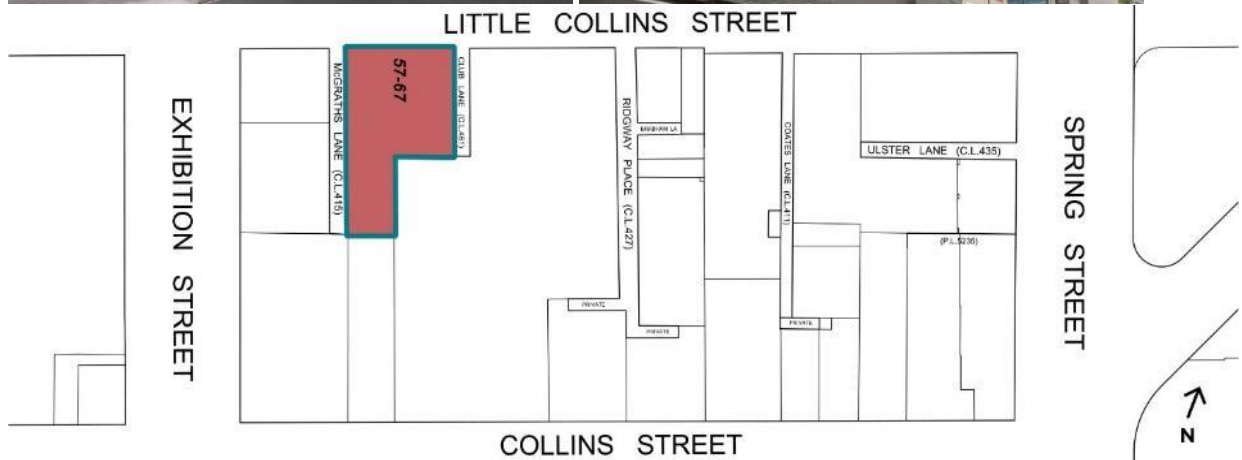


**SITE NAME** Former Craig, Williamson Pty Ltd complex

**STREET ADDRESS** 57-67 Little Collins Street Melbourne

**PROPERTY ID** 105968



**SURVEY DATE:** January 2018

**SURVEY BY:** Context

**HERITAGE INVENTORY** H7822-1679

**EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY** Yes – interim HO1287 (Little Collins Street Precinct)

**PLACE TYPE** Individual Heritage Place

**PROPOSED CATEGORY** Significant

**FORMER GRADE** D

**DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:** H B Gibbs & Finlay (1912)

**BUILDER:** James Wright (1912)

**DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:** Interwar Period (c1919-c1940)

**DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:** 1912 (rear), 1925 (façade)

## 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.
HISTORICAL THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
5 Building a commercial city	5.5 Building a manufacturing capacity
	OTHER SUB-THEMES
	5.4 Developing a retail centre
POSTWAR THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
3 Government in Melbourne's city centre	

## LAND USE

HISTORIC LAND USE	
<b>Archaeological block no:</b> 40	<b>Inventory no:</b> 679
<b>Character of Occupation:</b> Commercial, residential	
Fifth land sale in 1839, Allotment 19 Block 9, purchased by P Campbell. Brick cottages on this site by 1847.	
1839 Williamson	
1840 Hoddle	
1866 Cox	
1880 Panorama	
1888 Mahlstedt	Two single-storey buildings and outbuildings, Arden & Hall, photographic manufacturers.
1905/6 Mahlstedt	Site vacant
THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Retail, Manufacturing, Storage
1920s	Manufacturing, Storage, Motors and service stations
1960s	Telegraphic and telephonic, Laboratory

## 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

57-67 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, is a manufacturing and warehouse complex of two and three storeys, and incorporating buildings from 1912 and 1925 built for Craig, Williamson Pty Ltd, clothing and furniture manufacturers and retailers.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### Building a commercial city

#### *Building a manufacturing capacity*

From the 1850s, the Yarra River and the docks west of Swanston Street were in essence the 'lifeline' of the city. Port facilities and large warehouses were built in this area to serve shipping interests (Context 2012:39-40).

