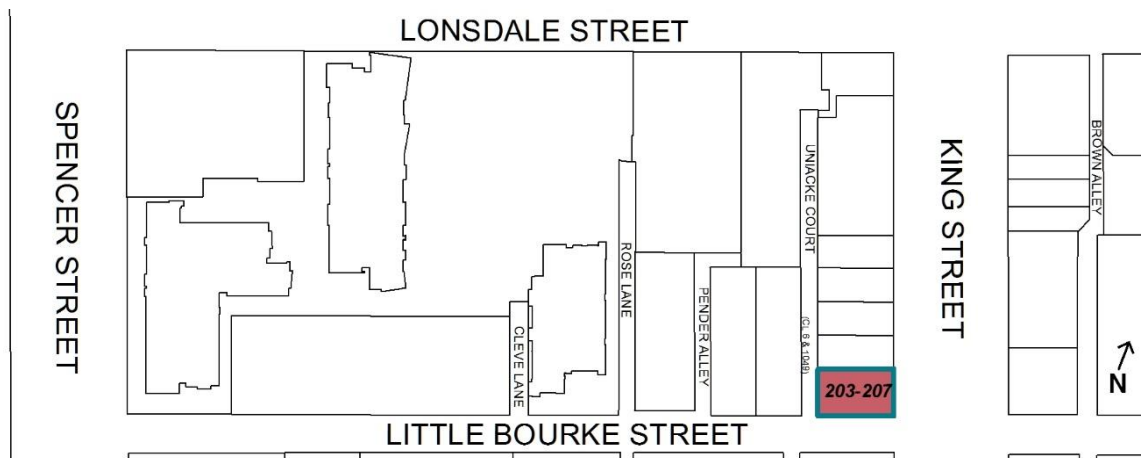


SITE NAME	Former Factory
STREET ADDRESS	203-207 King Street Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	105308



SURVEY DATE: October 2018

SURVEY BY: Context

HERITAGE INVENTORY	H7822-1210	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER GRADE	C
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	J A B Koch	BUILDER:	James Wright
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Federation/Edwardian Period (1902-c1918)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1912-13

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
HISTORIC THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
5 Building a Commercial City	5.4 Building a manufacturing capacity

LAND USE

HISTORIC LAND USE	
Archaeological block no: 17	Inventory no: 210
Character of Occupation: Commercial, Residential	
Land sale details not provided. Current building: two-storeys and basement.	
1866 Cox	Building shown on corner
1880 Panorama	Two-storey building fronting King Street
1888 Mahlstedt	One- and two-storey building, W Child, Butcher.
1905/6 Mahlstedt	One- and two-storey building, Pearson Earthenware shop.
THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Commercial, Residential
1920s	Manufacturing, Commercial
1960s	Manufacturing, Commercial

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

SUMMARY

203-207 King Street is a two-storey Federation period factory building erected in 1912-13 for printer and stationery manufacturer, Thomas George Ramsay. The building was designed by noted architect J A B Koch and constructed by builder James Wright. T G Ramsay & Co occupied the building until 1935. Other long-term occupants included George Wills & Co, shipping agents, from 1950 until at least 1974; and YHA Australia from 1986 to c1999.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Building a commercial city

Building a manufacturing capacity

Economic historian Tony Dingle states that, for much of its history, Melbourne has been Australia's largest single centre of manufacturing (Dingle 2008).

The fringes of north and west Melbourne developed as a mixed area of residential, commercial and industrial uses. Small, sometimes substandard workers' housing was built among the factories that provided employment. Manufacturers expanded in the late nineteenth century, often absorbing the adjacent housing. The city's west end manufacturing progressively expanded north to encompass the blocks between Adderley Street and King Street (MPS:34).

As the City of Melbourne's Municipal Planning Scheme notes, 'With the local impact of Sands & McDougall at the north end of Spencer Street, a printing, publishing and paper goods district was established in West Melbourne by the end of the nineteenth century' (MPS:34).

Development slowed during the economic depression of the 1890s, only recovering with the revival of immigration in the first decades of the twentieth century.

Although affected by World War One in the period 1914-1918, by the end of the 1920s Melbourne's population had reached one million people. In the first decades of the twentieth century, the demand for residential development declined in central Melbourne as many residents moved out of the city to the suburbs, and the booming retail and manufacturing sectors rapidly took up available city properties (Marsden 2000:29-30). Multi-storey workshops, factories and warehouses, many designed by architects, increasingly took over the city centre.

