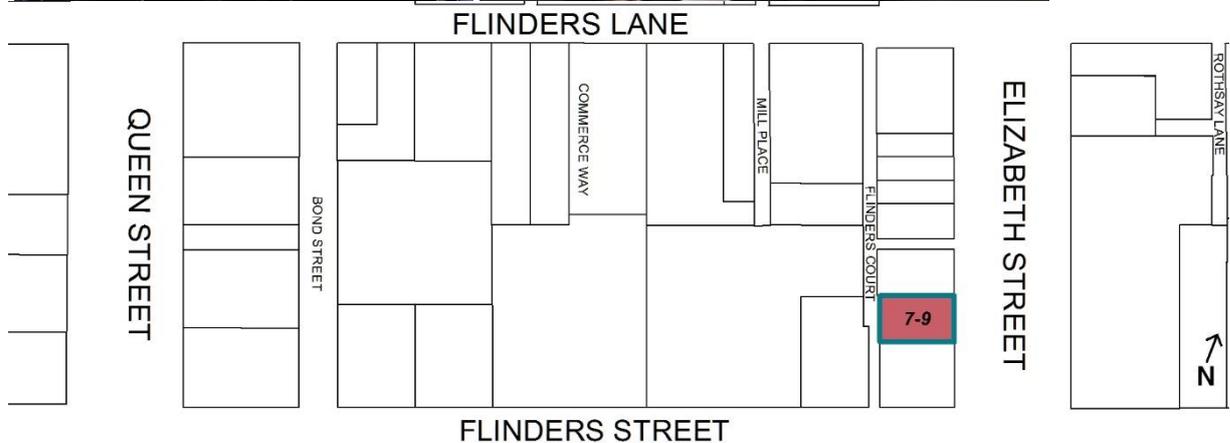


<b>SITE NAME</b>	Shops, café and office
<b>STREET ADDRESS</b>	7-9 Elizabeth Street Melbourne
<b>PROPERTY ID</b>	103166



SURVEY DATE: May 2019

SURVEY BY: Context

<b>HERITAGE INVENTORY</b>	H7822-1876	<b>EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY</b>	No
<b>PLACE TYPE</b>	Individual Heritage Place	<b>PROPOSED CATEGORY</b>	Significant
		<b>FORMER GRADE</b>	Ungraded
<b>DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:</b>	Harry A Norris	<b>BUILDER:</b>	Hansen & Yuncken
<b>DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:</b>	Interwar Period (c1919-c1940)	<b>DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:</b>	1933

## 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, Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here.
HISTORIC THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
5 Building a Commercial City	5.4 Developing a retail centre
	OTHER SUB-THEMES
13 Enjoying the City	13.6 Eating and drinking

## LAND USE

HISTORIC LAND USE	
<b>Archaeological block no:</b> 60	<b>Inventory no:</b> 876
<b>Character of Occupation:</b> Commercial	
First land sale 1837, Block 4, Allotment 8 to Alexander Thompson. Subdivision and lanes by 1840.	
1839 Williamson	
1837 & 1843 Hoddle	
1855 Kearney	
1866 Cox	
1877 Dove	Three-storey building; Virgue, Son & Chapman, Agents for Cross & Blackwell.
1880 Panorama	
1888 Mahlstedt	As above.
1905/6 Mahlstedt	Three-storey building; shops and tobacconist.
THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Merchants, Retail
1920s	Cafés
1960s	Cafés, Retail, Offices, Club

## 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 shops, café and office at 7-9 Elizabeth Street is a two-storey building built in 1933 by Hansen & Yuncken to a design by architect Harry A Norris. The building originally housed shops and a café on the ground floor with office space above. Built for tobacco retailer, G Damman & Co, the company occupied the building until at least 1974. Other long-term occupant were Vasile Vlasopoulos's Parthenon Café (1933-65) and the Young Men's Hebrew Association of Australia (c1945-60).

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### Building a Commercial City

#### *Developing a retail centre*

Even before the early 1850s, Melbourne had established the foundational infrastructure for international trade and commerce, including retail markets, shipping agents, and industry and finance houses - the beginnings of an entrepreneurial global city (Context 2012:2).

By the early 1840s, Elizabeth and Swanston streets, from the Town Hall in the south-east to the General Post Office to the north-west, had become the focus of retail activity, influenced also by the location of the Western Market in the west of the city, which operated as the city's premier wholesale fruit and vegetable market until 1930 (May 2016:176). The Eastern Market opened in 1847 as a fruit and vegetable market on the corner of Stephen Street (later Exhibition Street) and Bourke Street and drew retail further east. The department store Buckley and Nunn opened in 1854, establishing Bourke Street as the preferred retail strip.

