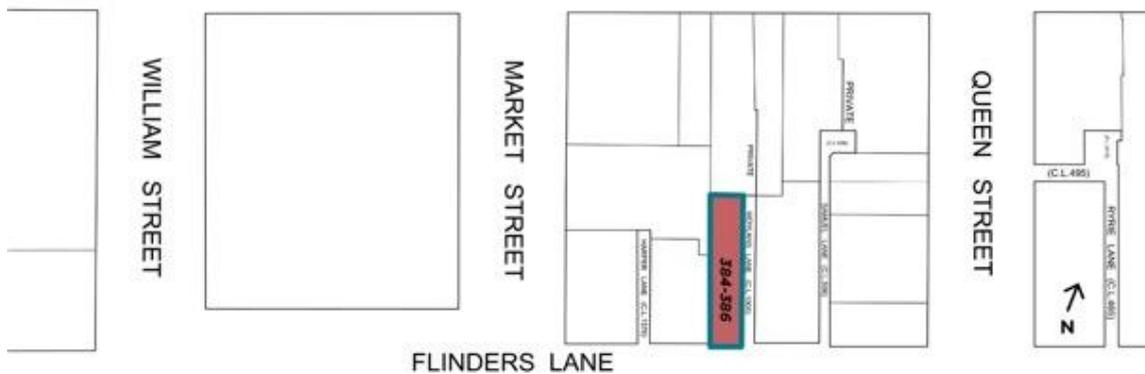


SITE NAME	Former Gordon Buildings
STREET ADDRESS	384-386 Flinders Lane Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	603904



COLLINS STREET



SURVEY DATE: May 2017

SURVEY BY: Context Pty Ltd

HERITAGE INVENTORY	H7822-1796	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER GRADE	C
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Frederick Williams (original and additions)	BUILDER:	Harry Lockington (1885) Robert Fraser (1888)
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Victorian Period (1851-1901)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1885, 1888

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
8 Living in the city	8.2 Housing the population
3 Shaping the urban landscape	3.2 Expressing an architectural style

LAND USE

HISTORIC LAND USE	
Archaeological block no: 51	Inventory no: 796
Character of Occupation: Commercial, Residential	
Land acquired by W Powell 1837, Block 3 Allotment 12.	
1839 Williamson	Building.
1837 & 1843 Hoddle	
1852 Proeschel	
1855 Kearney	
1866 Cox	
1877 Dove	Four buildings, one to four storeys; house, J William, Coopers Yard, Iron shed, S D Carter
1880 Panorama	Current building constructed 1885.
1888 Mahlstedt	One four-storey building. 'Gordon Buildings'.
1905/6 Mahlstedt	One four-storey building. 'Gordon Buildings'.
THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Residential, Commercial
1920s	Residential, 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

Built as office accommodation by biscuit manufacturer, Swallow & Ariell, the distinctive four storey (plus basement) office building was originally built as two storeys (plus basement) in 1885, with an additional two storeys built in 1888. The cohesive arrangement of elements such as arched windows openings, moulded cornices and parapet detailing results in an integrated 'Italianate' façade.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Building a commercial city

Developing a large, city-based economy

From 1883 to 1889 Melbourne witnessed an extraordinary boom in real estate prices and land speculation, making it an opportune time to invest in property, including offices.

By 1889, the value of land in parts of central Melbourne was as high as that in London. In central Melbourne, huge sums of money were poured into opulent new office buildings, many for the building societies, land banks and mortgage companies that were driving the boom (Gillespie 2008).

The boom was followed by a significant economic depression in the early 1890s.

Living in the city

Housing the population

Flats have never been a dominant feature of Melbourne's urban landscape.

Until the 20th century there were no purpose-built flats in the city other than the failed philanthropic development Gordon House in Little Bourke Street. Melbourne's first purpose-built block of flats was Melbourne Mansions in Collins Street, built in 1906. Other notable pre-World War I blocks included Whitehall in Bank Place, Fawkner Mansions in South Yarra and Cliveden Mansions, created out of Sir William Clarke's former home Cliveden in East Melbourne.

Flats became more common in the interwar years, as some Melburnians developed a taste for urban over suburban life, while others were attracted to the convenience that the small, sometimes serviced, flat offered. Mostly built in St Kilda Road and Queens Road, South Yarra and Toorak, East Melbourne, Hawthorn, St Kilda and Parkville, these flats are predominantly in low-rise blocks of two or three storeys. Individual flats were almost always rented, rather than owned, making blocks of flats a lucrative form of investment in the aftermath of the stock market crash and depression. Tenants were mostly single men and women, childless couples, widows and those thought bohemian (O'Hanlon 2008).