Development in the city slowed with the widespread economic depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s. Because of a lack of finance over this period, instead of new construction, some city buildings were substantially remodelled to create new commercial and industrial spaces.

The printing industry in the city's west was further consolidated in the area with the opening of the Argus Building, from where the *Argus* newspaper was printed and published, on the corner of La Trobe and Elizabeth streets in 1926.

From the 1930s, like the rest of Australia, an increasing proportion of the city's workforce took up jobs in manufacturing, an industry that led Australia's recovery from the economic depression, when, the *Encyclopedia of Melbourne* notes, a

steep rise in tariffs, devaluation of the Australian pound, falling wages and electricity costs all made local producers far more competitive internationally. Textiles benefited first, then the metals industries and engineering took over as pacemakers (Dingle 2008).

After being the centre of manufacturing in Australia in the 1930s, Melbourne's importance in this regard began to decline (Context 2012:35). However, from the end of World War Two to the beginning of the 1970s, Melbourne underwent the most sustained growth in its history, mostly based on the manufacturing industry.

SITE HISTORY

The subject site is located on part of Crown Allotment 17, Block 13, offered for sale in 1839 ('Plan of Melbourne' 1838).

During the Victorian period, the area near the corner of King and Little Bourke streets was developed with Victorian-period working-class residences and retail premises. By the first decades of the twentieth century through until the 1950s, the area became associated with the printing and publishing industry, reflecting the significant growth of industry and manufacturing in Melbourne over this time. A two-storey building (likely a store) and a one-storey building (likely a residence) were in existence on the subject site by 1888. In the same year, butcher, W Child, occupied the two-storey building and by 1905, Pearson Earthenware operated from the building (Fels, Lavelle and Mider 1993, Inventory no 210).

The subject building at 203-207 King Street was constructed in 1912-13 for printer and stationery manufacturer, Thomas George Ramsay.

T G Ramsay & Co, printers, had opened premises in Chancery Lane, Melbourne in 1888 (*Age* 28 July 1888:5).

In 1893, Messrs T G Ramsay & Co, letterpress and lithographic printers and manufacturing stationers of Little Collins Street Melbourne, opened a branch office at View Point in Bendigo. By 1894, the firm had moved its Melbourne offices to 87 King Street (*Age* 24 November 1894:3). In 1910, T G Ramsay & Co commenced operations from new premises at 209-211 King Street, which comprised two-storey brick offices and a factory designed by architects Ward & Carleton (*Argus* 30 June 1909:2). New premises for the company, the subject building, were constructed in 1912-13 at 203-207 King Street. Designed by architect J A B Koch, the brick factory building at 203-207 King Street was constructed by builder James Wright (MCC registration no 3377, as cited in AAI, record no 71707).

In 1923, Ramsay Publishing Pty Ltd was registered to acquire the businesses of T G Ramsay & Co and Shipping Publishing Co Pty Ltd, both located at 203-207 King Street (*Daily Commercial News and Shipping List* 15 August 1923:13). In 1925, the two-storey building with basement was described as constructed of steel columns and girders with a galvanised iron roof. In this year it continued to house printers T G Ramsay & Co (see Figure 1) (Mahlstedt Map Section 1, no 22, 1925). By 1934, Ramsay Publishing, who published mainly books, operated from premises addressed as 197-207 King Street (*Argus* 19 April 1934:3). T G Ramsay & Co remained in the building until 1935.

