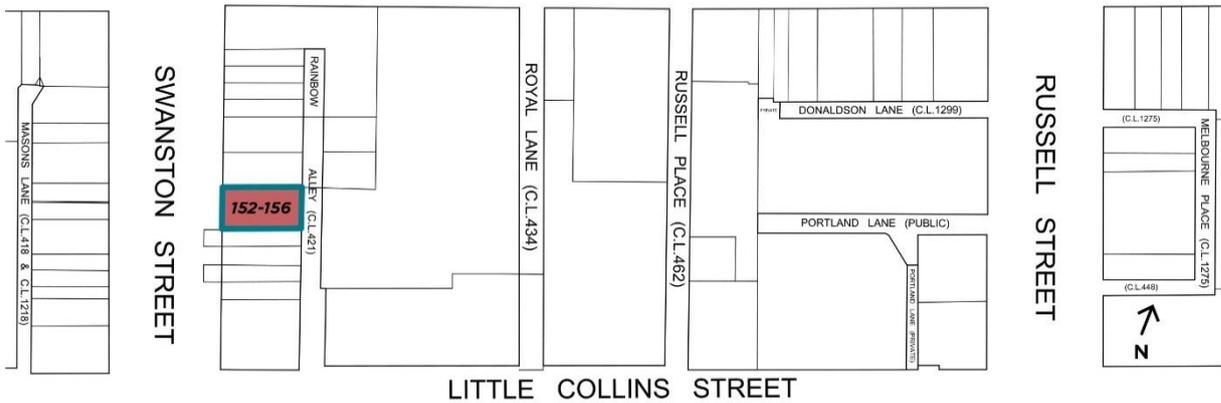


SITE NAME	Former Bank of Australasia
STREET ADDRESS	152-156 Swanston Street Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	109410



BOURKE STREET



SURVEY DATE: January 2018

SURVEY BY: Context

HERITAGE INVENTORY	H7822-1643	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	A & K Henderson	FORMER GRADE	C
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD	Interwar Period (c1919-c1940)	BUILDER:	Not known
		DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1888, 1938 (remodelled)

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	5.3 Developing a large, city-based economy
	OTHER SUB-THEMES
3.0 Shaping the Urban Landscape	3.2 Expressing an architectural style

LAND USE

HISTORIC LAND USE	
Archaeological block no: 38	Inventory no: Inventory not provided
THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Commercial
1920s	Commercial
1960s	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

The former Bank of Australasia at 152-156 Swanston Street was remodelled from two Victorian shops by A & K Henderson in 1938-39. It is an excellent example of an interwar bank and is a significant place within the Swanston Street South Precinct.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Building a Commercial City

Developing a large, city-based economy

Banks, insurance companies, building societies and shipping companies were first established in the block bounded by Flinders Street, William Street, Bourke Street and Elizabeth Street and many of them erected substantial buildings by the 1880s (Savill 1987). By this time other professional and business uses were also in evidence, including legal chambers (MPS:50).

As well as managing locally generated income, the banks provided significant overseas capital, principally from Britain, to finance public projects and private investment. But the boom of the 1880s saw over-borrowing and overspending on building projects. Economic depression in the early 1890s saw many banks and land companies close their doors as British capital was rapidly withdrawn. The city recovered to some extent in the early twentieth century, and Melbourne underwent further development in its new role as the nation's capital. The Great Depression followed in the 1930s, which marked another period of decline. Nevertheless, during the long boom of the postwar period that followed, the bulk of Australia's leading public companies had their headquarters in Melbourne. Melbourne remained the financial centre of Australia, a role it maintained until the late twentieth century (Context 2012:33).