Other residents embraced inner city living by residing in commercial premises converted to flats.

Shaping the urban landscape

Expressing an architectural style

The 1880s' property boom also made its mark on commercial design in the central city, with a new, bold generation of architects. Boom Style commercial buildings, such as William Pitt's Windsor Hotel and the Block Arcade, were characterised by increasingly rich decoration, Mannerist exaggeration of elements like keystones and segmental pediments, and the use of multiple classical motifs overlaid one atop the other. While Renaissance and Italianate influences are most closely associated with Melbourne's Boom Style, a similar treatment of materials and facades was used for Gothic Revival buildings such as William Pitt's Melbourne Stock Exchange and Rialto Building (both on Collins Street). Another variant was influenced by the English Gothic Revivalists, Augustus Pugin and John Ruskin, who called for a return to an 'honest' style by use of medieval design principles. Their

influence is seen in William Pitt and William Wardell's ES&A (now ANZ) Bank at 376-390 Collins Street, and English architect William Butterfield's St Paul's Cathedral (Context, 2012:14).

SITE HISTORY

The land on which the subject building stands (Block 3 Allotment 12) was acquired by W Powell in 1837. By 1877, the site comprised four buildings of one to four-storeys; a house owned by J William; and a coopers yard and iron shed owned by S D Carter (Fels, Lavelle & Mider 1993).

The current building at 384-386 Flinders Lane (originally 49 Flinders Lane West) was constructed in 1885 as an office block by Swallow & Ariell, Australia's first biscuit company (MCC registration no 1404, as cited in AAI, record no 76436). Designed by architect Frederick Williams and constructed by Harry Lockington, it is likely that the building was initially built as a two-storey building with a semi-basement. The building, named the Gordon Buildings, became fully tenanted soon after its completion, with its rooms being occupied by offices of importers, brokers and contractors (S&Mc 1888).

In August 1888, Frederick Williams, who designed the original building, invited tenders for two additional storeys and alterations. The additions were commissioned by a Mr Derham, who is presumed to be Frederick Thomas Derham, one of the co-managers of Swallow & Ariell after the founder Thomas Swallow's retirement in November 1887 (*Age* 19 November 1887:13). The additions to the building were constructed by Parkville builder Robert Fraser (MCC registration no 3584).

It is unclear how the name 'Gordon Buildings' was derived. Like other 'Gordon' buildings in and around Melbourne constructed in 1885, it is likely to have been named after Britain's Major General Charles George Gordon, who died in January 1885 (*Age* 3 September 1885:5; *Geelong Advertiser* 23 June 1885:3). Around 1907, the name of the building was changed to 'Goodwin Chambers' (S&Mc 1892-1907).

The Gordon Buildings were tenanted from the end of 1885 (*Age* 5 December 1885:16). The building was furnished with high-standard interior features. It was described as being very well-lit and adorned with a white enamelled staircase and a crimson carpet (*Argus* 9 January 1886:6; *Argus* 29 May 1886:6; *Critic Adelaide* 6 August 1898:28). An 1890 advertisement in the *Age* noted that the building contained 'several spacious, magnificently lighted rooms, in suites or singly...suitable for agents, artists' studios...etc' (*Age* 11 January 1890:7). The tenants during the first years were mainly agents (S&Mc 1892).

As one of the tallest buildings in the block, the Gordon Buildings had the benefit of natural light (Mahlstedt Map no 3, 1888), attracting an architect and a number of artists to take up rooms. A group of prominent Australian painters, Arthur Streeton, Charles Conder and Charles Douglas Richardson, who were involved in the milestone exhibition *9 x 5 Impression* in 1889, had their studios in the Gordon Buildings in 1890. This group of artists showcased their artworks in their studios for private viewers over a weekend before the Victorian Artists' Exhibition in 1890 (*Age* 14 March 1890:5; *Melbourne Punch* 20 March 1890:16). Richardson remained in his studio at the Gordon Buildings until c.1891-92 (S&Mc 1892). An Italian-born architect Luigi Boldini, and other artists, including Sara Southern, Alexander Colquhoun and A E Aldis, had their studios at the Gordon Building during the same period (S&Mc 1892-1893).

In 1890, the Gordon Building was advertised for sale and described as a

splendid four-story brick and cement edifice...containing 44 lofty and well-ventilated offices, all well-lighted, and fitted with modern conveniences, also a large and dry basement, the whole producing £1944 per annum (Argus 6 November 1890:2).