The gold rushes accelerated Melbourne's growth and by 1861 the city's population was 125,000, more than twice that of San Francisco (Frost 2008). Manufacturers and retailers subsequently erected substantial buildings to meet the demands of a booming population.

With the economic boom of the 1880s, the 1880s-1890s was a decade of significant expansion in Melbourne. Investment funds poured in from Britain, imposing architect-designed buildings were constructed, and speculation reached fever pitch in land and buildings (Marsden 2000:28). As Graeme Davison states, commercial Melbourne extravagantly asserted 'her wealth in stucco and stone' (cited in Marsden 2000:28). The growth facilitated the construction of retail outlets, offices and factories.

However 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 (Context 2012:41).

Retail premises in the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century generally included upper-level accommodation. Multi-storey buildings housing ground-level shops with rooms above were constructed across the retail strips of Melbourne, and three- or more storeyed commercial and retail buildings began to proliferate from the late 1880s (Lovell Chen 2017:220).

The Great Depression in the 1930s marked another period of decline.

To promote economic recovery in Australia during the 1930s the government introduced tariffs on imported goods. Importations receded into the background as the distribution of locally manufactured products came to the fore. From the 1930s, like the rest of Australia, an increasing proportion of the Melbourne's workforce took up jobs in manufacturing, an industry that led Australia's recovery from the economic depression, and which was accompanied by an increased demand for retail and office space in the city.

## Enjoying the city

### *Eating and drinking*

Fine dining was the preserve of the wealthy in nineteenth century Melbourne. Restaurants were few and gentlemen enjoyed good meals at their clubs. Others generally made do with the 'plain fare' served up at the city hotels. The mix of different cultural traditions brought to Melbourne by gold seekers contributed to varied culinary offerings from the 1850s. One observer described Bourke Street as 'packed with foreign cafes'. Gunster's Vienna Café on 'the Block', for example, was popular in the 1870s. Vincent Fasoli opened Fasoli's restaurant at 108 Lonsdale Street c1897 with the popularity of his establishment amongst Melbourne's bohemians and intelligentsia setting a precedent for the flourishing café society developed by Italian communities in subsequent decades (Context 2012:98; Swinbank 1994:5).

Between the 1840s and 1900 an estimated 200 Greeks settled in Victoria. Most came from the Ionian islands, particularly Ithaca (the dominant group before World War One) and Kythera to look for gold. Most resettled in cities and towns where they became shopkeepers, fishmongers and café owners, and began sponsoring family and friends (Vlahogiannis 2008).

Between 1900 and 1940, 2600 of the overall 12,000 Greek immigrants to Australia settled in Victoria. The heart of the community was the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne and Victoria (GOC), founded in 1897, with its offices now in the heart of the Greek precinct on the corner of Russell and Lonsdale streets (Vlahogiannis 2008). Amongst other businesses, Greek migrants established family-run food outlets in milk bars and cafes throughout Melbourne. A number of Australia's early Greek food caterers had relatives and friends living and working in the United States or had been there themselves. As a consequence

*Greek cafés in Australia offered, with such plain Australian fare as steak and eggs, fresh new Americanisms like milkshakes, soft drinks and ice-cream sodas. Glamorous and elegant, they were an island of exotica...Typically they were richly decorated and named after distant, unattainable places which for most people came to life only at the picture theatres: 'The Niagara', 'The Parthenon', 'The California' or 'The New York'...It was the Greek Diaspora, America and Australia combined (Kathy Orfanos cited in Janiszewski and Alexakis).*

Australia's postwar immigration program from 1947 brought 250,000 Greek-born immigrants to Australia. When, by 1987, the bulk of Greek immigration had ended, 96 per cent of the 170,526 Greek immigrants, Greek-speaking Cypriots and Egyptians, and their Australian-born children, who were located in Victoria lived in Melbourne (Vlahogiannis 2008). With increasing Greek immigration came a demand for more authentic Greek food, and a number of Greek restaurants and cafes opened in the city from the 1950s.

In more recent years the range of international cuisines available in Melbourne's restaurants has been extended dramatically. The number of restaurants and cafes has grown enormously, aided by the development of Southbank and Docklands. Melbourne's laneways and rooftops have been turned over to small bars and cafes, rejuvenating the city centre and forging a new era in eating and drinking in Melbourne (Context 2011:76).

