

# ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE HERITAGE COUNCIL



<b>NAME</b>	THE FORMER COMMONWEALTH NOTE AND STAMP PRINTING DEPARTMENT
<b>LOCATION</b>	115 VICTORIA PARADE, FITZROY
<b>VHR NUMBER:</b>	PROV VHR H2372
<b>CATEGORY:</b>	HERITAGE PLACE
<b>HERITAGE OVERLAY</b>	YARRA CITY, HO334 (South Fitzroy Precinct)
<b>FILE NUMBER:</b>	FOL/17/2735
<b>HERMES NUMBER:</b>	199986



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE HERITAGE COUNCIL:

- That the Former Commonwealth Note And Stamp Printing Department be included as a Heritage Place in the Victorian Heritage Register under the *Heritage Act 1995* [Section 32 (1)(a)].

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy Smith".

**Tim Smith OAM**

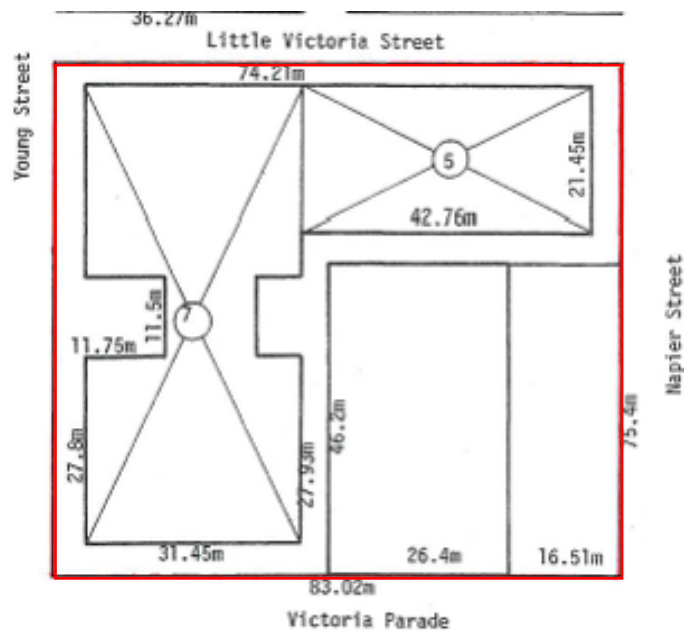
**Executive Director, Heritage Victoria**

**Recommendation Date:** 17 March 2017

This recommendation report has been issued by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria under s.32 of the *Heritage Act 1995*. It has not been considered or endorsed by the Heritage Council of Victoria.

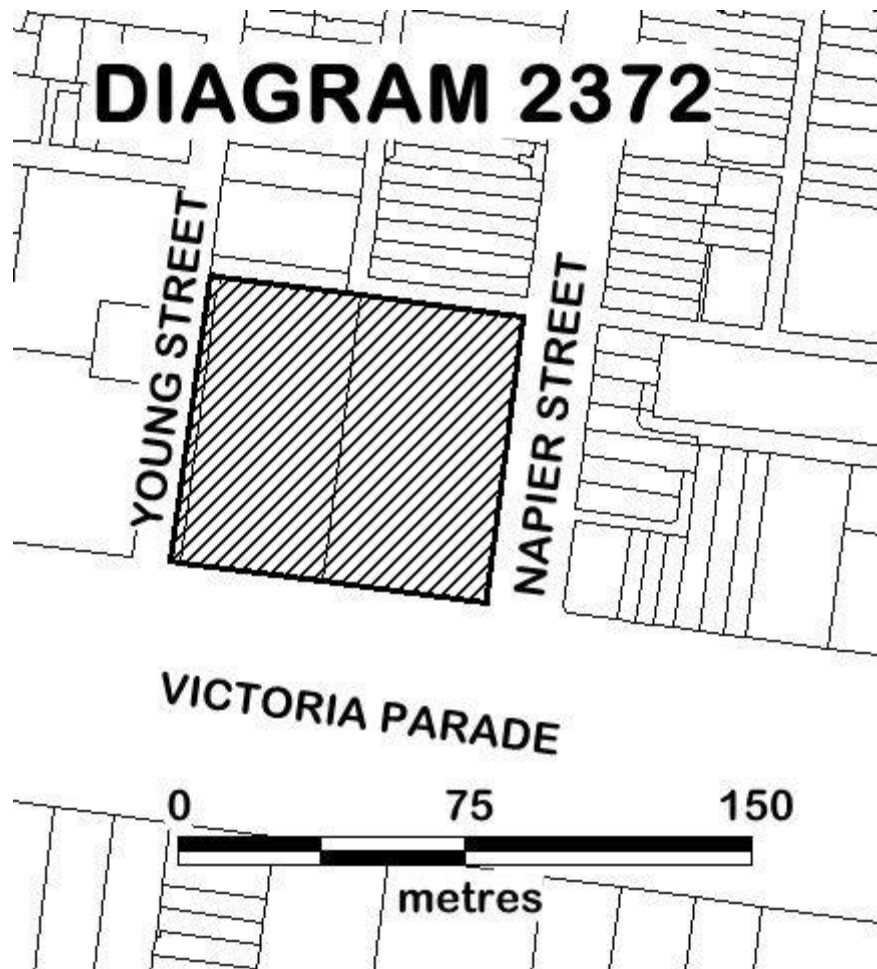
## EXTENT OF NOMINATION

1. The extent of the above title boundaries for (a) [all of Vol. 10008 Fol.592]
2. The extent of the title boundaries for (b) [All of Vol. 8763 Fol. 146] and in particular the area bounded by (a) on the west and the brick fence along the northern and eastern street frontage of the building shown on the diagram and the line of the fence's original alignment on the south.