By the 1880s, the areas of Flinders Street, King Street, Little Bourke Street and Spencer Street comprised multiple mercantile offices, produce stores and large-scale bonded stores, including Zander's Bonded Stores and Coles Bonded Stores. As Melbourne developed through the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, so did the manufacturing industry, much of which was established in close proximity to existing warehouses and stores.

Although affected by World War One in the period 1914-1918, by 1921, the manufacturing industry employed 38 per cent of Melbourne's workers. The growth of manufacturing, assisted by a new federal tariff in 1921, stimulated urban growth and by the end of the 1920s, Melbourne's population had reached one million people. The expansion of new sectors in the manufacturing industry was maintained by buoyant levels of domestic demand (Marsden 2000:29; Dingle 2008).

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 factory, workshop and warehouse buildings, some designed by architects, increasingly took over the city.

Development in the city slowed with the Great Depression, which commenced in October 1929 and continued through the early 1930s. Because of a lack of finance during this period, instead of new construction, some city buildings were substantially re-modelled for commercial and industrial use, as well as new office space, including for government use.

### Government in Melbourne's city centre

#### *Providing essential services*

In the postwar period, the number of government offices increased dramatically in city centres due to two phenomena: an expansion in Commonwealth revenue and powers, and the extension of state government responsibilities to include welfare, housing, education, culture, and public transport services (Marsden 2000:83). A telephone exchange and postal hall building was constructed by the Commonwealth government at 114-120 Russell Street in the period 1948-54. In 1959, the Commonwealth Arbitration Courts opened at 450 Little Bourke Street, and in 1965 the Reserve Bank opened at 60 Collins Street. A telephone exchange was also constructed by the Commonwealth Department of Works at 376-382 Flinders Lane and opened in 1957.

## SITE HISTORY

The subject site is located on Crown Allotment 19, Block 9, City of Melbourne (Fels, Lavelle and Mider 1993). In 1888, several one and two-storey buildings, occupied by Craig, Williamson & Thomas's furniture factory, existed on the subject site at today's 57-67 Little Collins Street (*Camperdown Chronicle* 25 October 1888: 2; Mahlstedt Map Section 1, no 9, 1888). A section

fronting Little Collins Street was vacant in 1888, but by 1895 four two-storey shops had been erected (MMBW Detail Plan no 1013, 1895).

The current building at 57-67 Little Collins Street was constructed in two major stages in 1912 and 1925, for drapers, clothiers and house furnishers, Craig, Williamson Pty Ltd, which had been originally established in 1875 as Craig, Williamson & Thomas. Craig, Williamson Pty Ltd occupied the site from at least 1888, and also had premises in other locations in Melbourne, Ballarat and Bendigo, including a large retail store at 8-26 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne (Figure 1) (S&Mc 1890; Mahlstedt Map Section 1, no 9, 1888; Age 13 February 1899:1).



Figure 1. Craig, Williamson's Elizabeth Street store c1890. (Source: Craig, Williamson Draper and Frank L Carr Jr c1890, SLV)

In 1911, Craig, Williamson Pty Ltd applied for a building permit for two shops at 57-59 Little Collins Street as well as additions to its premises at the rear of 57-67 Little Collins Street. Builder James Wright undertook the work to a design by architects, H B Gibbs & Finlay (MCC registration no 3024, as cited in AAI, record no 76933; *Herald* 12 September 1912:3). The new Craig, Williamson's complex, comprising a three-storey brick factory, store and garage, and single and two-storey stables, was completed by 1912, and the new premises given the address of 61 Little Collins Street (S&Mc 1912, 1913). A two-storey caretaker's residence built in the c1880s in McGrath Lane was retained and incorporated with the new premises (Mahlstedt Map Section 1, no 2, 1905-06 & 1910).

Amendments made to a 1910 fire survey plan show the subject site in c1912 with new structures comprising three-storey shops at 57-59 Little Collins Street and three-storey factory and storage, single and two-storey stabling facilities to the rear between Club Lane and McGrath Lane (Figure 2) (Mahlstedt Map Section 1, no 2, 1905-06 & 1910). The upper floors of the new factory were used for furniture manufacture and for the firm's storerooms.



