SITE NAME	Former Patersons Pty Ltd
STREET ADDRESS	152-158 Bourke Street Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	101212
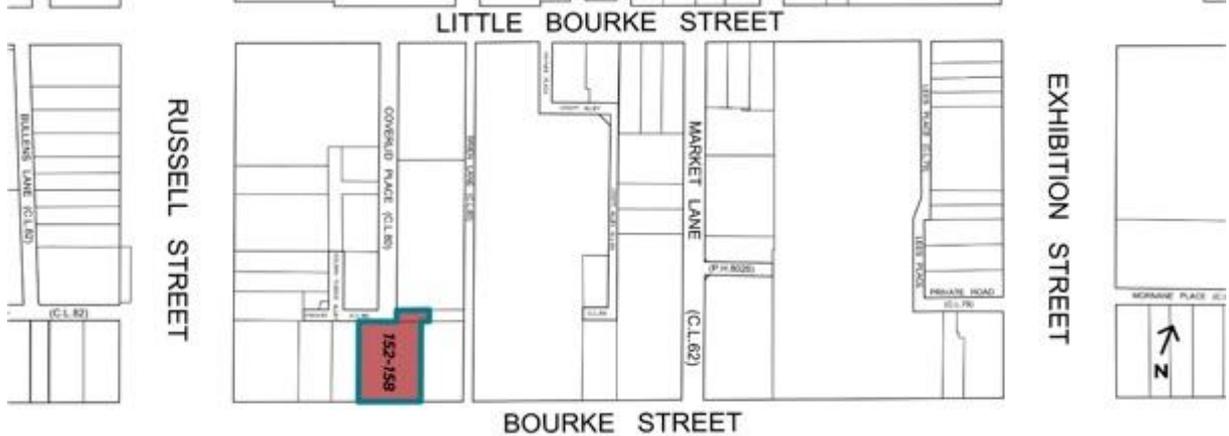
SURVEY DATE: May 2017   SURVEY BY: Context Pty Ltd

HERITAGE INVENTORY	H7822-1516	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER GRADE	C
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Arthur W Purnell	BUILDER:	Not known
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Interwar Period (c1919-c1940)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1934

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	5.5 Building a manufacturing capacity
	5.4 Developing a retail centre
	OTHER SUB-THEMES
3 Shaping the urban landscape	3.2 Expressing an architectural style

LAND USE

HISTORIC LAND USE	
Archaeological block no: 23	Inventory no: 516
Character of Occupation: Commercial	
Block between Coverlid Place and Brien Lane owned by William Martin & J J Thomson since 1850s. Bought by Abbondio Campi in 1882. Campi's first store built 1884-5. Campi's second store built 1889.	
1866 Cox	
1880 Panorama	
1888 Mahlstedt	
1905/6 Mahlstedt	
THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Retail
1920s	Retail or warehouse – furniture
1960s	Commercial and retail

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) Patersons Pty Ltd Building (1934) was built for the Paterson family as a furniture retailing outlet. The building was designed by architect Arthur W Purnell and is a fine example of a moderne façade from the Inter-war period.

CONTEXT

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Building a commercial city

Building a manufacturing capacity

As Melbourne developed through the nineteenth century, so did its manufacturing industry. Flinders Lane became an important area for clothing manufacturers, while Chinese cabinet makers were concentrated at the east end of town. Food-processing plants were established in North and West Melbourne. Factories tended to be small and specialised. Large factories, built in the later nineteenth century and early twentieth century tended to be built outside the City of Melbourne, where land was more easily obtainable (Context 2012:44).

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 of the late 1920s-early 1930s, 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).

Developing a retail centre

Department stores offered customers a wide range of goods, organised into 'departments', under the one roof. In Melbourne, department store Buckley and Nunn, which opened in 1854, established Bourke Street's reputation as the preferred retail strip. Russian immigrant Sidney Myer bought a block in Bourke Street in 1911, where he established his successful Myer emporium (Context 2012:43).

Chain department stores grew rapidly after 1920. With increasing car ownership and widespread distribution of shopping catalogues, by the 1920s department stores attracted shoppers from both the suburbs and rural areas.