## RECOMMENDED REGISTRATION

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2372 encompassing all of Lot 1 on Title Plan 844284, all of Title Plan 3475 and all of Lot 1 on Title Plan 568633.



The extent of registration of the Former Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department in the Victorian Heritage Register affects the whole place shown on Diagram 2372 including the land, all buildings (including the exteriors and interiors) and other features.

## RATIONALE FOR EXTENT

The recommended extent is the cadastral block which includes the Former Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department building and a curtilage to Victoria Parade, Young, Little Victoria and Napier Streets. This block was acquired for use by the Former Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department in stages between 1919 and 1961, as the needs of the Department increased. It was the location of the Note and Stamp Printing Department until its closure in 1981.

## AERIAL PHOTO OF THE PLACE SHOWING PROPOSED REGISTRATION



# STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

## WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT?

The Former Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department building, including all architectural elements, a reinforced concrete frame and load bearing floors, and remnant fencing, located on a block bounded by Victoria Parade, and Young, Little Victoria and Napier Streets. The elements of the late twentieth century/early twenty-first century exterior and interior refurbishment are not of significance.

### History Summary

Between Federation in 1901 and the establishment of Parliament in Canberra in 1927, Melbourne was the seat of the Commonwealth Government and the capital of Australia. Administration of important government processes including the design, manufacture and issuing of postage stamps, bank notes and secure government products took place in Melbourne. The Note and Stamp Printing departments initially operated from the Queens Warehouse (VHR H1211), but these premises were considered inadequate and in 1919, the Government acquired a property on Victoria Parade with the intention of establishing new premises. After consideration of Sydney and Canberra as alternative locations, the Victoria Parade site was regarded as the most suitable, and designs were prepared by Commonwealth Architect, John Smith Murdoch. However when the Commonwealth Bank took over responsibility for the issue of bank notes in 1920, Murdoch's designs were replaced with those prepared by John Kirkpatrick, the Bank's official architect. Kirkpatrick's design was constructed by 1924, and additions were made between 1930 and 1931 to the design of Commonwealth Chief Architect, E H Henderson. The Victoria Parade premises saw many changes in production and technology, including the change to decimal currency in 1966, which affected both notes and stamps, and research into polymer bank notes in the 1970s. The final day of note printing at 115 Victoria Parade took place on 19 October 1981 and operations were relocated to Craigieburn where notes continue to be printed. The Victoria Parade site was purchased by the Australian Catholic University in 1998 and has undergone extensive alterations to operate as the University's Melbourne campus.

### Description Summary

The Former Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department is an L shaped building contained within a block bounded by Victoria Parade, and Young, Little Victoria and Napier Streets. The building was completed in stages, which is evident in the design. A carpark is located in the south-eastern corner of the site.

The earliest building faces Victoria Parade and is six storeys high with a symmetrical front elevation comprising large plate glass windows to the three centre bays, flanked by end bays each containing three narrow windows. The two lower levels are partially enclosed by a modern glass and metal framed entrance ramp and a modern glass enclosed staircase is located on the eastern wall.

The additions constructed between 1925 and 1931 are located along Little Victoria Street at the rear of the site. The architectural detailing is similar to the earlier building, but more simplistic in design and form. A modern glass addition encloses most of the southern elevation. Internally, the buildings have been substantially altered, although the structure of the building, including external walls, reinforced concrete columns and load bearing floors is still evident.

This site is part of the traditional land of the Wurundjeri people.

## **HOW IS IT SIGNIFICANT?**

The Former Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department is of historical significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

### **Criterion A**

Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

### **Criterion B**

Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

## **WHY IS IT SIGNIFICANT?**

The Former Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

The Former Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department is historically significant as the place where all Commonwealth secure products, including stamps and bank notes for Australia and its overseas territories were designed, printed and issued from 1924. It was designed and constructed when Melbourne was the seat of the Commonwealth Government and produced stamps until 1977 and bank notes until 1981. The Former Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department is also historically significant for its association with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia which was established in 1911 as Australia's national bank and was responsible for the issue of bank notes from 1920. [Criterion A]

The Former Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department is historically significant as one of a suite of buildings constructed during the important period when Melbourne was the nation's capital, from Federation in 1901, to 1927 when Parliament was established in Canberra. Other buildings constructed during this period include the Federal Court of Australia (VHR H1476), the Former Mail Exchange (VHR H0881), the Commonwealth Offices building (which cannot be included in the VHR as it remains in Commonwealth ownership) and the Commonwealth Clothing Factory (now demolished). These buildings were constructed to perform specific Commonwealth duties and as symbols of the new nation, were designed to focus on modernity, efficiency and innovation. [Criterion A]

The Former Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department is rare as a purpose built building for the design, manufacture and issue of bank notes, stamps and other secure government products for use in Australia and its territories, during the comparably short period when Melbourne was the seat of the Commonwealth Government (1901-1927). The place is rare as one of only three places in Victoria, indeed in Australia, where Federal Government note printing and issue took place. The other two are the Queens Warehouse (VHR H1211) and the existing Craigieburn premises in use since 1981. [Criterion B]

## RECOMMENDATION REASONS

### REASONS FOR RECOMMENDING INCLUSION IN THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER [s.34A(2)]

Following is the Executive Director's assessment of the place against the tests set out in *The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Thresholds Guidelines (2014)*.