In 1915, six businesses operated from the shop buildings at 57-67 Little Collins Street, including the stables of Craig, Williamson; these included a picture framer (no 57); dryers and cleaners (no 59); a caterer (no 63); a sign writer (no 65) and a stained-glass artist (no 67) (S&Mc 1915).

By 1925, a new building was erected at the front of the premises at 57-67 Little Collins Street. In November 1924, a permit application for 'alterations and additions to motor showroom and store' was lodged, at an estimated cost of £3500. By 1925, the c1890s row of two-storey shops at 61-67 Little Collins Street was replaced with a three-storey structure, which was incorporated into the three-storey warehouse at the rear. No longer needing provision for stabling, the 1925 addition incorporated a new motor garage, but it is unlikely that the new premises comprised a motor showroom as specified in the permit application. Craig, Williamson Pty Ltd continued trading predominantly as a furniture manufacturer and clothier (*Age* 26 April 1926:15). The shops at 57 and 59 Little Collins Street were retained and continuously leased to J Cornes dryers and cleaners, who had earlier occupied 59 Little Collins Street (S&Mc 1915, 1925-1927)

Amendments to a 1925 fire survey plan shows the 1925 addition at 61-57 Little Collins Street labelled as 'Craig Williamson, Garage & Stores' (Figure 3) (Mahlstedt Map Section 1, no 2, 1925). The City of Melbourne rate books of 1925-26 recorded a substantial increase in net annual value of the site, with the building description changed from 'brick shops, factory and store' to 'brick factory and store' (RB 1925, 1926).

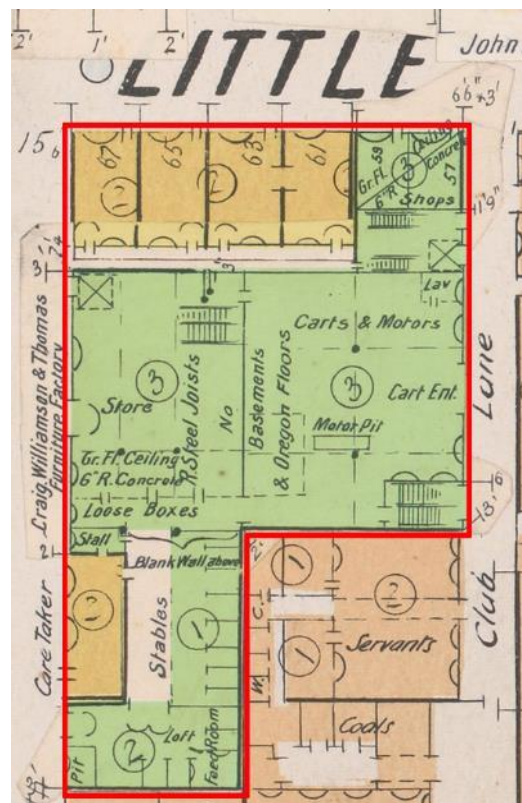


Figure 2. Showing the subject site c1912, outlined in red. The area marked green shows the area constructed by 1912, and the area marked yellow shows the pre-existing buildings from the late nineteenth century. (Source: Mahlstedt Map no 2, 1910).