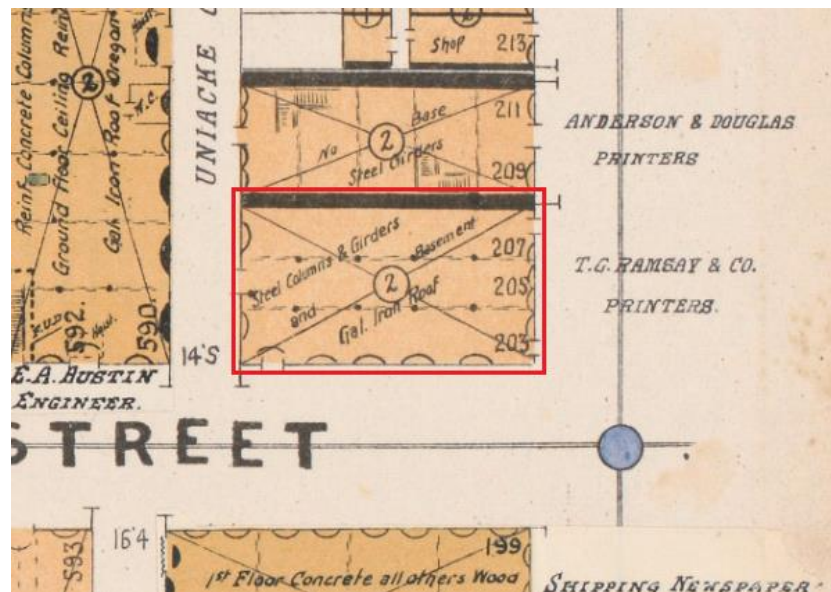


Figure 1. The site as it appeared in 1925. (Source: Mahlstedt Map Section 1, no 22, 1925)

In 1935 the building was briefly occupied by a lithographer by the name of J E Hackett (S&Mc 1935, 1938). In 1939 and 1940, the Textile Technical School Ltd operated from the building at 203-207 King Street (*Age* 27 January 1939:10; *Age* 11 September 1940:2). The building was then used by Kemp & Sheehan, who sold plumbing goods, between 1942 and 1945 (S&Mc 1942, 1945). By 1950, the subject building was occupied by George Wills & Co, shipping agents, who remained there until at least 1974 (S&Mc 1950, 1974).

English born George Wills founded G & R Wills, importers and warehousemen, in Rundle Street Adelaide in 1849, expanding from drapery supplies to include clothing and footwear. By 1922, George Wills & Co had established operations around the world, including London, Manchester, Liverpool, New York, Paris and Morocco (*Advertiser* 23 December 1922:12). To keep up with expansion in Melbourne, the company constructed a large warehouse in Flinders Lane in 1912 (*Advertiser* 23 December 1922:12). G & R Wills became a public company in 1946 *Sydney Morning Herald* 18 November 1946:6).

The subject building in unpainted brick building with signage above the entry reading 'George Wills & Co Limited' c1972 can be seen in Figure 2.

The company was taken over by Industrial Equity c1983, then sold to Southern Farmers which was taken over by Independent Holdings Ltd c1989 (SLSA 2019).

The building was put up for auction in December 1975 and occupied by a law firm named Oakley, Thompson & Co, from 1978 (*Age* 28 April 1977:49; *Age* 25 September 1984; *Age* 11 December 1975:37).

The subject building was refurbished by the Youth Hostels Association (YHA) Australia and converted to a hostel in 1986 (CoMMaps). YHA Australia is a non-for-profit and membership-based organisation that aims to provide affordable accommodation for travellers, whilst encouraging diversity and cross-cultural experiences (YHA 2019). Youth hostels originated in Germany in 1909, with an international federation of youth hostels founded in 1932. The first youth hostel in Australia opened in 1939 in Warrandyte in Victoria, and quickly spread to the other states (YHA 2019). In 1947, a national

meeting took place, which led to the formation of a national body of hostels, which was to be known as YHA. (RCM 2019).

YHA Australia operates 75 hostels that house 8,297 beds with an average of 4,400 guests per night. Over 250,000 people are members of YHA Australia, who hosts 6 million stays per year for guests from over 137 countries (RCM 2019).

YHA Australia remained at the site until at least 1998, and during its occupation the building was used as the headquarters for YHA Victoria (*Age* 29 November 1998:121). The site was sold by YHA Australia in 1999 (CT:V4722 F204).

The subject building was refurbished in 2000 and today operates as a backpacker's hostel (CoMMaps).



Figure 2. Corner Little Bourke Street and King Street, c1972, showing 203-207 King Street on the corner site. (Source: Halla c1972, SLV [copyright](#))

J A B Koch, architect

John Augustus Bernard Koch (1845-1928), architect, was born on 27 August 1845 in Hamburg (Germany), son of Johann Christian Koch, joiner. In 1855 the family migrated to Melbourne. By 1870 Koch was listed in the Melbourne directory as an architect at Richmond, having served his articles with F M White and becoming his assistant (Goad 2012:388).