Department stores elevated 'fashion, drapery and furnishings to a level of luxury and range which differentiated it from the everyday or rural emporium'. According to the 1948 retail census, in Victoria the 130 shops defined as department stores accounted for 10.3 per cent of retail sales. In money terms the stores sold 30.3 per cent of drapery, clothing and soft furnishings; 18.1 per cent of hardware, ironmongery and crockery; and 15.4 per cent of furniture and floor coverings (Young and Spearritt 2008).

Shaping the urban landscape

Expressing an architectural style

The interwar period brought with it a surge in tall building construction in the central city, made possible by the use of structural steel and reinforced concrete framing. In response, a height limit was imposed by the City Council in 1916, dictated by the limitations on fire-fighting at that time. A maximum height of 40 metres was dictated for steel and concrete buildings, a limit that was not broken until the 1950s. Commercial buildings in the 1920s were mainly of the Commercial Palazzo style, as exemplified by Harry Norris's Nicholas Building in Swanston Street (1925). 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. By the 1930s, the soaring height of the new office towers was embraced and the vertical thrust emphasised in the commercial gothic style and the jazz moderne. Landmark examples include, respectively, Marcus Barlow's Manchester Unity Building (1929-32) and the Tompkins Bros' Myer Emporium in Bourke Street (1933) (Context 2012:19-20).

SITE HISTORY

The buildings at 152-158 Bourke Street comprise six interconnected brick buildings between Bourke Street and Little Bourke Street, varying from two to five storeys. The former Patersons Pty Ltd building faces Bourke Street. Several former warehouses stand at Coverlid Place, including two that were built by William Radden in 1885 (at the northern end) and in 1889 (at the southern end). A two-storey building constructed in the mid-Victorian era faces Little Bourke Street (CoM Maps 2017). This citation assesses the former Patersons Pty Ltd building only.

The land on which the subject building stands at 152-158 Bourke Street has been occupied by a number of commercial enterprises since 1866. It is now occupied by the former Patersons Pty Ltd building. The block between Coverlid Place and Brien Lane was owned by William Martin and J J Thomson from the 1850s. It was bought by Abbondio Campi in 1882. Campi's first store was built in 1884-85, and his second store in 1889 (Fels, Lavelle & Mider 1993, Inventory no 516).

Patersons Pty Ltd was first established in 1884 as a small Richmond furniture business, later the Richmond Furniture Company, by Simeon Nathan, and his brother, George Nathan. Another branch was opened in Footscray in 1889. Simeon became mayor of Richmond in 1896 (*Daily Telegraph* 1 August 1925:13; University of Melbourne 2012; *Age* 29 August 1936:6).

In 1896, new premises were built for the business at 152-154 Bourke Street, Melbourne, and named Patersons Furniture Warehouse (Figure , Figure 2). Designed by architects Fisher and Yourelle, it was constructed by master builders Clements Langford Pty Ltd (University of Melbourne 2012). Patersons Furniture opened another large store in Fitzroy in 1911.

Figure 1. Patersons Furniture Warehouse,152-154 Bourke Street constructed 1896. (Source: University of Melbourne 2012)

Patersons Furniture Company was incorporated in 1923 and grew into one of Melbourne's largest furniture firms (University of Melbourne 2012).

Simeon Nathan, the founder of Patersons Pty Ltd with his brother George, died from heart failure on 30 July 1925 aged 64 years; he was chairman of directors of both Patersons Pty Ltd and the Richmond Furniture Company, and president of the Victorian Bowling Association at the time of his death. His son, Harold Benjamin Nathan, born in Richmond in 1887, became chairman-director of Patersons Pty Ltd (*Riverine Herald* 21 July 1938:3; *Daily Telegraph* 1 August 1925:13).

A large fire in 1929 that started at Payne's Bon Marche in Bourke Street caused significant damage to the three upper floors of Patersons Furniture Warehouse (*Sydney Morning Herald* 22 July 1929:11).