#### CRITERION A

**Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.**

##### STEP 1: A BASIC TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION A

The place/object has a *CLEAR ASSOCIATION* with an event, phase, period, process, function, movement, custom or way of life in Victoria's cultural history.

**Plus**

The association of the place/object to the event, phase, etc *IS EVIDENT* in the physical fabric of the place/object and/or in documentary resources or oral history.

**Plus**

The *EVENT, PHASE, etc* is of *HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE*, having made a strong or influential contribution to Victoria.

#### *Executive Director's Response*

Purpose built in 1924, when Melbourne was the seat of the Commonwealth Government, the Former Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department has a clear association with the important process of designing, printing, manufacturing and issuing all legal tender, stamps and other government security products for Australia and its overseas territories. Stamps and bank notes continued to be printed from this location until 1977 and 1981 respectively. The Former Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department is an important reminder of the establishment of an official Australian currency, which contributed to a sense of national identity in the early decades of the twentieth century.

It also has a clear association with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, which was formed in 1911 by the Australian Government as the national bank for the new nation. In 1920, responsibility for the issue of bank notes was transferred from the Treasury Department to the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. The association with this process is evident in the physical fabric of the place, through the Stripped Palazzo architectural style which was synonymous with financial buildings during the interwar period, and through the reinforced fireproof concrete walls and columns, and load bearing floors for printing equipment. The association is also evident in photographs, architectural documentation and descriptions.

Criterion A is likely to be satisfied.

##### STEP 2: A BASIC TEST FOR DETERMINING STATE LEVEL SIGNIFICANCE FOR CRITERION A

The place/object allows the clear association with the event, phase etc. of historical importance to be *UNDERSTOOD BETTER THAN MOST OTHER PLACES OR OBJECTS IN VICTORIA WITH SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME ASSOCIATION.*

### **Executive Director's Response**

There are few other places in Victoria, indeed in Australia which have substantially the same association as the Former Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department. The only other places associated with note printing are the Queens Warehouse (VHR H1211) and the existing premises at Craigieburn. Since c.1977, secure government products and stamps have been produced by various private companies. Unlike these places, the Former Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department was designed and constructed for its purpose when Melbourne was the seat of the Commonwealth Government of Australia.

While other Commonwealth Government buildings were constructed during this period, no others are associated with the task of producing the Australian government's secure products.

Criterion A is likely to be satisfied at the State level.

### **CRITERION B**

#### **Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.**

##### **STEP 1: A BASIC TEST FOR SATISFYING CRITERION B**

The place/object has a *clear ASSOCIATION* with an event, phase, period, process, function, movement, custom or way of life of importance in Victoria's cultural history.

**Plus**

The association of the place/object to the event, phase, etc *IS EVIDENT* in the physical fabric of the place/object and/or in documentary resources or oral history.

**Plus**

The place/object is *RARE OR UNCOMMON*, being one of a small number of places/objects remaining that demonstrates the important event, phase etc.

OR

The place/object is *RARE OR UNCOMMON*, containing unusual features of note that were not widely replicated

OR

The existence of the *class* of place/object that demonstrates the important event, phase etc is *ENDANGERED* to the point of rarity due to threats and pressures on such places/objects.

### **Executive Director's Response**

The Former Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department is rare as the only place purpose built for the design, manufacture and issue of bank notes, stamps and other secure government products for use in Australia and nearby territories, during the comparably short period when Melbourne was the seat of the Commonwealth Government (1901-1927).

The place is rare as one of only three places in Victoria (Australia) where note printing took place. The other two are the Customs Store (Queens Warehouse VHR H1211) and the existing Craigieburn premises in use since 1981.

Criterion B is likely to be satisfied.



## STEP 2: A BASIC TEST FOR DETERMINING STATE LEVEL SIGNIFICANCE FOR CRITERION B

The place/object is *RARE, UNCOMMON OR ENDANGERED* within Victoria.

### ***Executive Director's Response***

The place is rare as one of only three places where bank notes, stamps and other secure government products were designed, manufactured and issued for use in Australia and nearby territories. The place is particularly rare as the only place providing this function during the comparably short period when Melbourne was the Seat of Federal Government (1901-1927).

Criterion B is likely to be satisfied at the State level.

# PROPOSED PERMIT POLICY

## Preamble

The purpose of the Permit Policy is to assist when considering or making decisions regarding works to a registered place. It is recommended that any proposed works be discussed with an officer of Heritage Victoria prior to making a permit application. Discussing proposed works will assist in answering questions the owner may have and aid any decisions regarding works to the place.