## SITE HISTORY

The subject site at 7-9 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, was sold as part of Crown Allotment 8, Block 4, to Alexander Thompson in the first land sale of 1837 (Fels, Lavelle & Mider 1993, Inventory no 876). From 1877 to 1888 the site was occupied by a three-storey building used by Virgue, Son & Chapman, merchants and shipping agents (S&Mc 1884; Fels, Lavelle & Mider 1993, Inventory no 876). By 1906, a three-storey structure was still present at the site, which was occupied by shops and a tobacconist (Fels, Lavelle & Mider 1993, Inventory no 876). When demolition of the three-storey building was underway in 1933, the City's building surveyor dated the building to 1853 (*Argus* 9 September 1933:22; 8 September 1933:8). From c1913, Café Frank operated from that building and addressed as 7a Elizabeth Street (*Table Talk* 5 June 1913:33). From 1919 until c1932, Vasile Vlasopoulos operated dining rooms from 7a Elizabeth Street (Ancestry.com 2016).

The subject building was erected in 1933 as three shops and a café at ground level, with office space above, for P Damman, tobacconist. The architect for the building, numbered 7a, 7 and 9 Elizabeth Street, was Harry A Norris, and the builders were Hansen & Yuncken (*Herald* 18 October 1933:22). The erection of the building commenced in September 1933, and by October the shop fronts were under construction (MBAI 14612; MBAI14733).

During construction works, the following report was published in the 'Real Property and Architecture' section of the *Herald*, and accompanied by the illustration seen in Figure 1.

*Designed on simple lines: a two-storey reinforced concrete building is being erected at 7-9 Elizabeth Street, next to Hosie's Hotel, for Mr P Damman, tobacconist.*

*There are three shops with a cafe at the rear on the ground floor. The entrance to the cafe will be from Elizabeth Street, and it will also have access to the lane at the rear. Office accommodation is provided on the first floor.*

*The floors, stairs and dadoes to the first floor are finished with buff terrazzo with coloured line insets. The interior of Damman's shop will have maple wall fittings and glass counters in modern detail.*

*The shop fronts have staybright frames, with terrazzo stalls matching the interior dadoes. A cantilever verandah will protect the whole ground floor frontage (*Herald* 18 October 1933:22).*



Figure 1. An illustration of the subject building in 1933. (Source: *Herald* 18 October 1933:22)

By 1935, the building at 7-9 Elizabeth Street was fully tenanted. On the ground level, it comprised three shops individually known as 7, 7a and 9 Elizabeth Street, and a café at the rear of the shops. In the upper-level was an office space (S&Mc 1935, 1942; Mashtedt Map section 1, no 15, 1948).

G Damman & Co, the tobacconists for whom the building was constructed, occupied 7 Elizabeth Street until at least 1974 (see Figure 3) (S&Mc 1935, 1974).

G Damman & Co was founded by George Damman, a Danish migrant who arrived in Victoria in 1851 seeking gold (*Age* 31 July 1954:4). Whilst his attempts at gold mining were unsuccessful, Damman stayed in the colony of Victoria and founded a tobacco business on the goldfields. Initially operating in Beechworth, then Ballarat and Bendigo, business flourished to the point that he sent for his brother Gustave from Denmark and together the Damman brothers opened their first tobacco and pipe retail store in Melbourne on the southeast corner of Swanston and Collins streets in 1854 (see Figure 2) (*Age* 31 July 1954:4).

In 1954, the company celebrated its centenary, and was noted as being the oldest tobacconists in Australia (*Age* 31 July 1954:4). In 1954, six descendants of the original founders continued to work for the company, and Percy Damman, son of the founder George, ran the business (*Age* 31 July 1954:4). The company established three stores in Melbourne: a store on the intersection of Collins and Swanston streets, opened in 1854; a store at 75 Elizabeth Street; and a store at the subject site, 7-9 Elizabeth Street (Victorian Collections 2019). The company operated until at least 1985 (*Sydney Morning Herald* 7 December 1985:219).



*In the spring of 1854, two young Danish farmers established a tobacco shop in the heart of young Melbourne.*

Figure 2. Illustration showing Damman Brothers' first Melbourne tobacco shop on the southeast corner of Collins and Swanston streets, opened in 1854 and occupied by the firm until 1882. (Source: *Age* 31 July 1954:4)

Number 7a Elizabeth Street was briefly occupied by a cobbler from 1935 until at least 1942. By 1945 a fruiterer operated from the shop and remained in the building until 1965 (S&Mc 1935, 1942, 1965).