Although the building was primarily designed for office use, from the 1890s it became known as one of the 'city flats', with people, especially women, joining the crowd who lived in city apartments (*Critic Adelaide* 6 August 1898:28; *Australian Town and Country Journal* 4 May 1901:45). Until 1918, the upper storeys of the Gordon Building were used mostly for residences, with the tenants being mostly women (S&Mc 1896-1918). By 1923, however, the upper storeys had reverted to office use, and were occupied by agents and other businesses.

Refurbished in 2012-13 to house bars on the rooftop and in the basement, a new sign, 'A B Wine Tonic Stores', was installed under the top eave. The sign possibly refers to the wine and spirits trader, Arnold Bros, who once occupied offices on the ground floor in the 1920s (S&Mc 1920-25). It appears that the signage was originally located elsewhere on the building (Figure 1).

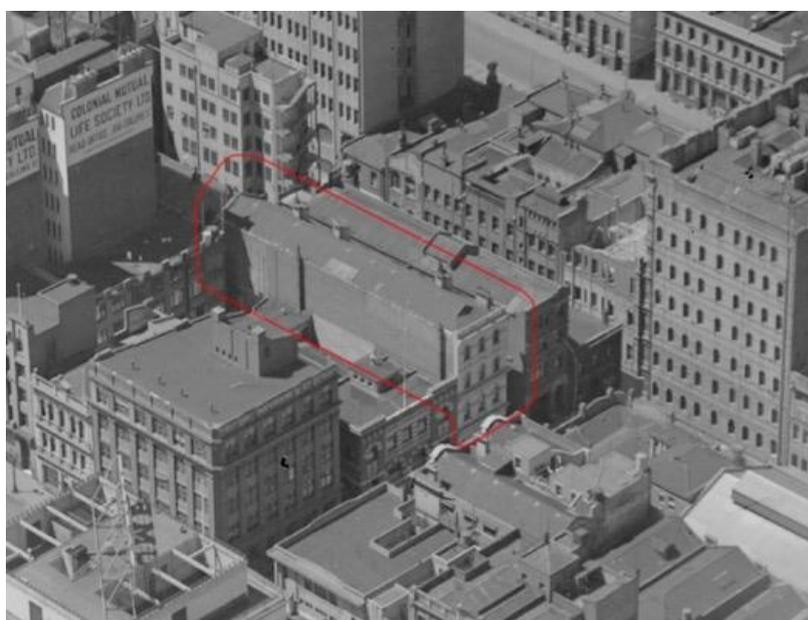


Figure 1. An aerial view of former Gordon Building (in red outline), shown in a section of Around Market Street, c.1945, by C D Pratt. (Source: SLV).

Frederick Williams, architect

Arriving in Australia in 1857, Frederick Williams became a councillor (1875-1886) and mayor (1880) of Sandridge Council (Port Melbourne). He commenced his career as an architect and surveyor in 1869 and was engaged in erecting numerous buildings in the city, suburbs and country. He designed many buildings in Port Melbourne including Excelsior Hall, the Holy Trinity Church Hall and Graham's Family Hotel. He also designed the extension to Swallow & Ariell's biscuit factory on the corner of Rouse and Stokes streets, Sandridge (Port Melbourne) as well as its office and counting house on the opposite side of Stokes Street (Gee 2010).

Williams was chosen as the Sandridge Council's representative on the Melbourne Tramways Trust and served in that capacity until 1886, when he retired from council. He was appointed architect to the

Modern Permanent Building Society in 1883. His offices were at 76 Collins Street west and his private residence was in Brighton (Gee 2010).

SITE DESCRIPTION

384-386 Flinders Lane is located on the northern side of Flinders Lane, (on the corner of Moylans Lane), between Queen Street and William Street. Originally built as two storeys (with half basement) in 1885, an additional two storeys were added in 1888. The addition was designed by the original architect and closely matches the original building in styling and scale. The completed building presents as an integrated four-storey rendered building in the Victorian 'Italianate' style. At all levels, consistent detailing runs across the Flinders Lane face and returns around a short section of the Moylans Lane facade.

At street level, a tall, wide, squared opening, with corner scrolls dominates the street frontage. An iron fence with double gates currently encloses the area. The face of the building is recessed behind this opening at the basement and first floor level, to provide basement access. Alterations have been made to the face of the basement and the first floor. Remaining details include the arched niches on the side walls and the segmented arched window openings to the first floor (although these have been extended to full height windows and windows and architraves have been replaced).

A separate arched entry foyer with no setback is located to one side of the wide opening. Non-original timber glazed doors have been installed with glazing bars to the door and highlight, arranged to provide decorative detail.