A new building for Patersons Pty Ltd was constructed in 1934. The building was designed in the moderne style by architect Arthur W Purnell, who, in that year, also invited tenders for extensions and alterations at the rear of premises at 152-158 Bourke Street (*Age* 31 January 1934:4). Purnell's sketch of the new Patersons building (Figure 2).

In March 1934, the Age reported that:

> *An interesting example of present-day tendencies to introduce colour into the facades of shopping premises - tints now produced scientifically to accord with local climatic conditions - will be found…in the new stores being erected in Bourke-street for Paterson's Pty. Ltd. The whole front of the building will be faced with [terra cotta] tiles of a mottle-green tone, these being selected because of the southern aspect. It is of interest to note that, after repeated experiments, a bright color is preferable in the city when buildings face to the south. As will be seen from a sketch of the architect, Mr. A. W. Purnell, of Collins-street, the vertical piers, which are to project about eight inches, will be accentuated, and the central portion treated as the main focal point to the eye of an observer. The balconette and canopy above the middle of the facade were included in the design to strike a true balance between the various structural elements. Other harmonious notes will be the ornamental panels and shallow bas-relief between the piers at the first-floor level. The spaces here will be dressed with cement renderings of a dark ivory shade to match the subdued appearance imparted by the green tiles.*

> *An additional floor area of 8200 square feet will be available when the new premises are completed, or a total area for the block of 24,500 square feet. Internally, the ceilings will be lined with fibrous plaster, with the beams and cornices of modern and distinctive design. The columns will be cased up to the height of seven feet in figured Australian hardwood panels, and a staircase of selected blackwood incorporated. The manager's office on the first floor will receive special treatment, acid glass and chromium being specified for lighting and other fittings. It is proposed to install powerful lights at the top of the columns, by which arrangement customers entering from the head of the staircase at the front of the building will be enabled to see a wide range of goods. The street windows will be formed of sand-blasted glass in an amber shade to give a soft and diffused light. As an integral part of the elevation an electric name sign will be introduced vertically and mid-way in the façade.*

> *The foundations will be completed shortly by the master builder, Mr. M. L. Massey, and the stores will be occupied by the firm in about four months (Age 27 March 1934:5).*

The new premises housed a variety of furniture for the home (Figure 3).

In 1938, Patersons took over Pears' Furniture stores, including six 'modern shops' at Horsham, Ballarat, Colac, Warragul, St Arnaud and Chapel Street, Prahran (*Horsham Times* 1 July 1938:1).

Director and chairman of Patersons Pty Ltd, Harold Nathan, died at Toorak in 1938, just weeks after the merger with Pears' Furniture (*Riverine Herald* 21 July 1938:3).

Under the leadership of managing director, Maurice Nathan, Patersons Pty Ltd underwent significant expansion after World War Two, stocking a range of items for the home. In 1948, the company managed sixteen branches in Victoria and in that year took over Andrade's furnishings in Mount Gambier, South Australia (*Border Watch* 16 October 1948:12). Formed as a public company, Patersons (Australia) Ltd, in 1949, in 1950 the company issued 600,000 shares to provide for further business expansion (*Sun* 12 December 1950:3). In this year it operated 22 branches.

In 1955, Patersons Pty Ltd purchased properties with frontages to Bourke Street and Little Bourke Street from G J Coles, who had bought the properties in 1954 to build a new store, for approximately £250,000. Patersons planned to demolish Ushers Hotel at 202-204 Bourke Street and the adjoining Maples store building to make way for the 'largest furniture emporium in Australia'. The building design by Bogle and Banfield was to follow the 'latest American store planning trends' and house the headquarters of the company, by which time had 33 branch stores. The existing Paterson store at 152-158 Bourke Street was to remain (*Argus* 12 August 1955:3). The planned emporium was never constructed.