Shaping the urban landscape

Expressing an architectural style

In the interwar period, a variety of styles was used in the design of commercial buildings, as architects and designers explored ways of treating buildings with new height limits, made possible by innovations such as the elevator and changes in regulations. In some instances, classical revival styles were used, while at other times, styles more closely associated with modern movement were used to express a streamlined, progressive aesthetic. The classical revival Commercial Palazzo style was commonly used, as exemplified by Harry Norris's Nicholas Building in Swanston Street of 1925 (Context, 2012:15). The style was an early attempt at creating a style suitable for the tall building. It was divided into a base, shaft and cornice, much like a Renaissance palazzo. The scale, however, was greatly enlarged, with the shaft stretching up to 10 storeys.

From the 1920s, onward, cantilevered verandahs came into fashion, for their clean lines and modern appearance. At this time the City Council began to encourage the removal of the cast iron 'corporation verandahs', and encourage their replacement with hung verandahs (which visually emulated the cantilevered ones). The corporation verandahs, with their iron posts and the city's coat of arms on the frieze, had characterised almost all commercial buildings in Melbourne and its suburbs up to this time (Context, 2012:15).

SITE HISTORY

Two three-storey brick buildings at today's 152-156 Swanston Street were in existence in 1888 and housed shirtmakers A A Benjamin and tobacconist J Josephs (Mahlstedt Map no 8, 1888). In 1917, the buildings were purchased by butchers T K Bennett and Woolcock Pty Ltd, who occupied the buildings, addressed as 154-156 Swanston Street, until 1938 (*Herald* 25 October 1917:10).

In 1938, the buildings were purchased by the Bank of Australasia for £60,000. As part of a complete remodelling, a newspaper report of the day stated that the bank planned to add an extra storey and mansard roof, covered in copper. A banking chamber and shop were to be located on the ground floor, with upper floors leased for offices and professional chambers. In addition, the report continued, the 'whole of the present architecture will be removed from the façade, and the new work will be carried out in brick, with a stucco finish'. The architects for the project were A & K Henderson & Partners of Bank Place, Melbourne (*Argus* 5 February 1938:2). The Bank of Australasia branch at 152-156 Swanston Street opened in the ground floor, addressed as 154-156 Swanston Street, in August 1938 (*Argus* 5 August 1938:5).

The upper premises all addressed as 156 Swanston Street, were occupied by various businesses including: Astor Studio, portrait photographers; Austral Lighting Supplies Co, electric wholesalers; W Broadhead, photographic suppliers; Ingram & Co, accountants; Skin Treatment, beauty salon; Radio Rentals Pty Ltd, radio retailers; and Romney Tea & Coffee Lounge (S&Mc 1942). The Ingram & Co also established the 'Ingram School of Commerce' on the premises and provided classes until the mid-1950s (S&Mc 1942; *Age* 16 June 1954:20). The current occupant of the ground floor is Salera's, a long-standing jewellery business founded in 1953.



Figure 1. 152 Swanston Street, date unknown. (Source: Melbourne Heritage Action 2015)

A & K Henderson

A & K Henderson (1906-1942) was a father and son practice with A M Henderson senior having worked with Reed & Barnes (1869-1872) and forming Henderson & Smart 1879-1906). With his son K A Henderson the firm became A & K Henderson (1906-1942) and continued a strong commercial clientele throughout the interwar period. Alcaston House at the corner of Spring and Collins Streets is an example of their restrained classical design. The partnership was extended in 1920 to include Rodney Alsop and Marcus Martin and it was as A & K Henderson, Alsop & Martin that they secured a major commercial client in Temperance & General Life Assurance. After Henderson Snr's death in 1922 the firm completed many commercial buildings under Kingsley Henderson's direction, working across styles such as the Renaissance revival and modern (Willis in Goad & Willis, 2012:322-3).

SITE DESCRIPTION

152-156 Swanston Street is part of the Swanston Street South Precinct. The site extends through to Rainbow Alley at the rear, and the building is built to the site boundaries. Rising to a height of four storeys and with a fifth storey under a pitched mansard roof, it is considerably taller than the two-storey scale of adjacent Victorian era places in this block of Swanston Street.

