

5 Individual places with submissions supported by Panel appearances

5.1 CFMEU, 152 -160 Miller Street, West Melbourne (HO1119) Submission 1

(i) The place

The place is described in the Statement of Significance as follows:

What is significant?

This 1950s Modernist cream brick warehouse and factory building has:

- *two levels on a corner site;*
- *simple elevations with ordered openings and opening groups set within each;*
- *openings typically fitted with natural aluminium framed windows;*
- *detailing that includes two-colour stretcher bond spandrels with alternating projecting bricks;*
- *window groups and the main entry framed by projecting plain cement borders typical of the era;*
- *the main Miller Street façade having a vertical element terminating the east end where originally there was the main entry hall and adjoining show room;*
- *Stawell and Anderson Street façades designed originally as one and two storey (for later expansion) with a similar vertical element at the south end;*
- *both elevations as raised to two storeys in 1956 in a matching manner; and*
- *originally large shuttered loading doors to docks at ground level in Anderson Street while Stawell Street had secured window groups.*

How is it significant?

Sisalkraft Distributors P/L store and offices is of historical and aesthetic interest to West Melbourne.

Why is it significant?

Sisalkraft Distributors P/L store and offices is of interest:

- *Historically as closely linked to one of the better known architectural product suppliers of the late 20th century (Criterion A); and*
- *Aesthetically, as a well preserved and uncommon commercial building design from a well-known and respected architectural firm (Criterion E).*

(ii) What is the issue?

The Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) was represented by Jonathon Chapman of Perry Town Planning at the Hearing.

Mr Chapman submitted that the property does not demonstrate significant historical or aesthetic significance sufficient to warrant inclusion within the Heritage Overlay. In particular, he submitted that:

- The significance of Sisalkraft Pty Ltd as the original owners and occupants of the building is not demonstrated by the building as it stands today
- The building has had multiple occupancies
- It is not a prominent or significant work of the architect, Marcus Martin
- It is an unremarkable example of a 1950s commercial building
- The building has undergone a number of changes since its construction and therefore cannot be considered to be intact.

(iii) Council position

Sisalkraft Pty Ltd was an important building supply firm in the immediate post WW2 period. The maintenance of the association of this building with such a significant firm is important even if the association is not overtly obvious.

This building is one of Marcus Martin's last major commissions and it demonstrates his capacity in handling a commercial commission using a modern architectural style.

The physical changes to the building are minor.

(iv) Other submissions

Mr Vines in his evidence for the National Trust suggested that this building was erected shortly after Sisalkraft became the Australian producers of vapour barrier materials for the Australian building industry and therefore reflected the expansion of both the use of building insulating materials and the Australian Sisalkraft business around Australia. He also suggested that the changing nature of architecture and building, from an essentially traditional guild craft to a formalised science, can be seen in this building.

(v) Discussion

The Panel is unconvinced of the historic significance of this building. There is no doubt that Sisalkraft Pty Ltd was an important building supplier in Australia in the mid twentieth century and it went to some lengths to promote itself as the producer and marketer of modern building materials. However, whilst this building is a competently designed and not surprisingly, a modern structure, it tells us little of its original owners and occupants, other than perhaps that they chose a modern design. By 1956 they were not alone in this regard.

The headquarters of Sisalkraft and its factory was in Sydney and it appears that this was a branch office. The association of the name with the Sisalkraft Research Scholarship and the Sisalkraft Theatre at the former University of Melbourne School of Architecture demonstrates that the company was a generous sponsor of the architectural profession and little relationship can be drawn with this building.

The Panel also agrees with the submission that the building's multiple occupancies also detract from any historical value.

However, it is a competent and good example of the modern architecture of post WW2 Melbourne and for that reason alone warrants the application of the proposed Heritage Overlay.

It is certainly not a typical example of the work of Marcus Martin, who was better known for his residential designs for well-to-do clients. Without a close examination of the nature of his practice at this time, it is unreasonable to draw any conclusions about the role of this building in the collection of his work. For example, did he actually design it or was it simply a product of his office?

The Panel believes that the alterations to the building have not destroyed its architectural significance.

(vi) Recommendations

10. That the CFMEU Building 152 -160 Miller Street, West Melbourne be included in the adopted Amendment as HO1119.
11. That the Statement of Significance be adjusted to emphasise the aesthetic importance of the building rather than its historic or associational values.

5.2 Citywide Depot, 208-292 Arden Street, North Melbourne (HO1107 and HO1095) Submission 2

(i) The place

This office building and garage is described in the Statement of Significance as follows:

What is significant?

A two-storey three-colour brick Modernist building erected as office accommodation at the Melbourne City Council Depot, with:

- *a parapeted form to Langford and Green Streets;*
- *two colour brickwork;*
- *windows are steel framed with multi-pane glazing and set in cream brick streamlines or banding encircling the two building levels;*
- *dark glazed manganese bricks trim the window and cream banding; and*
- *a distinctive hipped sawtooth roofline over workshop areas.*

Other buildings further east on the north side of Green Street are similar in design but typically one storey, part of a complex distributed both sides of Green Street, with frontages to Arden and Langford Streets.

How is it significant?

Melbourne City Council Depot office and workshop building is aesthetically significant to North Melbourne.