Number 9 Elizabeth Street was occupied by dry cleaners from 1942 until at least 1974 (S&Mc 1935, 1974).

The upper-level office space and the café at the rear of the ground level shops were both initially known as 7-9 Elizabeth Street (S&Mc 1935, 1942). The office space on the first floor of the building was briefly occupied by a financier between 1935 and 1942, and a bridge salon in 1945, before being occupied by the Young Men's Hebrew Association of Australia (YMHA) and the National Council of Jewish Women, who remained there until 1960 (S&Mc 1935, 1942, 1945, 1950, 1960). After 1960, the office space was occupied by G Damman & Co (S&Mc 1960, 1974).

The YMHA was founded in Sydney in 1929 with its inaugural meeting held in 1930. Its establishment followed the success of the organisation by the same name in America. Membership was open to Jewish men only, but any male over ten years old was eligible to become a member (*Hebrew Standard of Australasia* 26 December 1930:10). The National Council of Jewish Women was established for Jewish female membership in the same year.

The objectives of the organisation were to 'perpetuate Jewish ideals, contribute to the social development of [the] community, and to create a cultural Jewish life by means of a religious, educational, social, philanthropic and recreational programme' (*Hebrew Standard of Australasia* 26 December 1930:10). The society was established to provide a place for Jewish men to come together and meet at any time, which was not possible at their synagogues (*Hebrew Standard of Australasia* 26 December 1930:10). The movement spread to other Australian states in the 1940s and was important in strengthening the social and cultural fabric of Australian Jewry (Jupp 2001:532).

The Jewish Young People's Association was operating in Melbourne by the 1930s, and by late 1933 a Victorian branch of the YMHA had been established, with Alex Masel instrumental in its foundation. The Victorian branch operated until c1993 (*Argus* 15 December 1933:13; Australian Jewish Historical Society Victoria Inc 1993; Liberman 2018: unpaginated). The YMHA and the National Council of

Jewish Women purchased premises at 289 Collins Street in December 1934, before moving to the subject building c1945 (*Age* 15 February 1934:10).

The Parthenon Café was opened in 1935 on the ground level of the subject building by Greek migrant Vasile (also spelt Vasele) Vlasopulos (S&Mc 1935, 1965; Ancestry.com 2006-2019). Located at the rear of the ground level shops, the café also had access from a rear laneway Flinders Court (*Herald* 18 October 1933:22). Vlasopulos had operated dining rooms on the site from 1919 from the building that predated the subject building.

Vasele Vlasopulos was born in Ithaca, Greece, in 1870 to Anstener Raftopulos and Constanton Vlasopulos. Vasele arrived in Victoria in 1891 aged 22 years and lived in Bendigo for 13 years, marrying Agnes Isabella Orr in 1900. The couple had a son, Jim. By 1904, Vlasopulos had opened an oyster saloon at 340 Flinders Street, and by 1921 the family were living at 17 Dorcas Street, South Melbourne. Agnes Vlasopulos died in April 1941 and Vasele Vlasopulos died on 24 January 1950 (Ancestry.com 2006-2019).

By 1977, the café, then addressed as 7a-9a Elizabeth Street, was named the Two Way Restaurant (*Age* 15 January 1977:118).

The subject building c1972 can be seen in Figure 4.

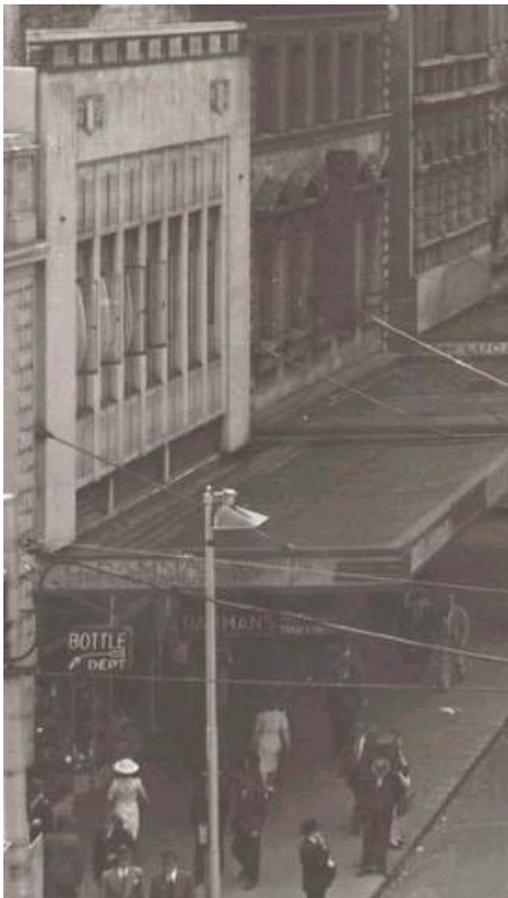


Figure 3. The subject building as it appeared some time between 1946 and 1953. Signage on the cantilevered verandah and below indicates G Damman & Co's presence at the site. (Source: 'Views along Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, Victoria' c1946-1953, SLV)