The interwar classical building is based on a remodelling of two earlier shops. The façade features a stucco finish with a regular pattern of vertically oriented windows that graduate in size reflecting the importance of each floor level. Each storey also employs a different type of classical decorative treatment to the windows. There is an overhanging cornice and a balustraded parapet with urns. The pitched roof over the front rooms contains an attic floor with dormer windows, a relatively unusual feature when most commercial buildings employ a parapet to conceal the roof entirely. At street level there is a cantilevered verandah and a recessed entry between faceted shopfront glazing. The shop front glazing is contemporary in manner with frameless sheets butted together. Overall the building at 152-156 Swanston Street is relatively conservative in its styling for its construction date of 1938.

INTEGRITY

156-162 Swanston Street retains high integrity to the upper floors and retains a cantilevered verandah. The ground floor shopfronts are highly likely to have been remodelled from the previous use as a bank. The historic photo, although undated shows that there has been little change to the building's façade apart from the removal of some window hoods or awning blinds.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The interwar period provided many new commercial buildings in the city centre. At the same time the use of different styles including neo-Gothic, Renaissance revival and classical revival was promoted by several prominent architectural practices including that of A & K Henderson. The images and descriptions below are provided by CoM Maps unless stated otherwise, with images dating from c2000 or later.

Other works by A & K Henderson

In the interwar period A & K Henderson were responsible for many large-scale commissions within the City of Melbourne. Their association with several banks and with the Temperance and General Life Assurance Society (T&G) throughout the 1920s and 1930s resulted in some fine buildings, many of which are on the Heritage Overlay and the Victorian Heritage Register. Their interpretation of

classical styling was widely used, even with taller and more modern buildings such as the former National Bank of Australasia headquarters at 271-275 Collins Street.

480 Bourke Street, 1925 (Interim HO1242 – recommended as significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review)

480 Bourke Street is a four-storey Interwar office building designed by A & K Henderson, Alsop & Martin in 1925, also in the classical revival style.



Figure 2. 480 Bourke Street constructed 1925. (Source: Context 2017)

Alcaston House, 2 Collins Street and 69-81 Spring Street, 1930 (VHR H0500; HO559, Significant in HO504 Collins Street East precinct)

Alcaston House is of architectural significance for its combination of Renaissance revival motifs within an essentially modern framework and for the way in which its design expresses its mixed uses. The use of detailing such as the smooth rustication and round-headed windows and the colour of the main structure complement the other buildings in this important precinct, especially the Old Treasury.



Figure 3. Alcaston House, cnr Collins and Spring streets constructed 1930. (Source: VHD)

Former Bank of Australasia, 394-398 Collins Street and 73-83 Queen Street, 1929 (VHR H0033; HO606)

The former Bank of Australasia was designed in two stages by two different architects. The architects for the first stage, Reeds & Barnes, designed a restrained two-storey classical building, constructed of imported Oamaru stone, with a rusticated base, a prominent cornice and grouped corner pilasters. The architects for the second stage of the building, in 1929, were A & K Henderson. Three stories were added which matched the original building in both external style and materials.



Figure 4. Former Bank of Australasia, cnr. Collins and Queen Streets constructed 1929. (Source: VHD)

Former National Bank of Australasia, 271-275 Collins Street, 1924-25 (VHR H2064; HO595)

In 1924-5 the architects A & K Henderson won the competition for the design of a new building, designing a five bay, 10-storey steel framed structure with reinforced concrete floors. The building rose to the maximum permitted height limit, 132ft (40.2m). The design is that of an elongated commercial palazzo.



Figure 5. Former National Bank of Australasia, 271-275 Collins Street constructed 1924-25. (Source: VHD)

T & G building, 141-165 Collins Street, 1929 (HO731)

12-storey office building with ground level retail and 4 level basement car park. Designed by Anketell & K Henderson in the neo-Baroque style it was built by the Macleod brothers in stages from 1926, 1938 & 1959. Of note is the 1929 Napier Waller mural in the foyer.