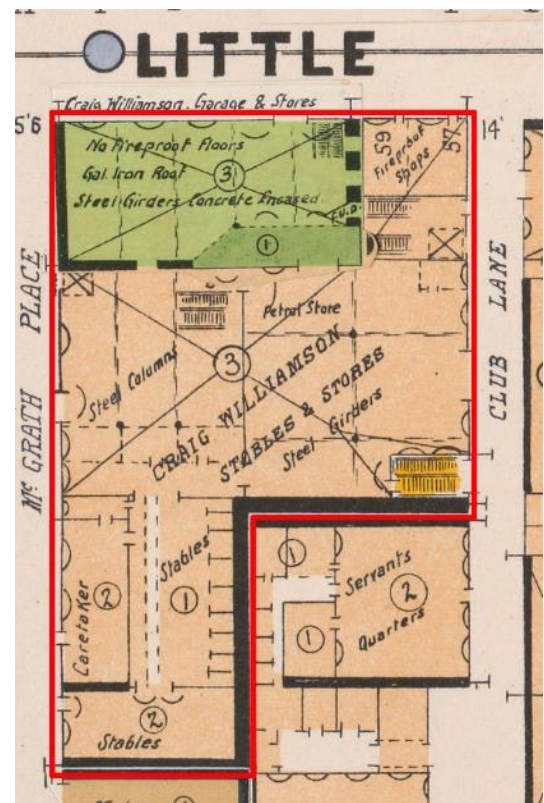


Figure 3. Showing the subject site c1925-26, outlined in red. The area marked green shows the three-storey structure that replaced the c1890s shops. (Source: Mahlstedt Map no 2, 1925).

In 1926 the business Craig, Williamson Pty Ltd came under the ownership of the Sydney retailer Marcus Clark (Victoria) Ltd (*Herald* 4 May 1926:7; Spearritt 1981). After the sale, the business continued operating as Craig, Williamson Pty Ltd. Its furniture factory and bulk store operated from the subject site until 1928 (*Age* 26 April 1926:11; S&Mc 1927, 1929).

In 1927, the Commonwealth Postmaster-General's Department acquired the building to house extensions in preparation for the future automation of Melbourne's telephone system. It was to be known as the Melbourne Central East Exchange. New foundations, designed to provide increased strength, and a fourth storey were planned, as was the complete remodelling of the interior of the building (*Age* Tuesday 25 January 1927:8). The proposed addition of a fourth storey was not carried out, and in 1928, the Department of Works and Railways offered its premises at 57-67 Little Collins Street for lease. The tender stated that the 'substantially-built three-storey brick building' continued to be occupied by Craig, Williamson Pty Ltd as a garage and store (*Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* 26 April 1928:656).

By 1929, Craig, Williamson Pty Ltd vacated the premises, and the shops at 57-59 Little Collins Street were occupied by S G Wilson's motor service (S&Mc 1929). By 1931, S G Wilson relocated to the main part of the building and became known as 59-67 Little Collins Street, with the shop at 57 Little Collins Street being vacant (S&Mc 1930, 1931).

In 1932, tenders were called by the federal Department of the Interior for alterations to the City East Telephone Exchange Building at 57-67 Little Collins Street, and in 1934 the ground and first floors of 61-67 Little Collins Street, together with two lock-up shops at the corner of Club Lane and Little Collins Street, were advertised for lease (*Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* 23 June 1932:832; 9 August 1934:1372). In 1935, the Postmaster-General's (PMG) Research Laboratories and the Victorian Post Institute Club occupied 59 Little Collins Street (*Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* 20 June 1935:877). The remainder of the building was leased to the following tenants in that year: H McConnell, electrical engineer (also at 59); 'Lucy Ann' cake shop at 61; and Wilsons Motor Service Pty Ltd at 63-67 (S&Mc 1935).

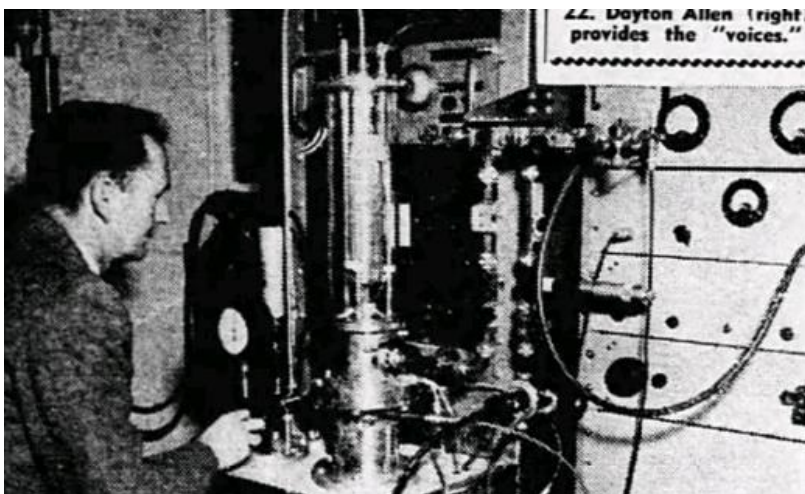


Figure 4. This instrument, popularly called the 'atomic clock', was responsible for keeping accurate time throughout Australia, and was located at the subject site as part of the PMG Research Laboratories. (Source: *Age* 25 May 1961:24)