Figure 4. A photo showing the subject building on the left-hand side c1972 occupied by a milk bar and Spotless Drycleaners at 7-9 Elizabeth Street, and a restaurant and coffee lounge at the rear of the building at 7a Elizabeth Street. (Source: Halla c1972, SLV [copyright](#))

Between 1992 and 1999, 9 Elizabeth Street operated as a sports bookstore (*Age* 13 May 1992:55; *Age* 21 February 1999:50).

Alterations to the building have been made mainly to the shopfronts at ground level (MBAI). Multiple signs underneath the cantilevered verandah have also been changed (MBAI).

The building was refurbished in 1992. Today the property contains one shop, and two food and drink outlets, including Pepperoni's pizza restaurant and Hella Good, which serves Greek food (CoMMaps).

#### *Harry A Norris, architect*

Harry Albert Norris (1888-1967) was born in Hawthorn, a son of a bootmaker. He was articled to architects Ward & Carleton between 1906 and 1911, a Melbourne firm that undertook modest domestic, commercial and industrial commissions. In 1910, Norris won second prize in the Royal Victorian Institute of Architecture student competition (Gurr and Willis 2012:502-3).

Norris commenced his sole practice from c1915, and by 1920 he was established in an office in Collins Street. His early works included domestic and commercial projects, with a significant number of motor garages, factories and bakeries. His younger brother Frank Leonard Norris (1903-1976), who gained a Diploma in Architecture from the University of Melbourne, also joined the practice (Gurr and Willis 2012:502-3).

Harry Norris also participated in a number of business ventures with Alfred M Nicholas. A M Nicholas played a key role in Victoria's motoring industry and, with his pharmacist brother George, he ran the highly successful Nicholas Pty Ltd, which was associated with the development and marketing of 'Aspro' in Australia. The close relationship between Norris and Nicholas resulted in a number of substantial architectural commissions, including the Nicholas Building, Swanston Street (1925-26), and two Nicholas residences: 'Carn Brea', Hawthorn (rebuilt in 1928) and 'Burnham Beeches',

Sherbrooke (1930-33). In addition, Norris was appointed as the architect of the St Kilda Road campus of Wesley College, substantially rebuilt in 1933-39 following a bequest from Alfred and George Nicholas (Gurr and Willis 2012:502-3).

Norris also had a long relationship with G J Coles, who sent him to the United States in 1929 to investigate chain store architecture. Norris was responsible for designing and altering many Coles stores across Victoria from c1927, and in Sydney from c1938 (Gurr and Willis 2012:502-3).

Norris regularly travelled overseas in 1934, 1936 and 1937, particularly in the United States, to observe overseas architectural trends (Gurr and Willis 2012:502-3).

Completing a number of influential examples of the key styles of the era, Norris became one of Victoria's most prolific commercial architects in the 1920s and 1930s. Victoria Gurr and Julie Willis's entry for Norris in the *Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture* sums up his architectural achievements as follows:

*From the mid-1920s onwards, Norris was enthralled by the possibilities of faience and showed himself to be remarkably adept at employing a wide range of stylistic approaches. From the cobalt-blue Spanish Baroque of Majorca House, Flinders Lane, Melbourne (1931) to the blush pink of the remodelled façade of the G.J. Coles Store, Bourke Street, Melbourne (1929) with its Jazz-Hispanic detailing, he demonstrated the possibilities of colour and modelling with faience to great effect. He was an early exponent of the Moderne, such as at Block Court, Collins Street, Melbourne (1929) and with the streamlined façade of Melford Motors showroom, Elizabeth Street, Melbourne (1937), which reached a high point with Mitchell House, Elizabeth Street, Melbourne (1938). The design for the Vice-Chancellor's House at the University of Melbourne (1937) showed a similar concern for materials and style, being a gentle Georgian Revival house given a modish twist by the use of Roman bricks that emphasised horizontality. His Mission to Seamen, Port Melbourne (1937, [since] demolished) was a confident essay in Dudokian modernism (Gurr and Willis 2012:502-3).*

Norris retired on his 75th birthday, dying six months later.

