

# TOTAL HOUSE



total car park plan.jpg



Total House Russell St view



Total House corner shops



Total House Russell St entrance



Total House view from Little Bourke



Total House Little Bourke St shops



Total House laneway side



Total House office supports



Total House office structure



Total House view from south



Total House ground level interior



Total House typical office level - view from lift

## Location

170-190 RUSSELL STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

## Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2329

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO507

HO1095

## VHR Registration

May 29, 2014

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 30, 2014

### *What is significant?*

Total House, built in 1964-65, comprises the Total Car Park, shops at ground level, the Total Office Building and a theatre in the basement.

### **History Summary**

Total House was one of a number of multi-storey car parks buildings constructed in the City of Melbourne in the 1950s and 1960s in response to the massive rise in car ownership during the post-war period. In 1955 the City of Melbourne recommended that parking stations be established on every city block. The site of the future Total House was purchased in 1959-61 by the City of Melbourne and tenders for a new car park were advertised in 1962. The new building was designed by the architectural firm of Bogle & Banfield Associates, a partnership of Alan Bogle (1902-76) and Gordon Banfield (1922-2007). The developer of Total House was the Savoy Car Park Company, which was controlled by Gordon Banfield, who owned or developed many car parks and entertainment venues in the city in the 1960s and 1970s. The name of the building derived from one of the building's tenants, the French company Total Oil Products P/L (Australia), which occupied the whole of the tenth floor of the building from 1966 until at least the mid 1970s. Total House is one of the earliest examples in Victoria of the Brutalist style, which incorporated ideas of integrity in the expression of materials, structure and function, and gave rise to dramatic building forms. Brutalism dominated construction in post-war Japan, and details of these buildings were widely published and admired by western architects: in Australia Robin Boyd published a monograph on Kenzo Tange in 1962. At this time many Australian architects visited Japan. The design of Total House shows a strong Japanese influence. In the basement of Total House was the luxuriously-appointed Lido nightclub, the first of its kind in Victoria. Most of the shop fronts and the entry to the offices were altered in the 1980s or 1990s, with glass canopies added at this time.

### **Description Summary**

Total House is a Brutalist style reinforced concrete building with shops on the ground floor along Russell and Little Bourke Streets, seven elevated parking decks above, four levels of offices with a smaller footprint elevated above the top deck, with a theatre in the basement. The car park levels are utilitarian in design, with supporting

columns inset from all edges so that from the street they appear as floating platforms dominated by the balustrades, which are divided by long slots and give a strong horizontal emphasis. The elevated office block takes the form of an almost solid box open to the north and south with protruding frames around deeply inset curtain walls. It is supported above the top deck on cruciform columns and beams at the corners, allowing it to appear virtually unsupported in views from the ground. When built the concrete was unpainted as on most of the laneway elevation, but the exterior of the car park was painted blue in the 1980s. Panels of dark brickwork were once a feature of the exterior and interior of the ground floor but apart from two sections along Little Bourke Street these have been painted white.

This site is part of the traditional land of the Kulin Nation.

#### *How is it significant?*

Total House 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 D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects

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

Total House is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

Total House reflects the massive increase in car ownership in the post-World War II period and the infrastructure developed to accommodate the large numbers of cars in the City of Melbourne. The construction of off-street car parking facilities became essential to the economic well-being and growth of the Central Business District to relieve congestion and provide access for shoppers and businessmen. (Criterion A)

Total House is a landmark of post-World War II modernist design and is one of the earliest and best expressions of Brutalist architecture in Victoria. Brutalism incorporated ideas of the integrity of expression of materials, structure and function. Total House reflects these ideals in differentiating the functional parts of the building and the 'honest' display of its materials and structure. Total House is also an outstanding example of Japanese influence on architecture in Victoria in the post-war period. Until then local architects had been inspired largely by the buildings of Europe and the United States, but the innovative Brutalist concrete architecture of post-war Japan was widely admired and published in the west, and inspired Australian architects to visit Japan at this time to research its architecture and landscapes. (Criterion D)

## **Permit Exemptions**

### **General Exemptions:**

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

**Places of worship:** In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must **notify** the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

**Subdivision/consolidation:** Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

General Conditions: 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 Conditions: 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 Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: A Conservation Management Plan provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable. Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works must submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

Interiors of Office Building:

Interior works to the office building that are not visible from outside the building.

### Theme

3. Connecting Victorians by transport and communications 9. Shaping cultural and creative life

Construction dates	1964,
Architect/Designer	Bogle & Banfield,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	Total Car Park, Total Carpark,
Hermes Number	194652
Property Number	

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### History

#### CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

Car parks: a new building type

The motor car was invented at the end of the nineteenth century but ownership was at first restricted to the very wealthy and cars did not become a common sight in Melbourne until after World War I. A massive growth in car ownership occurred in the 1920s, from 99,270 registrations in 1921 to 571,471 in 1930. A range of structures began to be built to cater for the increase, such as new roads, bridges, flyovers, domestic garages, car manufacturing plants, car showrooms, petrol stations, service stations and car parks.