In 1942, the upper floors of the building at 59-61 Little Collins Street were occupied by the PMG Research Laboratories, and the ground floor was vacant (S&Mc 1942). The PMG Research Laboratories occupied the whole building by 1950 (S&Mc 1950). The Research Laboratories were noted as 'the heart' of time in Australia. The Laboratories contained a Mayser clock, often referred to as an 'atomic clock', which was renowned for its accuracy, and supplied time to the master clocks in the capital cities of Australia (*Age* 25 May 1961: 24). The public were able to call and check the clock, and radio stations, companies and government departments had direct lines to the clock (*Age* 25 May 1961: 24). Aircraft and other transport took their time from stations which were also connected to the clock (*Age* 25 May 1961: 24).

The site was offered for sale under instructions from Telecom Australia in December of 1988, indicating that Telecom had retained the building following the split of the PMG into Telecom and Australia Post in 1976 (*Age* 15 December 1988: 27; Telstra 2019).

In 1998, the site was offered as a development opportunity by the Melbourne Club, which had the title to the property; the rear of its Collins Street premises adjoins the site (*Age* 28 November 1998: 47). The Melbourne Club sought for the existing building to either be renovated or demolished and rebuilt, for investment purposes, and stated that it had no intention of occupying the building (*Age* 28 November 1998: 47).

This site currently contains one business, two shops and three food and drink outlets (CoMMaps).

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The former store and furniture manufacturing business of Craig, Williamson Pty Ltd at 57-67 Little Collins Street is situated between McGrath Lane and Club Lane. These laneways provide an opportunity see the building in three dimensions. A three-storey façade presents to Little Collins Street, while a two-storey component is evident on McGrath Lane. The Little Collins Street frontage is composed of a masonry pier and beam structure that is typical of interwar commercial premises. Between this masonry frame are large square industrial steel-framed windows. Masonry to the façade has been overpainted. The upper floor has stucco detailing and a parapet, a string course and vertical mouldings to the brick piers. The ground floor windows have been altered and part of the façade formerly incorporating narrow shop frontages has been removed to create a recessed entrance.

Behind the three-storey side elevation of the 1925 building, there are earlier buildings at the rear, incorporating a 1912 two-storey brick stable with central upstairs loading door (now a window) and pulley beam. A wide two-storey, red and cream brick building from the c1880s, formerly used as the caretaker's residence has been modified with windows bricked in and a roof deck with glazed balustrade added.

## **INTEGRITY**

57-67 Little Collins Street is largely intact to the upper floors along Little Collins Street. Above the ground floor level, the building retains its original pattern of openings, brick wall surfaces although these have been overpainted, and some stylistic detailing. All glazing has been replaced and openings enlarged in the ground level. Side elevations are generally intact, with its original face brick walls, although some of the openings have been bricked-in or altered and the glazing replaced. Overall, the built form and scale of the building dating from 1925 has been retained.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The construction of warehouses and industrial buildings was an important phase of development in central Melbourne, especially during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The buildings were usually low scale and located in minor streets and laneways with rear or side lane access to facilitate the movement of material in and out of the building. Many of these early storage or manufacturing facilities are no longer operating, often adapted to house businesses or offices. These former industrial buildings are gradually gaining recognition as important historic places, representing a distinct period Melbourne's urban development pattern, and historically as reminders of past businesses. Their architectural expression is derived from the solid massed façade, with simple classically derived detailing, suggesting a utilitarian function. Interwar warehouses tended to adopt a more restrained architectural style in a classical mode when compared with earlier examples from the Edwardian period.