Today the former Paterson Pty Ltd building at 152-158 Bourke Street houses businesses and a number of retail outlets.
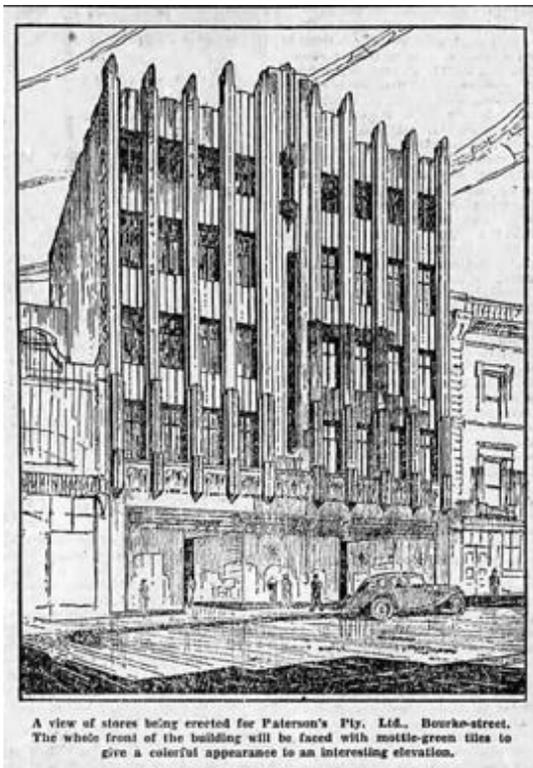

Figure 2. Purnell's sketch of the new Patersons building at 152-154 Bourke Street, 1934. (Source: Age 27 March 1934:5)

Figure 3. Advertisement for Patersons, 1935. (Source: Argus 6 April 1935:20)

CONTEXT

Figure 4. Patersons Furniture Warehouse in 1920 shown in a section of Melbourne 1920, showing Bourke Street, 1920, by Row. (Source: SLV)

Arthur W Purnell, architect

Arthur W Purnell designed the 1934 Patersons building. The University of Melbourne Archives is the custodian of Arthur W Purnell's architectural drawings, and provides the following information about Purnell's practice:

> *Arthur W. Purnell (1878-1964) was a Geelong-born architect who built a thriving practice in Melbourne. Arthur Purnell had a long and successful career, maintaining a busy architectural practice in Melbourne - both on his own and in partnership with others - until he retired in the late 1950s. Over this time he designed hundreds of buildings, ranging from garages to grandstands.*

> *His eclectic repertoire included Chinoiserie, Italianate, Modern, Neo-Classical, Queen Anne, Spanish Mission and even what would be described today as Post-Modern. Always eager to move with the times, he designed ornate Queen Anne-style houses in his thirties and plain ranch-style houses in his seventies. He also designed many factories, offices, shops and warehouses. A large number of these still exist, including the Melbourne landmark Michael's Corner (1915) on Elizabeth Street, Melbourne.*

> *Purnell's commissions frequently reflected his own interests. As a lover of sport, for example, he designed a…variety of sporting facilities, including the Clifton Springs Golf Club (1926), the grandstand at Western Oval (1929), a greyhound-racing track at Tottenham (1927), the Olympia Sea Water Swimming Pool at South Melbourne (1937) and the Rosebud Yacht Club (1939). Indeed, he is perhaps best remembered for his last major commission, the Olympic Stand at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (1953–1955).*

CONTEXT

Regrettably, many of his best buildings have been demolished, such as the Wattle Path Palais De Danse and Café (1922), perhaps better known as St Moritz Ice Skating Rink.

Between 1900 and 1910 Purnell lived and worked in China. At least a dozen of Purnell's buildings still exist in China and recently Purnell has been 'rediscovered' by the Chinese and acclaimed as a major architect there.

Purnell initially set up on his own in the Nicholson Chambers at 101 Swanston Street. The practice gradually grew, so he moved to larger premises in Phair's Buildings at 327 Collins Street. In 1915 he went into partnership with Isadore George Beaver, a Manchester-born architect 19 years his senior. They moved office to Altson's Buildings at 82 Elizabeth Street. In 1925 the partnership with George Beaver ended and the following year Purnell moved to the Equitable Building at 314 Collins Street. In 1928 he went into partnership with Eric Hazel Round and William Alfred Graham.