Figure 6. 141-165 Collins Street constructed 1929. (Source: VHD)

National Trustees and Executors Company offices, 93-95 Queen Street, 1939 (HO731)

A seven-storey brick office building designed by A & K Henderson in the neo-Gothic style and built in 1939.



Figure 7. 93-95 Queen Street constructed 1939.

Interwar banks

The interwar bank forms a prominent part of the landscape of the Hoddle Grid. Amongst the examples below are several State listed banks and some with Heritage Overlays. Banking buildings of the early 1920s were generally three to four storeys but by the 1930s had grown to 10 storeys or more. The styles deemed appropriate included the classical Greek and Renaissance revival styles

whilst employing concrete structures and sometimes terra cotta faience as facing. Later buildings in the 1930s started to express themselves through modernism.

Former Bank of New South Wales, 137-139 Flinders Lane, 1924 (Interim HO1292, HO1286 Flinders Lane East Precinct – recommended as significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review)

137-139 Flinders Lane, the former ES& A and Bank of New South Wales, now Flinders Lane Gallery dates from 1924. It contributes to the Flinders Lane East Precinct and is individually significant. It is a reinforced concrete building with neo-Gothic styling.



Figure 8. 137-139 Flinders Lane constructed 1924. (Source: Context 2018)

Former State Savings Bank, 615-623 Collins Street, 1923-1924 (HO1013)

615-623 Collins Street is a five-storey rendered brick former State Savings Bank building. Designed in the Renaissance revival style by Peck & Kemter.



Figure 9. 615-623 Collins Street constructed 1924.

Former Union Bank, 351-357 Elizabeth Street, 1928 (HO1019)

A five-storey rendered brick bank building. Designed by Butler & Martin in the Commercial Palazzo style and built for the Union Bank by Thompson & Chalmers in 1928.



Figure 10. 351-357 Elizabeth Street constructed 1928.

Former ES&A Bank, 219-225 Swanston Street, 1928 (VHR H0390; HO749)

The Former ES&A Bank at 219-225 Swanston Street of 1928 by Hare, Henry & Hare is of architectural significance as a notable example of the popular 1920s Greek neo-Classical revival. The Greek Revival style was favoured by the ES&A Bank and a number of its branches were built in this style in the 1920s. This appears to be the most intact and best example of the style in its relatively unabstracted form. The style emphasises solidity in its classical references, a characteristic no doubt valued by a bank.



Figure 11. 219-225 Swanston Street constructed 1928.

Former Bank of New South Wales, 190-192 Bourke Street, 1929 (VHR H0799; HO540)

The former Bank of New South Wales building of 1929 by Godfrey & Spowers is architecturally significant for exemplifying the architectural eclecticism and exoticism of the late 1920s and early 1930s. It is very unusual for the application of Egyptian motifs. It is an excellent example of the use of decorative terra-cotta faience, which was a popular cladding material in the inter-war years.



Figure 12 190-192 Bourke Street constructed 1929.

77-89 William Street, 1939 (HO753)

Nine-storey concrete office building with a sandstone faience. It contains a ground floor banking chamber. Designed by Meldrum & Noad in the neo-Renaissance modernist style and built in 1939. It received the Victorian Institute of Architects Street Architecture Medal in 1942.



Figure 13. 77-89 William Street constructed 1939.

In the context of the commercial work of A & K Henderson, 152-156 Swanston Street is a modest example and most similar to 480 Bourke Street. It adopts the relatively conservative styling adopted for many of the practice's larger commissions, probably reflecting the wishes of their banking and other commercial clientele. When compared with other smaller interwar banks it is comparable in architectural quality and integrity to several examples already on the HO.

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

152-156 Swanston Street is also contributory to the Swanston Street South Precinct.