**The extent of registration of the Former Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department in the Victorian Heritage Register affects the whole place shown on Diagram 2372 including the land, all buildings (exteriors and interiors) and other features.** Under the *Heritage Act 1995* a person must not remove or demolish, damage or despoil, develop or alter or excavate, relocate or disturb the position of any part of a registered place or object without approval. It is acknowledged, however, that alterations and other works may be required to keep places and objects in good repair and adapt them for use into the future.

If a person wishes to undertake works or activities in relation to a registered place or registered object, they must apply to the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria for a permit. The purpose of a permit is to enable appropriate change to a place and to effectively manage adverse impacts on the cultural heritage significance of a place as a consequence of change. If an owner is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that Heritage Victoria be contacted.

Permits are required for anything which alters the place or object, unless a **permit exemption** is granted. Permit exemptions usually cover routine maintenance and upkeep issues faced by owners as well as minor works or works to the elements of the place or object that are not significant. They may include appropriate works that are specified in a conservation management plan. Permit exemptions can be granted at the time of registration (under s.42 of the Heritage Act) or after registration (under s.66 of the Heritage Act).

It should be noted that the addition of new buildings to the registered place, as well as alterations to the interior and exterior of existing buildings requires a permit, unless a specific permit exemption is granted.

## Conservation management plans

It is recommended that a Conservation Management Plan is developed to manage the place in a manner which respects its cultural heritage significance.

## Other approvals

Please be aware that approval from other authorities (such as local government) may be required to undertake works.

## Archaeology

Ground disturbance may affect any archaeological deposits at the place and, subject to the exemptions stated in this document, requires a permit.

## Cultural heritage significance

### *Overview of significance*

The cultural heritage significance of the Former Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department lies in the physical fabric of the place, including the architectural detailing, reinforced concrete fireproof walls and load bearing floors of the building bounded by Victoria Parade and Young, Little Victoria and Napier Streets. The elements of the late twentieth century / early twenty-first century exterior and interior refurbishment are not of significance.

## PROPOSED PERMIT EXEMPTIONS (UNDER SECTION 42 OF THE HERITAGE ACT)

It should be noted that Permit Exemptions can be granted at the time of registration (under s.42(4) of the Heritage Act). Permit Exemptions can also be applied for and granted after registration (under s.66 of the Heritage Act)

### **General Condition 1**

All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.

### **General Condition 2**

Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible.

### **General Condition 3**

All works should ideally be informed by Conservation Management Plans prepared for the place. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan, and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.

### **General Condition 4**

Nothing in this determination prevents the Heritage Council from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

### **General Condition 5**

Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the relevant responsible authority, where applicable.

### **Specific Permit Exemptions:**

Works and alterations to the following buildings and features are permit exempt:

#### **EXTERIOR**

- Repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- Removal, replacement, repair or installation of building and fire services in a manner that does not alter the original structural system of the building, including the reinforced concrete columns and load bearing floors.
- Repair or replacement of existing glass including glass walling, windows and doors (revolving, fixed and hinged).

## INTERIOR

- Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove original paint schemes or original painted signage.
- Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.
- Demolition or removal of partition walls, suspended ceilings, screens, doors, built-in cupboards, computer and office fitout and equipment and the like.
- Refurbishment of existing bathrooms, toilets and kitchens including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall tiling and floor coverings and the like.
- Installation, removal or replacement of all information technology, communication, security and cleaning infrastructure and equipment, including electric clocks, public address and speaker systems, detectors, alarms, lights, emergency lights, exit signs and the like.
- Installation, removal, repair or replacement of building and fire services in a manner that does not alter the original structural system of the building, including reinforced concrete columns and load bearing floors.
- Repair or replacement of lifts and escalators.
- Installation, removal or replacement of way-finding signage and signage relating to building security and the identification of tenants.
- The installation and relocation of lightweight partitioning to allow for meetings rooms, offices, staff kitchenettes and the like, provided that the partitioning or any part of the structure is not abutting an external window.
- All works in the basement excluding works to the internal structure required to support the building. (check for original elements onsite)

## RELEVANT INFORMATION

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY

City of Yarra

### HERITAGE LISTING INFORMATION

- **Heritage Overlay:** HO334 (South Fitzroy Precinct)
- **Heritage Overlay Controls:**
  - External Paint: No
  - Internal Alteration: No
  - Tree: No
- **Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register:** No
- **Other listing:** No

## HISTORY

### *The development of an Australian currency and postage stamp*

#### *Bank notes*

When the colony of New South Wales was established in 1788, there was little need for currency. A barter system based primarily on rum emerged, however as the colony progressed, the need for a more formal currency became evident. A variety of systems followed, including handwritten credit notes, English and Spanish coins, and in 1817, following the formation of the Bank of New South Wales, the first bank notes. Following the discovery of gold in 1851, many private banks were established, each of whom produced their own notes which were exchanged for gold. The *Australian Notes Act of 1910* gave responsibility for the issue of bank notes to the Commonwealth Treasury, and notes issued by States or private banks were overprinted and used as Australian bank notes.