On the exterior of the building, a deep cornice marks the top two levels of the building, and a deep bracketed cornice demarcates the extent of the original building. Both cornices have matching scroll details at each end (one fronting Flinders Lane, the other end fronting Moylans Lane).

The upper three levels all have sets of arched window openings. The placement and dimensions of windows is consistent across all three level, but the detailing varies. On the second level (part of the original building), a row of identical rounded arched windows with key stones is intersected by a moulded string course at the spring point of the arches. Each opening is fitted with a timber framed sash window and has a bracketed sill. The third level has segmented arched openings with key stones and no cornice between the windows. The upper level has rounded arched openings with a deep cornice at springing point and a recessed rendered panel below each window.

The top of the building has a parapet with dentil cornice and flat name plate. Current lettering is not original.

INTEGRITY

The upper part of the building retains a high level of intactness. Openings at the street level are intact but alterations have been made to the basement and the windows of the first floor. The door and highlight window to the entry porch are of a high quality but not original. Lettering to the parapet is non-original.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Late Victorian buildings constructed during the 1880s contributed to shaping Melbourne into a commercial city. Often with multiple storeys, the use of these buildings varied, from housing walled office spaces to offering large workshop floors. Being influenced by the 1880s property boom, these

commercial buildings were popularly treated with Renaissance and Italianate styles, which are closely associated with Melbourne's Boom Style.

The subject building compares well with the following examples, drawn chiefly from the Central City Heritage Review 2011, being of a similar use, scale, location and creation date. The images are provided by CoM Maps unless stated otherwise.

Selected examples from the 1880s include:

Schuhkraft & Co Warehouse, 130-132 Flinders Street, 1885 (HO1036)

A five-storey cement rendered brick former warehouse. Designed by William Henry Ellerker in the Italian High Renaissance Revival style and built by Charles Butler in 1885 for the printers and stationers Schuhkraft & Co. Refurbished, converted and subdivided into residential units with ground level retail in 1995.



Figure 2. 130-132 Flinders Street constructed 1885.

George Robertson & Company Pty Ltd, 392-396 Little Collins Street, 1883 (HO1056)

A five-storey cement rendered brick former warehouse. The building was formerly one of a pair of warehouses (the other was at 384-390) built for George Robertson & Company Pty Ltd. This company was Melbourne's foremost book selling, publishing and stationery manufacturer. Mr Robertson, from Glasgow, commenced business in 1852 with a shop at 84 Russell Street. Authors associated with the company included Adam Lindsay Gordon, Henry Kendall, Marcus Clarke and Rolf Boldrewood.

Built on a base of Malmsbury bluestone it was designed by Twentymen & Askew in the Italian Renaissance style and completed in 1883. Refurbished, converted and subdivided into 31 residential and one ground level retail unit in 1995.



Figure 3. 392-396 Little Collins Street constructed 1882-3.

Edward Keep & Co Warehouse, 377-381 Lonsdale Street, 1889 (HO716)

A four-storey rendered brick warehouse. Designed by Twentyman & Askew and built for Edward Keep in 1889 by Waring & Rowden at a cost of £14,000. Mr Keep was the principal of the iron mongering firm Edward Keep & Co. This firm specialised in the importation of carriage materials and agricultural implements. In October 1899 the interior was destroyed by fire and stock with the value of £40,000 pounds was lost. It was rebuilt later that year. Refurbished and subdivided in 1987.



Figure 4. 377-381 Lonsdale Street constructed 1889.

Leicester House, 302-308 Flinders Lane, 1886 (HO646, Significant in HO502 Flinders Lane Precinct)

A six-storey brick and bluestone warehouse building. Designed by Thomas J Crouch and Nahum Barnet in a mix of styles, namely Renaissance with Gothic and Romanesque features. It was built by Page McCulloch in two stages in 1886 and 1909. It was subdivided into residential units and shops in 2000, 2004 and 2006.



Figure 5. 302-308 Flinders Lane constructed 1886.

384-386 Flinders Lane is a fine example of an Italianate style warehouse from the late Victorian era, comparable to former warehouses at 392-396 Little Collins HO1056) Street and 130-132 Flinders Street (HO1036) in terms of its scale and stylistic expression. It is an notable example of an early office/residential block type in the CBD.

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

REFERENCES

Age, as cited.

Anderson, Fay 2008, 'Swallow and Ariell Ltd' in *eMelbourne*, School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, <http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM01456b.htm>, accessed 13 June 2017.

Argus, as cited.

Australian Architectural Index (AAI), as cited. Copyright Miles Lewis.

Australian Town and Country Journal, as cited.

Bolton, G C 1976, 'Swallow, Thomas (1823–1890)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/swallow-thomas-4676/text7735>, accessed online 19 June 2017.