REFERENCES

Argus, as cited.

Context 2012, *Thematic History: A History of the City of Melbourne's Urban Environment*, prepared for the City of Melbourne.

Herald, as cited.

Melbourne Planning Scheme (MPS), 'Melbourne and its Heritage Precincts', reference document to Clause 22.06 Heritage Precincts Policy of the Melbourne Planning Scheme, <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/heritage-precincts-history-significance.pdf>, accessed 2 February 2018.

Sands and McDougall, Melbourne and Suburban Directories (S&Mc), as cited.

Savill, Barbara 1987, 'First land owners in Melbourne', Royal Historical Society of Victoria, <http://www.historyvictoria.org.au/Early%20Melbourne/First%20Melbourne%20Settlers.html> accessed 23 January 2018.

Young, John and Spearritt, Peter 2008, 'Retailing' in *eMelbourne*, School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, <http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM01241b.htm>, accessed 13 June 2017.

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

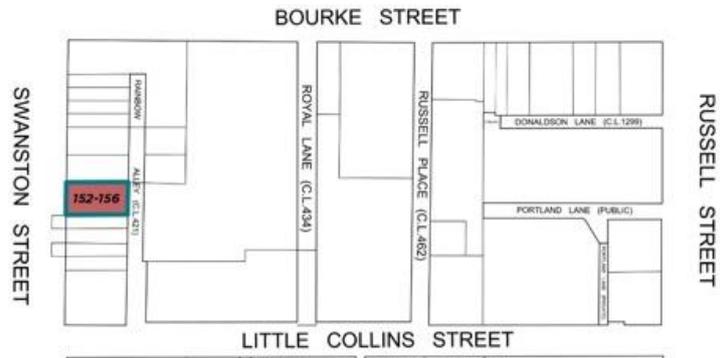
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011**

Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Bank of Australasia

PS ref no: Interim HO1295



What is significant?

The former Bank of Australasia at 152-156 Swanston Street, Melbourne, constructed in 1938 and designed by A & K Henderson.

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

- The building’s original external form, materials and detailing;
- The building’s high level of integrity to its original design;
- The pitched mansard roof, balustraded parapet with urns and cornice;
- The original pattern and size of fenestration; and
- The recessed entry.

Later alterations at ground level are not significant.

How it is significant?

152-156 Swanston Street, Melbourne is of local historic, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The former Bank of Australasia at 152-156 Swanston Street, Melbourne is historically significant for its association with the interwar boom in banking, financial services and insurance that followed the recovery from the great economic depression of the 1890s. The interwar period saw many banks construct new premises in the central city, contributing to Melbourne’s growth and consolidation of a large, city-based economy. (Criterion A)

152-156 Swanston Street is representative both of the form and development of commercial buildings in the interwar period and as a work of prominent city-based architects A & K Henderson. It represents a substantially intact interwar bank that compares favourably to other examples on the HO including the former State Savings Bank, 615-623 Collins Street and the former Union Bank at 351-357 Elizabeth Street. It is also a modest example of the work of A & K Henderson who completed many commissions for major banks throughout the 1920s and 30s. 152-156 Swanston Street employs architectural classicism which was routinely used for their commercial projects. (Criterion D)

152-156 Swanston Street is of aesthetic significance for its contribution to the Swanston Street South Precinct. Its form and scale are both prominent, yet not out of scale with other buildings in the precinct. 152-156 Swanston Street demonstrates aesthetic value in its classically styled façade that is of high integrity. Particular characteristics include the stucco finish, vertically oriented windows of graduating proportions and distinctive decorative treatment, reflecting the importance of each floor. Other features include the cornice and balustraded parapet with urns. Amongst commercial buildings, the roof feature with dormer windows and an attic floor is unusual. A further characteristic of the style and period, and integral to the building is the cantilevered verandah. (Criterion E)

Primary source

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