Appointed architect to the City of Melbourne in 1873, Koch designed the City's hay, horses, cow and pig markets and the corn exchange. Later institutional buildings included two Richmond libraries, the German Club in Alfred Place, and projects associated with the Women's Hospital, Melbourne (of which he was honorary architect and life member) and the Castlemaine hospital. Two of his Richmond hotels, the Spread Eagle and the Prince Alfred, survive in addition to some warehouses, factories and stables (Goad 2012:388). His utilitarian structures are noted for their sound construction, firm lines and sparing use of decorative brickwork (Forge 1983).

Koch is known for his use of classical building styles in the boom period of Melbourne. His best remembered work is the Labassa mansion in Caulfield, Victoria, where he designed and oversaw the complete renovation of an earlier house at great cost (Goad 2012:388). An active community member, Koch was a councillor for Richmond and later mayor (in 1883), as well as being chairman for the local school board. He was president of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects (RVIA), 1903-04 (Goad 2012:389).

SITE DESCRIPTION

Located at the northwest corner of the intersection of King Street and Little Bourke Street, 203-207 King Street comprises a two-storey factory/warehouse building with a basement constructed in 1912-13. The King Street and Little Bourke Street elevations are symmetrical comprising four equal vertical bays on King Street and five on Little Bourke Street. The walls are painted (originally unpainted) loadbearing face brickwork. The Federation period warehouse has a restrained design, featuring some elements influenced by Romanesque architecture, including a strong vertical emphasis with brick pilasters featuring curved corners to the reveals, terminating in semicircular arches with four rows of brick on edge voussoirs. The King Street elevation features Art Nouveau style decorated capitals to the brick pilasters at the spring point of the first-floor arches, but these are not present on the Little Bourke Street elevation, indicating a secondary frontage. There are simple recessed spandrels between the pilasters at the first-floor level with a projecting sill below each window opening. The building terminates in a substantial cornice supported on modillions with a simple low brick parapet. Behind the parapet, the roof is pitched and clad in corrugated steel, with a gambrel form at the eastern end.

The original timber frame windows appear to be substantially extant at first floor level, comprising a triple-bay Diocletian pattern. At the ground level, some of the mullions have been removed to create larger shopfront windows although the openings remain unaltered. The ground floor is raised above the street, and is accessed through a doorway on the Little Bourke Street elevation. On both frontages, there are low windows with security bars to allow daylight to enter the basement below the ground floor. The building does not have an awning.

The rear (Uniacke Court) lane elevation is of unpainted loadbearing face brickwork with rendered concrete lintels over the door and window openings, and a simple triangular parapet with roof vent. A face brick chimney with corbelled top rises above the parapet. Most of the window openings appear to be original and retain a mixture of timber and (possibly later) steel framed glazing. Some large exhaust ducting, air conditioning units and machinery have been fixed to the rear wall.

INTEGRITY

203-207 King Street is substantially intact with only some minor changes visible to original or early fabric. The building retains its original built form, scale and configuration including pilasters, semicircular arches arch tops, Art Nouveau style decorated capitals, cornice supported on modillions and parapets. It retains its original pattern of openings and timber windows, although some of the steel framed windows on the rear (Uniacke Court) elevation may have replaced earlier windows. At street level, the building retains its original refined configuration of masonry and openings. Alterations include the overpainting of the brickwork (which is reversible) and creation of larger windows by the removal of mullions at street level. Overall the building is of high integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Modestly scaled factory/ warehouses constructed during the Edwardian/Federation period were an important phase of development in central Melbourne, especially during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These buildings are typically built of loadbearing face brick, with minimum ornamental detail that, where present, generally references back to classical architecture. Many of these buildings are no longer operating in their original industrial or manufacturing role, often adapted to house businesses or offices with retail at ground level, resulting in substantial changes at street level.

The following examples are comparable with the subject building at 203-207 King Street, being of a similar use, scale, location or construction date. The images and descriptions are provided by CoM Maps unless stated otherwise, with images dating from c2000 or later.

103-105 Lonsdale Street, 1908 (Significant in HO507 Little Bourke Street Precinct)

Former warehouse/factory originally of three storeys. Designed in the Romanesque Revival style and built by J J Oliver in 1908. Now an office building with ground level retail it was refurbished and subdivided in 2008 with the addition of two extra storeys and an accessible rooftop.



Figure 3. 103-105 Lonsdale Street, built in 1908.

217 Queen Street, 1907 (HO1071)

A three-storey brick building with ground level retail and upper level offices. Formerly a warehouse and factory. It was designed by Gibbs & Finlay in the American Romanesque style and built by James SG Wright in 1907. It features particularly good Art Nouveau ornamentation.