Development in the city slowed with the Great Depression that commenced in October 1929 and continued through the early 1930s. Because of a lack of finance over this period, instead of new construction, some city buildings were substantially re-modelled to create new office, commercial and industrial spaces, and also used by government authorities.

The following examples are comparable to 57-67 Little Collins Street for its use, stylistic features, construction date and/or scale. The images and descriptions are provided by CoM Maps unless stated otherwise, with images dating from c2000 or later.

### *Former Myer despatch buildings, 258-274 Queensberry Street, Carlton, 1928 & 1934 (HO17)*

A three to four-storey red brick building with three street frontages to Berkeley, Queensberry and Barry streets, built in 1928 as a Myer Emporium despatch building to a design by H W & F W Tompkins. Also designed by Tompkins, the fourth storey was added in 1934 (RBA 2013:C4).



Figure 5. 258-274 Queensberry Street, Carlton, built in 1928.

### *401-405 Little Bourke Street, 1911 & 1933 (Significant in HO1205 Guildford & Hardware Laneways Precinct)*

A four-storey face brick warehouse building with some classically derived detailing including bricked pilasters and a dentil cornice. In 1933, a single-storey shop at 405 Little Bourke Street was incorporated into the existing warehouse. The Little Bourke Street façade was remodelled at this time, resulting in the current configuration of the building (Lovell Chen 2016:3).





Figure 6. 401-405 Little Bourke Street, built in 1911 and remodelled in 1933.

*215-233 Franklin Street (rear of 186-190 A'Beckett Street), 1923 (HO1157)*

A large, three-storey and face red brick and rendered warehouse building built in 1923, with a symmetrical stripped classical style façade. It was designed by Walter & Richard Butler. The original multi-paned windows were removed from the façade (RBA 2013:D41).



Figure 7. 215-233 Franklin Street, Melbourne, constructed 1923.

*411-423 Swanston Street, 1925 (HO1084)*

411-423 Swanston Street, is a five-storey reinforced concrete former warehouse that was designed by Francis J Davies in a conservative Free Edwardian style and built by Walter E Cooper for the tobacco company W D and H O Wills in 1925. It was refurbished for educational usage in 1978.



Figure 8. 411-423 Swanston Street, built in 1925.

*Former Koorie Heritage Trust building and Zander’s Warehouse, 295-305 King Street, 1919  
(Recommended as significant within the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review)*

A three-storey brick former factory Designed by Christopher Cowper and built for the eldest son of John Charles and Cecilia Zander, John Bernard Zander in 1919. Extensively refurbished and converted to a museum and cultural centre in 2003.



Figure 9. 295-305 King Street, Melbourne, constructed in 1919.

*Lonsdale Court, 594-610 Lonsdale Street, 1924 (Recommended as significant within the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review)*

594-610 Lonsdale Street was erected in 1924 for Andrew Jack, Dyson & Co Pty Ltd, stationery and printing merchants. Designed by architect R M King as an interwar industrial building, the building was used as the business’s offices, warehouse and factory for around forty years. From 1965 to 1983 it was occupied by printer and publisher McCarron, Bird & Co.



Figure 10. 594-610 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, 1924

*57-67 Little Collins Street compares well to the above HO-listed examples in the City of Melbourne.*

In particular, the former Myer despatch buildings at 258-274 Queensberry Street, Carlton (HO17) share a similar historical context, as warehousing facilities built to serve retail outlets in the city. Both buildings represent the interwar expansion of retail industry in central Melbourne, led by a number of branded department store chains.

Stylistically, the interwar period warehouses 215-233 Franklin Street (HO1157), 401-405 Little Bourke Street (Significant in HO1205 Guildford & Hardware Laneways Precinct), 411-423 Swanston Street

(HO1084), 295-305 King Street and 594-610 Lonsdale Street (both recommended as individual place in Hoddle Grid Heritage Review) are closely comparable with the subject building. These examples have restrained architectural detailing derived from classical architecture. Slightly decorative parapets and vertical bays divided by pilasters are commonly seen in these examples.