City of Melbourne Maps (CoM Maps) 2017, <http://maps.melbourne.vic.gov.au/>, accessed 7 June 2017.

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

Critic Adelaide, as cited.

Fels, M, Lavelle S, and Mider, D 1993, 'Archaeological Management Plan', prepared for the City of Melbourne.

Gee, Colma B 2010, *Gee Family In Australia: Information about FREDERICK WILLIAMS*, <http://www.genealogy.com/ftm/g/e/e/Colma-B-Gee/WEBSITE-0001/UHP-0827.html>, accessed 15 June 2017.

Geelong Advertiser, as cited.

Gillespie, R 2008, 'Land Boom in 1880s Melbourne' in *Museums Victoria Collections* <https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/2676>, accessed 22 June 2017

Mahlstedt & Gee 1888, *Standard plans of the city of Melbourne*, Mahlstedt and Gee, Melbourne.

O'Hanlon, Seamus 2008, 'Flats' in *eMelbourne*, School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, <http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00582b.htm>, accessed 22 June 2017.

Pratt C D c.1945, 'Around Market Street, Melbourne', State Library of Victoria (SLV) Airspy collection of aerial photographs, accessed online 22 June 2017.

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

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** C

**Central City Heritage
Study 1993** C

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

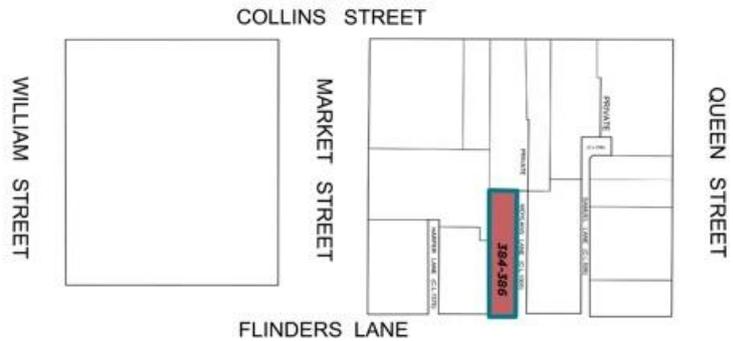
**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Gordon Buildings



PS ref no: Interim HO1271



What is significant?

The former Gordon Building at 384-386 Flinders Lane, completed in 1885 (with additions completed in 1888) and designed by architect Frederick Williams.

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; and
- Consistent ‘Italianate’ style detailing to all levels across the Flinders Lane façade and short section of Moylans Lane, including the street level squared openings with corner scroll arched niches on side walls; major bracketed cornice and minor deep cornices both with scroll details at each end; all arched window openings to the upper levels including key stones, string courses, timber framed sash windows and bracketed sills and; parapet with dentil course and flat name plate.

Later changes to the basement and first floor windows, lettering to the parapet and the new entry door and highlight window to the entry porch are not significant.

How it is significant?

The former Gordon Building is of local historic, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The former Gordon Building at 384-386 Flinders Lane is historically significant for its association with office accommodation in the City of Melbourne. The building clearly demonstrates an association with the 1880s boom period, when the value of land in parts of central Melbourne was comparable with

London and there was a dramatic increase in the construction of opulent office buildings. Built by biscuit manufacturer, Swallow & Ariell, the Gordon Building was constructed in 1885 to house offices. The Gordon Building is historically significant for its association with prominent Australian Impressionist painters Arthur Streeton, Charles Conder and Charles Douglas Richardson, who had studios in the building and invited private viewings of their work prior to a major exhibition of their work in 1890. Artists Clara Southern and Luigi Boldini continued the painters' association with the Gordon Building by renting studios there until 1893. (Criterion A)

384-386 Flinders Lane is a fine example of an Italianate/Renaissance Revival style building from the late Victorian era, comparing well to former warehouses at 392-396 Little Collins (HO1056) Street and 130-132 Flinders Street (HO1036) in terms of its scale and stylistic expression. It is a notable and early example of an office/residential typology in the central city. (Criterion D)

The building is aesthetically significant for its integrated 'Italianate' façade resulting from an additional two levels designed by the original architect Frederick Williams, and its scholarly interpretation of elements such as the decorated parapet, the arched window openings, and the moulded cornices that also extend to the Moylans Lane façade. Aesthetic significance is demonstrated by the building's fine quality Italianate render work to the cornices, window mouldings and scrolls, and the unusual recessed ground floor with semi basement configuration and side stair. 384-386 is aesthetically significant for its high level of integrity. (Criterion E)

Primary source

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