#### *Hansen & Yuncken, builders*

Otto Yuncken was born in Lyndoch, South Australia in 1865 and trained as a carpenter under his German-born father. Together they built simple structures in the Barossa Valley before Otto left for Port Adelaide at the age of 18 (Carland 2009). By 1885 Yuncken had moved to Melbourne and taken up work with Clements Langford, one of the city's largest building companies. During his time with Clements Langford, Yuncken studied at the Working Men's College and attained first class honours in architectural drawing and carpentry (Carland 2009). After leaving Clements Langford, Yuncken partnered with Lauritz Hansen in 1918 to form Hansen & Yuncken (Hansen Yuncken 2019).

The firm was responsible for some of Melbourne's 'most memorable buildings' (Carland 2009). Earlier works include the Collingwood Football Club grandstand and the Port Authority building in Market Street (Carland 2009). The firm was responsible for renovations to Myer buildings and constructed the new spires at St Patrick's Cathedral. The company also devised an innovative suspended scaffold to replaster the domed ceiling at the State Library of Victoria (Carland 2009).

The company exists today as Hansen Yuncken and has built many notable structures over the past decades, including the Myponga Dam (1959), The Alfred Hospital (1969-1977) and Council House 2 for the City of Melbourne (2006) (Hansen Yuncken 2019).

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

Located on the western side of Elizabeth Street between Flinders Street and Flinders Lane, with a rear frontage to Flinders Court, 7-9 Elizabeth Street is a two-storey retail/office building constructed in 1933 to a design by prominent architect Harry A Norris. It has some elements exhibiting influences from the non-traditional Moderne style, which was popularised in the interwar period.

The façade to Elizabeth Street is of painted render, over a reinforced concrete structure. At the first floor level the façade is symmetrical, with a large central recessed bay, which comprises seven vertically proportioned modules defined by thin projecting fins of moulded painted render. Each module comprises a narrow window opening, above and below which are solid spandrel panels with a simple vertical fin moulding in their centre. The original window frames have been replaced. Simple flush painted render masonry frames the recessed central bay on either side and above, relieved at each end above the end window modules with a moulded decorative motif of a shield set between a pair recessed panels with the letter 'D' set forward and reversed, possibly the signature of the original owner and occupier G Damman & Co. The façade terminates in a low recessed parapet, inset at each end, with a series of recessed panels embossed with an Art Deco decorative 'wave' and stylised ionic capital, topped with a thin horizontal capping.

At street level the original awning and shopfronts have been replaced with contemporary aluminium frame shopfronts and a standard heavy suspended awning.

The rear elevation facing Flinders Court is a two-storey reinforced concrete structure, punctuated with three groups of windows and two ground-level openings. At the northern end is a series of small openings fitted with louvres for ventilation. In the centre at each floor are two large multipaned window openings. The first floor windows have been replaced with aluminium windows whilst the ground floor openings appear to retain their original steel framed windows, some with their bottom sections angled back with a fixed vertical grill running across the top, as is typical in many 1920s and 30s industrial buildings. At the southern end there are two smaller multipaned windows. At the ground level, there is an original service lift opening with a steel door and near the southern end, an original opening that would have provided a rear access to the ground-level café is also retained. Extensive plumbing and a number of air conditioning units have been fixed to the elevation.

## **INTEGRITY**

7-9 Elizabeth Street is relatively intact with changes visible to original or early fabric largely confined to the ground floor. The building retains its original built form and scale, painted render walls and key stylistic details. Original facade detailing at the first-floor level includes the large central recessed window bay, decorative relief panels and parapet with 'wave' elements indicative of Art Deco styling, although the original steel frame windows have been replaced with aluminium frame units. The original shopfronts and awning have been replaced with contemporary items. The rear elevation retains original pattern of openings. Overall, the building has high integrity.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Utilitarian two to three-storey shops or offices similar to 7-9 Elizabeth Street are a common building typology in the Hoddle Grid, although with extensive commercial development in the late twentieth century, these are now more common along main streets and smaller laneways in the peripheral precincts than in the main commercial area of central Melbourne. The interwar commercial buildings in central Melbourne utilised various classical or more progressive styles including the Commercial Palazzo, Chicagoesque or Moderne styles, as seen in landmark examples and other office/retail buildings around the city. The modestly scaled buildings were typically built of loadbearing brick, with a painted render finish and a minimum of detail.