Incorporating structures from c1880s, 1912 and 1925, all built for the same business Craig, Williamson Pty Ltd, 57-67 Little Collins Street demonstrates the ongoing expansion of manufacturing and retailing industry in the city from the late nineteenth century through the interwar period.

**ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA**

✓	<p><b>CRITERION A</b> Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p><b>CRITERION B</b> Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p><b>CRITERION C</b> Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p><b>CRITERION D</b> Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
	<p><b>CRITERION E</b> Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p><b>CRITERION F</b> Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p><b>CRITERION G</b> 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><b>CRITERION H</b> 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

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**Central Activities  
District Conservation  
Study 1985** D

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**Central City Heritage  
Study 1993** D

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

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**Central City Heritage  
Review 2011** Ungraded

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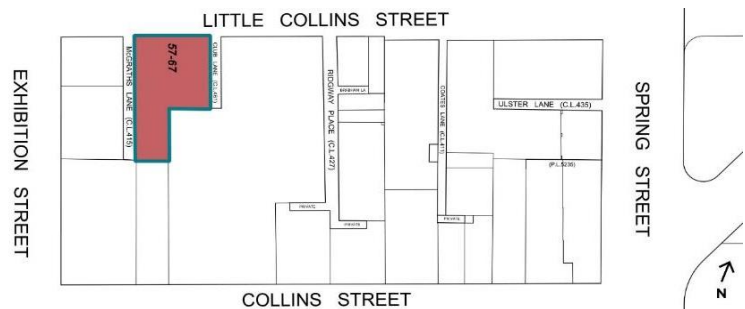


## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

**Heritage Place:** Former Craig,  
Williamson Pty Ltd complex



**PS ref no:** Interim HO1287



### What is significant?

57-67 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, built in two major stages in 1912 and 1925 for Craig, Williamson Pty Ltd, is significant.

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

- The buildings' original external form (incorporating buildings from 1912 and 1925), materials and detailing;
- The 1925 three-storey building's high level of integrity to its original design composed of a masonry pier and beam structure;
- Earlier two-storey face brick masonry components (from c1880s and 1912) of the former Craig, Williamson Pty Ltd complex in McGrath and Club Lanes;
- Pattern and size of original fenestration (Little Collins Street, McGrath Lane and Club Lane); and
- Large square industrial steel-framed windows (Little Collins Street).

More recent alterations, including the ground level shopfronts, replacement of glazing, infill to window openings and roof deck with glazed balustrade, are not significant.

### How it is significant?

57-67 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, is of local historical and representative significance to the City of Melbourne.

### **Why it is significant?**

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The complex at 57-67 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, incorporating structures from c1880s, and built in 1912 and 1925 for drapery, clothing and furniture business Craig, Williamson Pty Ltd, demonstrates the growth in manufacturing that was part of the buoyant new economy in early twentieth century Melbourne following the economic depression of the 1890s and new federal tariffs introduced in the early 1900s.

Craig, Williamson Pty Ltd, who were also major retailers with premises in Elizabeth Street from the 1890s, as well as in Bendigo and Ballarat, consolidated their manufacturing and storage at 57-67 Little Collins Street in the city centre close to their retail operations. (Criterion A)

The building is significant for its association with the Commonwealth Postmaster-General's Department from 1932-88. Having acquired the building in 1927, in preparation for the future automation of Melbourne's telephone system, the first PMG Research Laboratories were established on the upper two floors. The premises are historically significant as the site of the Mayser or 'atomic clock' that supplied accurate timekeeping to all master clocks in Australia. (Criterion A)

57-67 Little Collins Street is representative of an interwar industrial building and maintains its rhythm, scale and form from the 1925 period. This is evident along Little Collins Street where the masonry framework is inset with large metal-framed windows. The interwar characteristics are evident to the upper floors of the Little Collins Street elevation with restrained stucco mouldings over brickwork. Earlier parts of the building are also evident along McGrath and Club lanes where the red brick elevations form part of the urban landscape. (Criterion D)

### **Primary source**

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