Figure 4. 217 Queen Street, built in 1907

612-620 Lonsdale Street, 1911 (HO722)

Two-storey brick and bluestone building built in 1911 and demolished in mid-2014 with the 1911 heritage façade retained.



Figure 5. 612-620 Lonsdale Street, built in 1911. (Source: Gogle 2019)

The two-storey building at 203-207 King Street is a largely intact example of an early twentieth century factory/warehouse building, utilitarian and functional yet refined in its design, of which there are several surviving examples within central Melbourne (often adapted to house new uses). These buildings were generally built of load-bearing face brick, with restrained decoration compared to their Victorian period precursors, but with some earlier stylistic references.

203-207 King Street is comparable with a number of other HO listed examples of the type, including 103 Lonsdale Street (HO507) and 217 Queen Street (HO1071) where the vertical proportions of the brick pilasters terminating with semicircular arches demonstrate the Romanesque influences often found in Federation period warehouses. It is particularly comparable with 103 Lonsdale Street, (HO507) being relatively austere in its use of applied decoration, especially when compared to 217 Queen Street (HO1071). It is also comparable to 612-620 Lonsdale Street (HO722), although this latter building has a more elaborate parapet.

Unlike most of the other examples, the original brickwork of the subject building has been overpainted, however this change is reversible.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** D

**Central City Heritage
Study 1993** C

**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

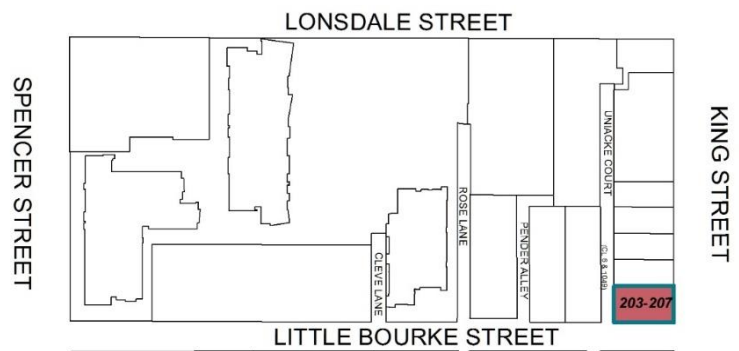
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Factory



PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

203-207 King Street, Melbourne, a two-storey factory/ warehouse building built in 1912-13.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The original building form and scale;
- The original fenestration, including brick pilasters (some with Art Nouveau capitals), semicircular arches, recessed spandrels, cornice, parapet and pattern of window openings; and
- The original timber frame windows.

Later alterations made to the street level facades are not significant.

How it is significant?

203-207 King Street, Melbourne, is of local historic and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The two-storey factory building at 203-207 King Street is historically significant for the evidence it provides of a key phase in Melbourne's manufacturing history during the first decades of the twentieth century when most residents moved out of the city to the suburbs, and the retail and manufacturing sectors rapidly took up city properties. Multi-storey workshops, factories and warehouses, many designed by architects, were increasingly established in the city centre. The factory building at 203-207 King Street was constructed in 1912-13 to a design by notable architect J A B Koch. Constructed for printer and stationery manufacturer, Thomas George Ramsay, it is also significant as it is indicative of the historical concentration of businesses connected to the printing, publishing and paper goods industry in the west of the city. Ramsay's business, named T G Ramsay & Co, was associated with the Ramsay family, Melbourne printers and publishers since 1888. T G Ramsay & Co occupied the building for 22 years, until 1935. (Criterion A)

203-207 King Street is significant as a largely intact example of a two-storey Federation period factory/warehouse building featuring some elements influenced by Romanesque architecture. It is one of several such buildings that survive from the period, which are generally low scale and use simple construction of loadbearing face brick walls with either a steel post and beam or reinforced concrete internal structure. It retains its original form and scale, and exhibits key characteristics of its type and style, such as brick pilasters (some with Art Nouveau capitals) terminating in semicircular arches, recessed spandrels, cornice, parapet and pattern of window openings and, at first floor level, timber-framed Diocletian pattern windows. The significance is enhanced by retention at street level of the original refined configuration of masonry and openings. Despite the overpainting, the original form and detailing of the building remain clearly legible. (Criterion D)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)