#### *Stamps*

Prior to the formation of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901, each of the six individual colonies produced their own stamps through their own postal systems. Following Federation, this became a centralised Commonwealth responsibility, administered through the Postmaster-General's Department.

### *Establishment of the Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department*

Between Federation in 1901 and the official opening of the Commonwealth Parliament House in Canberra in 1927, Melbourne was the seat of the Commonwealth Government. Tasks relating to the administration of the Government took place in Melbourne, including the design, manufacture and issuing of postage stamps, which was the responsibility of the Postmaster General, and the design, manufacture and issuing of bank notes and all other secure products, which was the responsibility of the Commonwealth Department of Treasury.

In 1908, part of the Queens Warehouse (VHR H1211) was acquired for the Commonwealth Stamp Printer and in 1912, the remainder of the building was taken over by the Commonwealth Note Printer. In 1913, the first Australian bank notes and stamps were produced in this building. The bank notes were designed by Thomas Harrison, Note and Stamp Printer. The first Australian stamp was the outcome of a controversial design competition which reflected the differences between monarchists and republicans. The winning design featured King George V, however Post Master General Charles Frazer (appointed by the new Labor Government) intervened and the final design was produced by artist Blamire Young, with input from Frazer. It featured a kangaroo within an outline of Australia. When the Liberal Government won the next election, Frazer was replaced by Agar Wynne, who delivered a new stamp featuring the British monarchy. Both versions remained in circulation until 1948.

### *A proposal for new premises*

Although Australia's first bank notes were printed at the Queens Warehouse (VHR H1211), the building was unsuitable for printing purposes, which required an environment free from dust, smoke and chemicals. However the establishment of new premises could not be considered during World War One.

Following the war, in 1919, the Government acquired a property at the corner of Victoria Parade and Young Street with the intention of relocating the Stamp and Note Printing departments to this site. It had previously been occupied by the Turn Verein, a German social and gymnastics Club which had been forced to close in 1915 by the Commonwealth Government. Substantial nineteenth century buildings remained on the site and all note sorting staff (who were located at either the Queens Warehouse or the Commonwealth Offices) initially worked from these.

Following the purchase of the property, evidence was heard by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works regarding the Proposed Erection of the Commonwealth Note Printing Offices. Twenty five witnesses were heard, including Thomas Harrison, Note and Stamp Printer. The Committee also considered other locations for the new premises, including Canberra and Sydney. It was considered that Sydney would not be cost effective as all the equipment would require relocation from Melbourne. Canberra was also considered unsuitable due to the cost of establishing new premises, as well as a new village to accommodate 220 staff. In addition it was not known when the Seat of Federal Government would be transferred to Canberra and this uncertainty, together with the exorbitant costs, prompted the Committee to conclude that Melbourne was the most appropriate location for new printing premises.

Thomas Harrison had given strong evidence to the Standing Committee which condemned the Queen's Warehouse (VHR H1211) premises. He stated that the building was a fire risk due to the storage of note printing chemicals, as well as chemicals stored by Customs. If a fire did break out, he claimed that the 'girls on the top floor had no means of escape' and production would be delayed while replacement equipment, inks and papers were imported. In addition, the nearby gasworks emitted sulphur and ammonia which tarnished the machines and affected certain print colours. He advised the Committee that the most suitable premises would require almost airtight conditions, free from gas, smoke and damp.

Harrison was in favour of the Victoria Parade location due to its elevation and atmospheric conditions. He visited the site with the government's Chief Architect, John Smith Murdoch and advised on the size and layout of the new building.

#### *New premises for the Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department*

John Smith Murdoch completed designs for the new building, however they were never constructed. In December 1920, the *Commonwealth Bank Act* transferred responsibility for the issue of bank notes from the Treasury Department to the Commonwealth Bank of Australia which had been formed in 1911. The following year, Bank Governor Denison Miller appointed his cousin John Kirkpatrick as official bank architect. Kirkpatrick proposed a new, larger design, and it was his design which was constructed.

In 1920, the Treasury note sorting staff moved into the former Turn Verein buildings and in 1922, work commenced on the new building with the intention of retaining the Turn Verein buildings for note sorting and engraving. New imported note presses were installed, and existing machinery and equipment was transferred from the Queens Warehouse (VHR H1211). The building was completed in 1924, however both Miller and Kirkpatrick died in 1923, before its completion. In 1926, Thomas Harrison resigned, having made a significant contribution to the development of Australian bank note and stamp production, and to the design of the new premises.

Stamp and note production commenced in the building in 1924.

#### *Additions and alterations*

Within years, the department outgrew its new building, and by 1931 substantial new additions had been made to the north of the site. This included a four storey addition on the corner of Young and Little Victoria Streets (which received an additional two storeys in 1953), followed by an additional four storey building extending along Little Victoria Street to Napier Street.

#### *Towards new premises*

From its establishment the Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department premises saw many changes in production and technology. In 1960, responsibility for the issue of bank notes was transferred to the newly established Reserve Bank, which oversaw the change to decimal currency in 1966, one of the

biggest changes in the history of the Department. During the 1970s, the Currency Note Research Development and CSIRO began research into the production of polymer notes.