Purnell also had a long-standing and a close client-architect relationship with Alexander George ('Alec') Barlow (1880–1937), a trailblazing, somewhat shady Melbourne car dealer. Redesigned car show rooms, racing stables and a house were amongst the work completed by Purnell for Barlow (University of Melbourne Archives 2016)*.*

SITE DESCRIPTION

Located on the northern side of Bourke Street, between Exhibition Street and Russell Street, this five-storey building is distinguished by the dynamic moderne styling to the upper façade. The façade incorporates a combination of plain concrete with glazed tiling as accent decoration.

The ten vertical fins that extend beyond the stepped parapet provide vertical emphasis to the façade.. Each fin projects slightly from the main façade and is clad in distinctive green-glazed terracotta tiles. Decorative elements such as a balconette and flag pole are located high on the building and contribute to the sense of verticality.

The vertical fins divide the symmetrical façade into eight vertical bays of equal width with a double width bay at the centre. Vertical bays are intersected by horizontal bands comprised of regular window openings over concrete spandrels, at each of the four upper levels of the building. Regular rectangular window openings have steel framed casement sash windows with four (unequal) panes.

A repeated curved Art Deco motif has been inscribed across the lowest concrete spandrel at the bottom edge of the façade, just above street level. A glazed and non-original shopfront is located at street level.

INTEGRITY

The upper four floors of the façade retain a high level of integrity. At street level the shopfronts have been altered.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Structural steel and reinforced concrete framing became popular building materials in interwar Melbourne. The 1930s interwar industrial or commercial buildings in Melbourne often embraced commercial gothic style and jazz moderne, as seen in landmark examples and other office/retail buildings around the city.

The subject buiding 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 below images and descriptions are provided by CoM Maps unless stated otherwise.

Selected examples of Melbourne's offices/retail buiding from the 1930s include:

Bourke House and Hardy Brothers Jewellery Store, 340-342 Collins Street (HO1090) & 338 Collins Street (HO1007)

Formerly known as Burke House, 340-342 Collins Street is a seven-storey concrete rendered office and retail building, designed by Schreiber & Jorgensen in the Commercial Gothic style. It was built for the noted businessman and philanthropist Thomas Burke by The Reinforced Concrete & Monier Pipe Construction Company in 1930. At the time of completion, the property was valued at £60,000. It incorporates a two-storey brick shop. This shop was designed by Marcus Barlow in the moderne style and built for Hardy Jewellers in 1933. The ground floors of both buildings were integrated into one shop in 2002. Both buildings feature particularly fine terracotta facades.

Figure 5. 340-342 Collins Street constructed 1930 (left), and 338 Collins Street, constructed 1933 (right).

Norman's Corner Store, 180-182 Bourke Street, 1932 (HO1000)

An eight-storey brick office building with basement and ground level retail. Formerly a three-storey warehouse it was purchased by Mr Norman Sharpe from the clothier Leopold Leber in 1932 for £38,000. Mr Sharpe, a successful merchant from Morwell who had established a chain of stores in Gippsland, refurbished the building and established a drapery emporium which he named Norman's Corner Store. In 1935 the building was completely rebuilt with the addition of five extra storeys. The reconstruction was designed by Marcus Barlow in the jazz moderne style. It was subdivided into 23 commercial units in 2003.

Figure 6. Norman's Corner Stores, 180-182 Bourke Street constructed 1932.

Manchester Unity Building, 220-226 Collins Street, 1932 (VHR H0411; HO590, Significant in HO502 The Block Precinct)

A twelve-storey concrete encased steel office building with retail, offices, residential units and an arcade. Crowned with a turreted gothic style tower it is clad with a glazed terracotta faience.

Designed by Marcus R Barlow in the Neo-Gothic Commercial style and built for the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows by WE Cooper Pty Ltd in 1932, the Manchester Unity Building houses twelve stories of offices, residential units, and retail spaces. The building is clad in glazed terracotta faience and crowned with a turreted gothic style tower.

Figure 7. Manchester Unity Building, 220-226 Collins Street, constructed 1932.

Myer Emporium, 314-316 Bourke Street, 1933 (VHR H2100; HO542, Significant in HO509 Post Office Precinct)

Seven storey rendered concrete department store with basement. Designed by H W & F B Tompkins and built by Clement Langford in 1933. The Bourke Street Mall store was first opened in 1911 and continues to trade today as the flagship store of the Myer department store chain.