The following examples in Melbourne are comparable with 7-9 Elizabeth Street, being of a similar use, scale, location and/or construction date. The images and descriptions are provided by CoM Maps unless stated otherwise, with images dating from c2000 or later.

### *211-213 Franklin Street, 1931 (HO1125)*

Two-storey building originally built as a café in 1931 in an eclectic design, broadly indicative of the Spanish Mission style. The architects were Cowper, Murphy & Appleford. The ground floor opening has been altered in the 1980s, and tile cladding on the lower part of the wall is not original (RBA 2013:D38).



Figure 5. 211-213 Franklin Street, built in 1931.

### *Diamond House, 313-317 Bourke Street, 1936 (Significant in HO509 Post Office Precinct)*

Diamond House is a four-storey brick building designed by H W & F B Tomkins in the Moderne style and built by E A Watts in 1936.



Figure 6. 313-317 Bourke Street, built in 1936. (Source: Google 2019)

*Former Sharpe Bros Pty Ltd, 202-204 Bourke Street, 1934 (Recommended as significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review)*

202-204 Bourke Street is a four-storey interwar commercial building built in 1935 in the Moderne style to a design by Melbourne architects H W & F B Tompkins. It functioned as the successful department store of Sharpe Bros Pty Ltd from 1935 to 1963 and continued its use as a department store until c1970.



Figure 7. 202-204 Bourke Street, built in 1934. (Source: Context 2018)

*Former Alexanders Building, 88 Elizabeth Street, 1928 & 1933 (Significant in HO502 The Block Precinct)*

A three-storey brick retail building with a faience tile-clad facade and a mezzanine. Built for the pipe and smoking requisites retailer Alexanders Proprietary Limited in 1928, and the façade was renovated in 1933 (*Age* 19 September 1933:14)



Figure 8. Elizabeth Street, built in 1928.

*295-297 Elizabeth Street, 1930s (Contributory in HO1204 Elizabeth Street West Precinct)*

Two-storey rendered brick shop built in the early 1930's.



Figure 9. 295-297 Elizabeth Street, built in the early 1930s. (Source: Google 2019)

*349 Elizabeth Street, c1920s (Contributory in HO1204 Elizabeth Street West Precinct)*

Two-storey concrete rendered shop built in the 1920s in Neo-Greco style.



Figure 10. 349 Elizabeth Street, built in c1920s.

7-9 Elizabeth Street is a relatively intact example of a modestly scaled two-storey shop/office building in central Melbourne. It was constructed in 1933 and exhibits aspects of the Moderne style. While other examples of the style currently on the City of Melbourne's Heritage Overlay, such as 88 Elizabeth Street (Significant to HO502 The Block Precinct) from 1936, which was also occupied by a cigarette manufacturer Alexanders Pty Ltd, and 313-317 Bourke Street (Significant to HO509 Post Office Precinct) of 1928.

7-9 Elizabeth Street is of interest as an unusually low scale example of the work of prominent architect Harry A Norris, demonstrating his ability to adapt his craft to lower scale commissions. This is indicative of its construction date close to the height of the 1930s Great Depression, a period of economic restraint and limited commercial development.

A café building at 211-213 Franklin Street from 1930 (HO1155) is another modestly scaled example with understated detailing. Although this example exhibits elements influenced by the Spanish Mission style, this building and 7-9 Elizabeth Street are both representative of the lower-scale commercial development during the later interwar period. 211-213 Franklin Street is also comparable for its original use as a café.

Unlike other two-storey retail/office or similar use buildings from the interwar period such as 295-297 Elizabeth Street (Contributory to HO1204 Elizabeth Street West Precinct), or 349 Elizabeth Street (Contributory to HO1204 Elizabeth Street West Precinct) the subject site exhibits a more refined and sophisticated use of stylistic motifs indicative of the influences of Art Deco. The incorporation of geometric stylised decorative panels enlivens the façade and sets the building apart from these more stylistically conservative examples of small-scale commercial building being constructed during 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

## REFERENCES

*Age*, as cited.