On 19 October 1981, the last day of note printing took place at 115 Victoria Parade. Although the research development department remained at the site, all other operations were relocated to Craigieburn where bank notes are still produced. The Victoria Parade site was purchased by the Australian Catholic University in 1998. It has undergone extensive alterations and now operates as the University's Melbourne campus.

## CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

<b>Architect name:</b>	John Kirkpatrick (1922-24)
<b>Architectural style name:</b>	Inter-War Commercial Palazzo style
<b>Builder name:</b>	F E Shillabeer (1922-24)
<b>Construction started date:</b>	1922
<b>Construction ended date:</b>	1953

## VICTORIAN HISTORICAL THEMES

- 05 Building Victoria's industries and workforce**
  - 5.2 Developing a manufacturing capacity
  - 5.4 Exhibiting Victoria's innovations and products
  - 5.5 Banking and finance
  
- 07 Governing Victorians**
  - 7.1 Developing institutions of self-government and democracy

## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Former Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department is an L shaped building contained within a block bounded by Victoria Parade, and Young, Little Victoria and Napier Streets. The building was completed in stages, which is evident in the design. A carpark is located in the south-eastern corner of the site and there are low height boundary walls surrounding access to the basement level on the north eastern corner of the site.

The earliest building fronts Victoria Parade and is designed in the Interwar Stripped Palazzo style with rendered walls alternating with window bays. It is six storeys high with a symmetrical front elevation comprising five bays, with the outer bays containing three narrow windows and the centre bays containing a single large window each. All windows are of plate glass. The upper floor is separated from the lower floors by a cornice supported by moulded decorative brackets. The ground and first floors to the front facade are partially enclosed by a modern metal and glass entrance ramp. The side elevations are of similar design, with the addition of a glass enclosed staircase to the eastern elevation.

The later additions are located at the rear of the site and are six storeys high at the western end and four storeys high at the eastern end. They extend along Little Victoria Street, between Young and Napier Streets. The architectural detailing is similar to the earlier building, but more simplistic in design and form and a modern glass addition encloses most of the southern elevation. Internally, the buildings have been substantially altered, although the structure of the building, including external walls, reinforced concrete columns and load bearing floors is still evident.

## **ARCHAEOLOGY**

There is no identified archaeology of state level significance at this place.

## **INTEGRITY/INTACTNESS**

Intactness – The overall external form and appearance of the place is mostly intact, although elements relating to security and fireproofing have been removed or altered, such as the perimeter fence which has been removed, and the original windows of steel and reinforced fireproof glass which have been replaced with plate glass. Internally the building has been significantly altered although load bearing floors and the reinforced concrete framework is intact. (February 2017)

Integrity – The exterior integrity of this place is good. The heritage values of the Former Note and Stamp Printing Department are evident in the overall form and the architectural style remains readable. The interior integrity is substantially compromised but still readable to a certain degree. (February 2017)

## **CONDITION**

The place is in excellent condition. Its current use as the Melbourne campus of the Australian Catholic University has ensured that the extant building fabric is well maintained. (February 2017)



## COMPARISONS

### Comparison – Commonwealth Government buildings

#### **The Federal Court of Australia (VHR H1476)**

The Federal Court of Australia, originally the High Court, was built in 1926 to a stripped Classical design by Chief Commonwealth Architect, John Smith Murdoch. The Court was extended in 1935 by HJ MacKenna, chief architect for the Victorian Branch of the Commonwealth Works Department, with the addition of an upper storey in the same materials and style. Further additions were made in 1946 and in 1991-92.

The building was designed as the High Court of Australia when Melbourne was the nation's capital from 1901 until 1927, but a new High Court was only opened in Canberra in 1980. Until then this building, and others in the other State capitals, continued to be used for sittings of the High Court. In 1977, the building became the Melbourne premises of the Federal Court, being used solely for this purpose after the opening of the High Court in Canberra. The Federal Court of Australia is of historical significance as a reminder of Melbourne's dominance of federal politics before the development of Canberra, and for its associations with the highest levels of Australian legal administration over a lengthy period. The Federal Court of Australia is of architectural significance as an excellent example of the inter-war Stripped Classical style which characterised many Commonwealth buildings of the time, and as an early work of the fledgling Commonwealth Department of Works and its first chief architect, John Smith Murdoch.



The Federal Court of Australia (VHR H1476)

### **The Former Mail Exchange: (VHR H0881)**

The Former Mail Exchange, completed in 1917, was designed by Commonwealth Home Affairs architect John Smith Murdoch. The seven storey, steel-framed building was constructed in a beaux-arts classical style. The dominant feature of the facade is the paired giant order fluted columns, with ionic capitals, rising through three storeys. Bronzed steel framed windows fill the bays between the columns, contrasting with the mass and solidity of the masonry. The building is a distinguished example of beaux-arts classical design which was not common in Australia, tending to be used for large and important buildings. It was the sense of monumentality that it imparted that Murdoch considered appropriate for Commonwealth buildings and classicism became the style of choice for Commonwealth buildings during Murdoch's time. Its dignified conservatism was thought appropriate for major public buildings. The Former Mail Exchange is of historical significance as an important reminder of the development of the Australian mail service in the early decades of the twentieth century.