CONTEXT

Figure 8. Myer Emporium, 314-316 Bourke Street constructed 1933.

The subject building compares well with the above buildings, (all of which have Heritage Overlays) particularly in terms of its architectural style and dominant land uses. With its highly intact details, it is a finer example of jazz moderne building than the Former Bourke Building (HO1090) or the Hardy Brothers Jewellery Store (HO1007).

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✔	**CRITERION A** Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).
	CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).
	CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).
	CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).
✔	**CRITERION E** Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).
	CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)
	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).
✔	**CRITERION H** Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

CONTEXT

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

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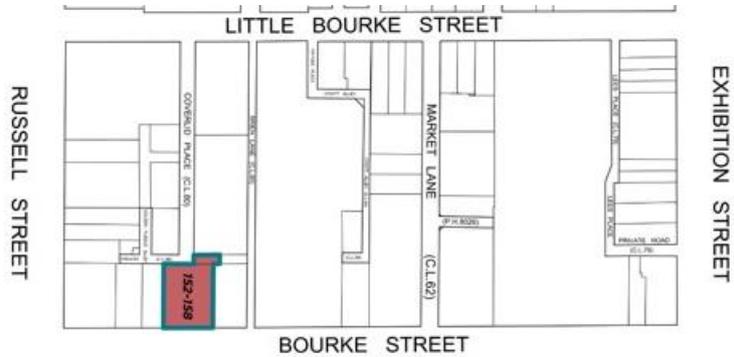
CONTEXT

PREVIOUS STUDIES

Central Activities District Conservation Study 1985	C
Central City Heritage Study 1993	C
Review of Heritage overlay listings in the CBD 2002	C
Central City Heritage Review 2011	Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Patersons Pty Ltd	**PS ref no:** Interim HO1266

What is significant?

The former Patersons Pty Ltd Building at 152-158 Bourke Street, built in 1934 to a design by architect Arthur W Purnell.

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 pattern and size of fenestrations to its Bourke Street façade at above ground level;
- The stepped parapet, concrete spandrels and steel framed casement sash windows; and
- Green-glazed tiling, vertical fins, balconette and flagpole.

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

How it is significant?

The former Patersons Pty Ltd Building at 152-158 Bourke Street is of local historic, aesthetic and associative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The building, 152-158 Bourke Street, built in 1934 for Paterson Pty Ltd as a furniture store and warehouse to a design by architect Arthur W Purnell, is historically significant for its association with manufacturing and retailing in the City of Melbourne. From 1938, and particularly after World War Two, Patersons expanded into suburban Melbourne, regional Victoria and interstate; by 1950 it operated 22 branches throughout Australia. Patersons Pty Ltd was listed as a public company in 1949 and was an important part of the Bourke Street retail strip until 1987. (Criterion A)

CONTEXT

The former Patersons Pty Ltd Building at 152-158 Bourke Street is of local aesthetic significance for its upper façade which is a fine example of the moderne style that was popular in the interwar period. The particular characteristics include an emphatic vertical expression derived from the ten vertical fins that run the full height of the façade and extend beyond the stepped parapet. Projecting slightly from the main façade each fin is clad in distinctive green glazed terra cotta tiles. Decorative elements such as the balconette and flag pole contribute to the sense of verticality contrasted by horizontal bands of windows and concrete spandrels . A repeated curved Art Deco motif is inscribed across the lowest concrete spandrel at the bottom edge of the façade. (Criterion E)

The former Patersons Pty Ltd building at 152-158 Bourke Street is significant for its long association with the Paterson family, who manufactured furniture in Richmond from 1884, and who sold furniture and homewares from this site from 1896 and from the current building from 1934 until 1987. The building is also significant for its association with architect Arthur W Purnell, who, both on his own and in partnership with others, designed houses, factories, offices, shops, sports centres and warehouses in Melbourne. A large number of these buildings still exist, including the Melbourne landmark Michael's Corner (1915) on Elizabeth Street, Melbourne. (Criterion H)

Primary source

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

CONTEXT