with demolition in the late 1960s, but as a consequence of heritage legislation, the front part of the building was retained in the 1984 redevelopment.

Description summary

The Collins Street facade of the Record Chambers building retains the original ground floor arrangement of two entrances (one pedestrian, one vehicular) flanking a large shop window, although the window has been replaced by an entrance lobby. The iron gate, which gave access to the laneway leading to the rear, is now fixed in an open position.

The facade, which is the most significant part of the building, is an expression of free classicism. It is arranged as four bays, the central two projecting slightly towards the street. Engaged columns and pilasters define each bay. A caryatid terminus (half-female figure on a pedestal) takes the place of the central column on the second storey. The four large arched windows to the first and second storeys contrast to the eight smaller windows on the third storey. A prominent cornice and a segmental pediment crown the second storey. The top of the building is decorated with a bracketed cornice, with balustraded parapet and four urns. The words 'Record Chambers' are

inscribed in the centre balustrade.

Internally the building has a depth of approximately eleven metres, which is all that survives following redevelopment at the rear. Exposed timber roof trusses and a tongue and grooved lining board ceiling survive in the top floor, though the ceiling linings are concealed behind modern finishes.

How is it significant?

The Record Chambers building is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Record Chambers building is historically significant as the premises of one of Melbourne's largest and most prominent nineteenth century publishing companies. The company published many of the important contemporary banking and insurance journals. The Record Chambers building is historically significant as a large and important commercial work of the prominent architect J A B Koch. Koch brought to the boom style a personal, Baroque flavour. [Criterion A]

The Record Chambers is also historically significant for its association with the burgeoning heritage movement of the 1970s, in particular the campaign to save the Gothic streetscape of Collins Street by the National Trust. This campaign and the public concern and development in the city led to the introduction of the Victorian heritage legislation. [Criterion A]

The Record Chambers building is architecturally significant as an early expression of a city building in the so-called boom style. The free and animated use of classical elements demonstrates the growing architectural exuberance of owners and architects during the boom period of the late 1880s. [Criterion D]

## Permit Exemptions

Permit Exemptions

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.
2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations 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 alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

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

**Exterior**

- \* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- \* Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, signage, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.

**Interior**

- \* Refurbishment of the entrance lobby.
- \* Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative scheme.
- \* Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves, skirtings and decorative strapping.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted artworks.
- \* Refurbishment of existing bathrooms, toilets and or en suites including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.
- \* Removal or replacement of existing kitchen benches and fixtures including sinks, stoves, ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers etc and associated plumbing and wiring.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed: if wiring original to the place was carried in timber conduits then the conduits should remain in-situ.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors

Construction dates 1887,

Architect/Designer Koch, JAB,

Heritage Act Categories Registered place,

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## History

Contextual History: Maker/Builder G B Leith. Leith was based in Flemington. He came to Victoria in 1881 and worked as a stonemason for 12 months before becoming a building contractor. His other major project was the Stock Exchange for architect William Pitt (G Sutherland, Victoria and Its Metropolis, Vol II B, p 645). Architect J A B Koch Distinctive style and a master of the decorative use of cement render. Eg. Labassa (formerly Ontario) in Caulfield, 1889-91; Friesa (formerly Oxford, Isabella Grove, Hawthorn (1888); Ulimaroa, St Kilda Road(1880). History of Place: The printing and publishing firm of McCarron , Bird & Co. was established in 1872 in Flinders Lane west. The partnership comprised JF McCarron, JH Bird, HW Puttman and Andrew Stewart. The partnership published the International Exhibition catalogue, 1875. and then in 1876 founded the Australasian Insurance and Banking Record. The Record, which later gave its name to the Record Chambers building, was pre-eminent amongst insurance and banking journals in Australia. Other publications by the company included Alexander Sutherland's Victoria and Its Metropolis (1888), and numerous journals, including Australasian Trade Review and Manufacturer's Journal, Australian Brewers' Journal and Temperance News (Victoria and Its Metropolis, Vol.2, A Sutherland, 1888, p.569). In 1887 the partnership moved to their own purpose built premises, designed by J A B Koch and built by G B Leith of Flemington. The MCC building permit, no.2542, is dated 19 November 1886 (Burchett Index). Presumably the building was finished in the first half of 1887. The building, with fireproof floors, cost over &#pound;18,000 (Builders and Contractors News 15 October 1887 p 366). Despite being recently completed, by the late 1880s the building was barely adequate for the burgeoning business. The printing works incorporated lithography, engraving and bookbinding (Victoria and Its Metropolis, Vol.2, A Sutherland, 1888, p.569). The ground floor served as a retail stationary shop. The first and second floors were divided into offices for tenants. A 7 ft (2.1m) well hole was left in the building for the later erection of a passenger lift. An Otis goods elevator was installed during construction and served the printing works (Builders and Contractors News 15 October 1887 p 366).

### Extent of Registration

#### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended in that the Heritage Register Number 38 in the category described as a Heritage place is now described as :

Record Chambers, 479-481 Collins Street, Melbourne, Melbourne City Council.

#### EXTENT:

1. All the buildings and structures being B1 Record Chambers building as marked on diagram 38 held by the Executive Director.
2. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 38 held by the Executive Director, being described in part of plan CP159396L Vol. 10184, Fol, 749 being part of Crown Allotments 12 and 13, Section 2 in the Parish of Melbourne North.

Dated 13 December 2000

RAY TONKIN  
Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette G 51 21 December 2000 pp.3008-3009]

*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/>*