Parking facilities for cars were a new architectural challenge around the world in the 1920s and 1930s, particularly in the crowded cities of Europe and New York. In 1925 in Berlin the parking problem was addressed

by constructing the first multi-level parking station, where lifts took the cars to the upper floors. At about the same time a ramp garage was constructed in Stuttgart. In the United States the first multi-level ramped car park was constructed in 1926. Parking stations became common internationally only after World War II when car ownership became the norm.

### Car parks in Melbourne

In Melbourne kerbside parking was free until the introduction of parking meters in the 1950s, but even before World War II there was increasing pressure from motorists for off-street parking. The first multi-storey car park in Victoria was the former Victoria Car Park (VHR H2001) built in 1938 on the corner of Russell and Little Collins Streets in Melbourne (now largely demolished).

In the post-war period the provision of off-street parking became essential to the economic well-being and growth of the Central Business District and the wider city area. There were many ground level off-street parking spaces in the city on sites where buildings had been demolished pending development, but the increasing number of cars led to the City Development Association recommending in 1955 that more off-street parking be provided in nine 'parking stations', one for every block in the city, each with 600 spaces.

### Architecture of the 1960s

A reaction to the abstraction and apparent simplicity of International Modernism emerged in the post-war period, with architects exploring alternative modes. In Australia architects in the early 1960s explored in different ways the humanist works of Frank Lloyd Wright, Alvar Aalto and the ideas of Brutalism. From the early 1960s there was a change in aesthetic preferences, and the slick glass curtain walled buildings of the 1950s, such as the former ICI House at 1 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne by Bates Smart & McCutcheon (1955-58, VHR H786), lost favour. Concrete became the favoured material and the skeletal appearance of 1950s buildings began to give way to solid more modelled forms.

By the mid-1960s a more robust architecture became widely accepted around the world, inspired originally by Le Corbusier's *Unite d'Habitation* in Marseilles (1952) and Jaoul House at Neuilly (1954), which displayed a new attitude to materials and construction. The term Brutalism is closely associated with Le Corbusier's *beton brut* ('concrete in the raw', that is in its natural state when the formwork is removed, often to show the timber graining). The Brutalist ethic incorporated ideas of integrity in expression of materials, structure and function, and often gave rise to dramatic sculptural forms. The new style was exemplified by Alison and Peter Smithson's Hunstanton School in Norfolk, UK (1954). This openly displays the functional parts of which the building is composed, and its use of exposed 'as-constructed' surfaces attempted to be 'honest' in the use of materials.

Although concrete is the material most widely associated with Brutalist architecture, not all Brutalist buildings are formed from concrete, and demonstrate Brutalist qualities through a rough, blocky appearance and the expression of their structural materials, forms, and (in some cases) services on its exterior. For example, many of Alison and Peter Smithson's private houses were built from brick. Brutalist building materials also include brick, glass, steel and rough-hewn stone.

Although the movement was originally European the influence in Australia came more from built works in North America and Japan.

### Post-war Japanese architecture and Japanese brutalism

The Brutalist movement dominated construction in post-war Japan. Abandoning the historical primacy given to form in Japan, architects instead focused on materials and functionality as determining factors for the design of a building. This new western thinking led to innovative architectural designs. Pre-war landmark buildings in Japan imitated European Neo-Baroque and Neo-Renaissance styles, but post-war buildings took a completely new turn, incorporating futuristic visions with a Japanese twist. For example, the Hiroshima Peace Centre designed in the 1950s by one of Japan's most famous architects, Kenzo Tange, combines the Le Corbusier style of modernist architecture along with the forms of the traditional tombs of the rulers of old Japan. Kenzo Tange's mature works are built of concrete left as rough as possible and used for the most dramatic effect.

From the 1950s western architects began to realise that traditional Japanese construction had the simplicity, lightness and openness that western architects had been advocating, and began to take an interest in the work of contemporary Japanese architects. The architect and critic Robin Boyd became fascinated by Japanese architecture in the 1960s and was an advocate for an appreciation of the striking concrete buildings of post-war

Japan. In 1962 he published a book on the work of Kenzo Tange (and in 1968 *New Directions in Japanese Architecture*). Tange's later works, such as the Kagawa prefectural office (1955-58), are notable for restraint of design and the employment of the traditional Japanese aesthetic in modern technical terms.

### *Brutalism in Australia and Victoria*

In the early 1960s in Australia architects tended to draw primarily on the visual attributes of Brutalism. Evidence of the style was at first mainly found in brick buildings (for example the so-called 'Sydney School' houses). Concrete was used but not yet in the form of the *beton brut* with the dramatic forms that characterised much Japanese, European and American architecture of the 1950s. The first example of the use of *beton brut* in Australia was at the Hale School Memorial Hall in Perth by Marshall Clifton with Anthony Brand, completed in 1961, which displayed a strong Japanese influence. In Melbourne among the earliest and most well-known Brutalist buildings are the Plumbers and Gas Fitters Union Building by Graeme Gunn (1967-71, VHR H2307) and the 1969-79 work from the office of Daryl Jackson, such as Harold Holt Swim Centre by Kevin Borland and Daryl Jackson (1969, VHR H69).