The Former Mail Exchange, Melbourne (VHR H0881)

### **Commonwealth Government Offices**

**(This place cannot be included in the VHR because it is in Commonwealth ownership)**

The Commonwealth Offices building at 4 Treasury Place, Melbourne was designed by Australia's first Commonwealth Government Architect, John Smith Murdoch and built between 1912 and 1914. It is an outstanding example of Edwardian Baroque design in Victoria. The Commonwealth Offices building was the first office building constructed by the Commonwealth, and was initially occupied by the Prime Minister's office, the Attorney General, the Treasurer's Department and the Post Master General. It has been used as the Melbourne offices of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Governor General since 1912. The building has a close association with the foundation of the Commonwealth of Australia, and particularly as a physical legacy as the primary home of the Commonwealth Government until the establishment of Canberra in 1927. With the intention to store gold reserve and bank notes in a Strong Room in the basement, the floors and structure of the building were constructed in reinforced concrete for fire protection. This was an early application of this type of construction.



The Commonwealth Offices building (not in the VHR)

### **Comparison summary**

Together with the Former Mail Exchange Building and the Commonwealth Government Offices, the Former Commonwealth Note and Stamp Printing Department is one of a very small number of buildings constructed in Victoria for a specific government purpose when Melbourne was the seat of the Commonwealth Government. These buildings represent the significant duties which they were designed to perform and are an important legacy in understanding the development of Australia as a new nation.

### **KEY REFERENCES USED TO PREPARE ASSESSMENT**

Minutes of Evidence (1919) Report relating to the proposed erection of Commonwealth Printing Offices  
*Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works*  
Entries in Australian Dictionary of Biographies for Sir Denison Miller and John Kirkpatrick.

### **PROPOSED TEXT FOR THE BLUE HERITAGE PLAQUE**

This building was erected in 1924 when Melbourne was the capital of Australia. Postage stamps and secure government products were produced here until 1977, and bank notes were produced here until 1981.

## ADDITIONAL IMAGES



2017: 1924 building fronting Victoria Parade. The metal and glass entrance ramp is evident to the front of the building. The 1931 building is evident along Young Street on the left of the image.



2017: Western elevation. The 10 plate glass windows in the centre of the image indicate the position of the former junction between the 1924 building and the 1931 building, which has been filled in.



c. 1935: The first section of the complex, with the second section (before the additional two storeys were added) at the left. (Source: State Library of Victoria)



2017: 1924 building, fronting Victoria Parade. The enclosed staircase is evident to the right of the image.



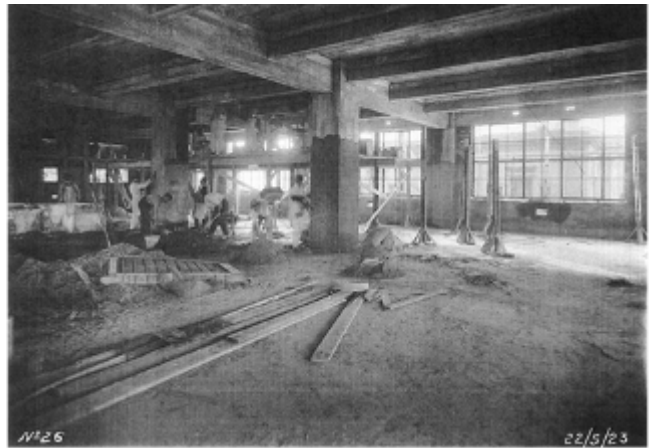
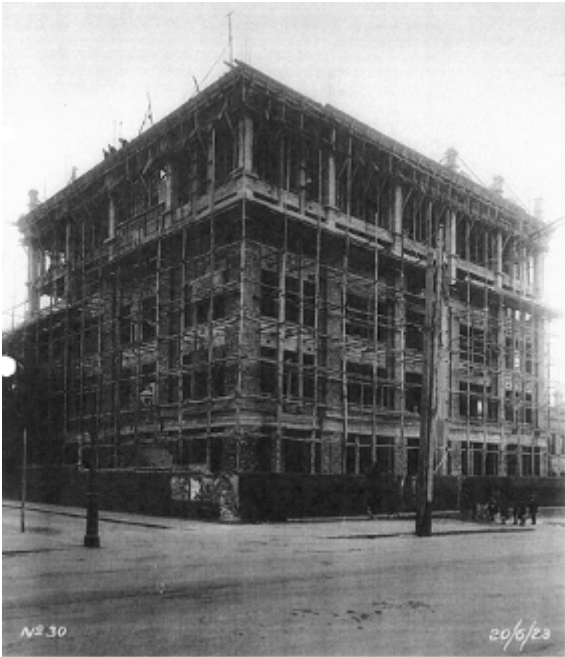
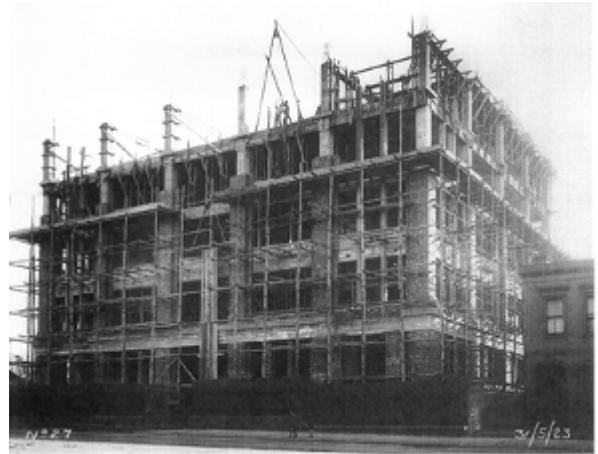
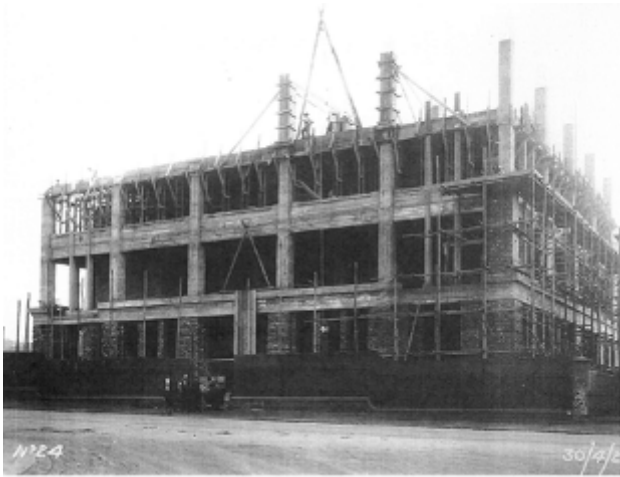
2017: 1931 addition, fronting Victoria Parade. The enclosed glass addition is evident in the centre of the image.