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## PREVIOUS STUDIES

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**Central Activities District  
Conservation Study 1985**      Ungraded

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**Central City Heritage  
Study 1993**      Ungraded

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

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**Central City Heritage  
Review 2011**      Ungraded

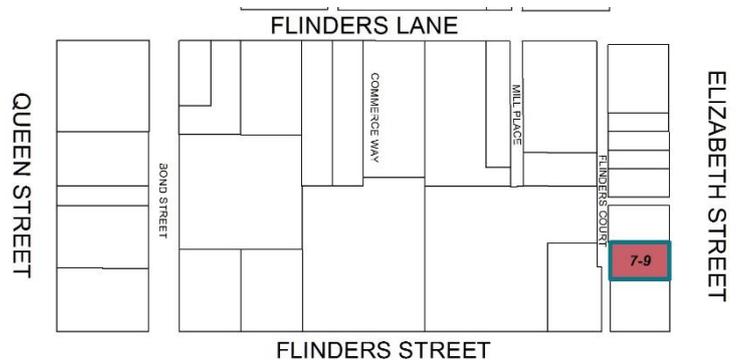
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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

**Heritage Place:** Shops, café and office



**PS ref no:** HOXXXX



### What is significant?

7-9 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, a two-storey retail building built in 1933 to a design by architect Harry A Norris.

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

- The original built form and scale;
- The original rendered reinforced concrete façade to Elizabeth Street and the pattern of fenestration, including large central recessed bay with vertically proportioned modules of narrow window openings and solid panels, moulded decorative motifs and parapet with recessed Art Deco/Jazz Moderne motifs; and
- The original rear elevation with exposed concrete finish to Flinders Court and the pattern of fenestration.

Later alterations made to the Elizabeth Street facade, including the aluminium frame shop front, are not significant.

### How it is significant?

7-9 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, is of local historic, representative and associative significance to the City of Melbourne

### Why it is significant?

The two-storey shop, office and cafe building at 7-9 Elizabeth Street is historically significant for the evidence it provides of an important phase in Melbourne's retail and office development. During the economic depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s, government tariffs on imported goods brought

locally manufactured products to the fore, which aided Melbourne's recovery. The building at 7-9 Elizabeth Street was occupied immediately by small businesses associated with retail, café and financial services. Building owner, tobacco retailer G Damman & Co, occupied part of the building for around 40 years, from 1933 to at least 1974. The tobacco business of G Damman & Co was founded on the Victorian goldfields by Danish migrant brothers George and Gustave Damman. They opened their first tobacco and pipe retail store in Melbourne in 1854. Another occupant was the Parthenon Café from 1933-65, established by Greek immigrant Vasile Vlasopoulos. Vlasopoulos had a longer connection to the site, in 1919 having established a dining room in the previous building at 7A Elizabeth Street. Opened in 1933, the Parthenon Café was one of the earliest Greek cafes established in Melbourne, which were uncommon before the increased arrival of Greek migrants after World War Two. The building at 7-9 Elizabeth Street is also significant for its direct association of 15 years with the Young Men's Hebrew Association of Australia who occupied the first-floor office space in the subject building from c1945-60. The Young Men's Hebrew Association of Australia (YMHA) was founded in Sydney in 1929, with a Victorian branch established by late 1933, to perpetuate Jewish ideals, contribute to the social development of the community, and to create a cultural Jewish life by means of a religious, educational, social, philanthropic and recreational program. The role of the YMHA during its tenancy of 7-9 Elizabeth Street is likely to have taken on particular importance in the course of Melbourne's and Victoria's Jewish history in the immediate postwar years. (Criterion A)

The building at 7-9 Elizabeth Street is significant as a relatively intact example of a two-storey shop and office building constructed in the later interwar period and designed by Harry A Norris. The building is characteristic of the modestly scaled and fine-grained retail expansion in central Melbourne during the widespread economic depression of the later 1920s and early 1930s. Its use of the Moderne style in such a low scale building is not common. The style was in vogue at the time for much more substantial (especially commercial) buildings rather than low scale retail buildings, which tended to be more stylistically conservative and restrained. The primary façade to Elizabeth Street retains its original fenestration, including large central recessed bay with vertically proportioned modules of narrow window openings and solid panels, moulded decorative motifs and parapet with recessed Art Deco inspired motifs. (Criterion D)

7-9 Elizabeth Street is significant for its direct association with one of the earliest-established Australian tobacconists G Damman & Co. Built for the company in 1933, the building was occupied by G Damman & Co for over 40 years through to the 1970s. In 1954, the company celebrated its centenary, and was noted as being the oldest tobacconists in Australia. The company established three stores in Melbourne, and the subject building at 7-9 Elizabeth Street is the only surviving physical evidence of their business in central Melbourne for over 120 years. (Criterion H)

### **Primary source**

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