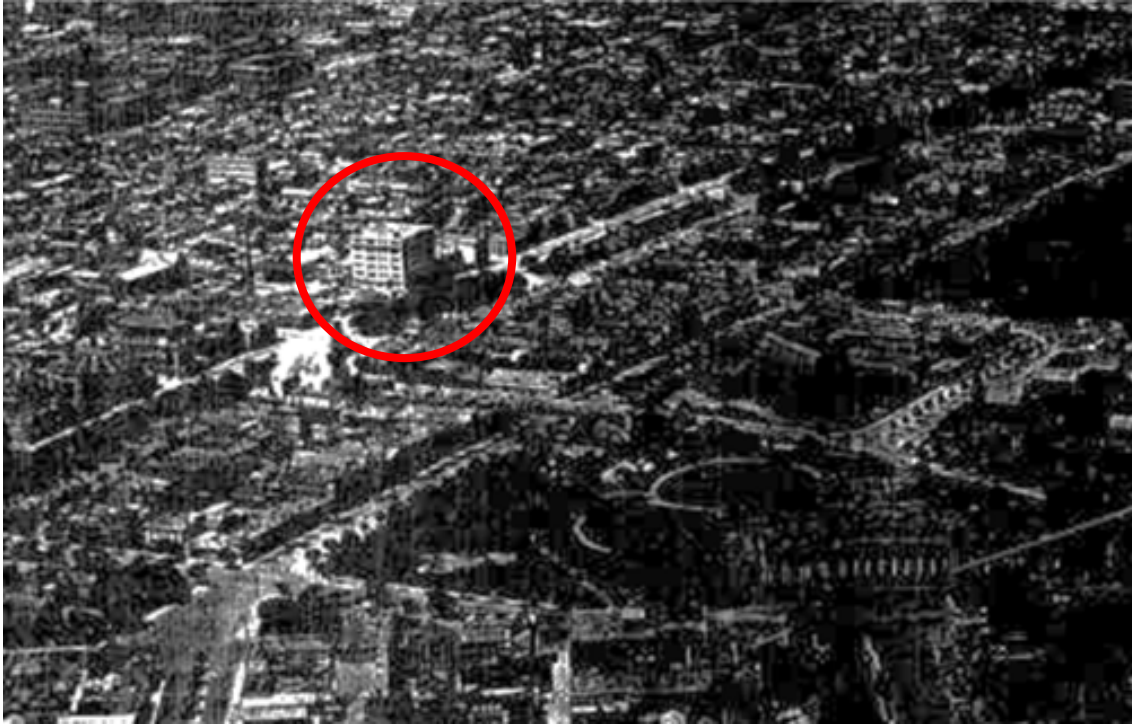
2017: 1931 building. View from corner of Little Victoria and Napier Streets, looking south-west.



2017: View from corner of Napier Street and Victoria Parade, looking north-west. The glass enclosed staircase is in the centre of the image.



1923: Views 1924 building under construction.



December 1924: The 1924 building is indicated in red.  
(Source: The Australasian)



c. 1961: View from Victoria Parade. The 1924 building is on the left and the 1931 building is on the right.  
Note the security fence to the perimeter of the property.



1982: The complex from the south east, prior to its sale by the Commonwealth. Note the garage and the laundry building at the bottom of the image, in what is now a car park in the south-eastern corner of the site. (Source: Richard Ellis)