The architects: Bogle & Banfield Associates

[Information from entries for Bogle & Banfield Associates by Julie Willis (p 95), in Philip Goad and Julie Willis (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Port Melbourne 2012; and from nomination report.]

Bogle & Banfield Associates was a partnership formed c1959 between Gordon Douglas Banfield (1922-2007) and Alan Bogle (1902-76). Bogle was articled to Louis Williams of North & Williams in 1918, worked in Albury from 1925-27, and from then until 1933 was with Irwin & Stevenson, after which he set up in sole practice. In 1945 he joined the office of Harry Norris. Banfield worked in a number of offices in his home town of Brisbane from 1945, and moved to Melbourne in 1954, joining the office of Harry Norris, where he met Bogle. The pair went into practice together, opening Bogle & Banfield by 1959. They designed a series of bold buildings, for some of which they were both client (companies controlled by Banfield) and architect.

Bogle had retired by 1968 and Banfield continued the practice 'to build his property portfolio'. By 1974 he was described as the 'biggest individual land owner' in the city of Melbourne, owning offices, cinemas and car parks, but was declared bankrupt two years later, which spelt the end of his practice and property speculation. Bogle was well-known in theatre circles, produced a number of shows, designed several cinemas, created a 'new-type theatre' in Total House and is reported to have owned the Playbox Theatre in Exhibition Street.

In contemporary references to the firm's work it is often implied that neither Bogle nor Banfield was the principal designer of the firm's output, but that the firm relied on talented young architects in their employ, among whom was Bernard Howard Joyce (see below).

The firm of Bogle & Banfield Associates designed a number of now well-known large-scale buildings, with Total House being the most famous in architectural circles. The eminent post-war architect Neil Clerehan considered that a few of their buildings were 'the best of their time'.

### PLACE HISTORY

The site on which Total House was to be built was previously occupied by a number of mainly nineteenth century buildings. It was bought in 1960-61 by the Melbourne City Council for use for car parking, and let on a 75 year lease. Tenders for a new car park were advertised in 1962. Bogle & Banfield Associates prepared drawings which included plans for a theatrette in the basement to seat 650-700 people, shops at ground level and a six storey car park with six levels of offices above. The final design was slightly different, with seven shops, eight levels of car parking above and four levels of offices above. It was developed by the Savoy Car Park Company, which was formed in 1963 specifically to develop the site, presumably for Ralton Holdings Pty Ltd whose prime shareholder was also the principal architect, Gordon Banfield. A major tenant was Lonsdale Properties, a subsidiary of Ralton. It also housed the offices of Bogle & Banfield Associates. According to Norman Day (*The Age*, 24 December 2005) Total House 'heralded the arrival of the Brutalist style in Victoria'.

The name of the building derived from one of the building's tenants - the 'anchor' tenant, who also secured naming rights - the French company, Total Oil Products P/L (Australia), which operated in Australia from the late 1950s, and had its own chain of service stations. According to the Sands & McDougall Directories, Total occupied the whole of the tenth floor of the building - one of the four floors of the office component of the building - from 1966 until at least the mid 1970s.

Total House was the first city building designed to include offices above a large car park. It was also the first city building in the post-war years to include a purpose-built theatre/nightclub, in this case in the basement. The nightclub was initially known as the Total Theatre Restaurant, and from 1966 as the Lido Cabaret.. By 1974 it had changed its name to the Red Garters Theatre Restaurant, and then was renamed the Total Theatre (*Age*, 5 July 1974 p.12). It was initially operated by the Sydney theatre identity David McIlraith, and specialised in shows similar to those at its Paris namesake. The luxuriously appointed space was designed by the architects Frederick Morsby and Stanley McConnell with interior decor by Angus Winneke of the Tivoli. While the audience enjoyed dinner and drinking they could watch sophisticated Tivoli-style vaudeville revues, with a permanent company of forty showgirls, dancers, singers and musicians supporting star acts such as Lovelace Watkins, Winifred Atwell, Eartha Kitt, Shirley Bassey and June Bronhill. It appears to have been the only venue in Melbourne providing this sort of entertainment. In 1970 the nightclub was sold to Ferdinand Nemeth and became the El Toro Espana, a Spanish themed nightclub with live, penned bulls. He sold it to Gordon Banfield in 1973 who had it renovated to a design by his own firm as the Total Theatre. Since 1980 it has operated as the Billboard nightclub.

The offices above the car park have been popular amongst architecture and design firms. Previous tenants include John Wardle Architects, who commissioned a neon work of art in 2003 that took advantage of their highly-visible tenth floor south-facing window. The work, by the artist Peter Kennedy, was the Kurt Vonnegut quote 'And so we say to the as yet unborn, watch out for life and ...' in large neon-lit letters. The offices currently house the offices of Peter Elliott Architecture + Urban Design, Shelley Roberts Architect, K2LD Architects and B K K Architects. The entire tenth floor is currently occupied by the offices of the popular bag manufacturers Crumpler.

In *Melbourne Architecture* Philip Goad writes that

The Total Carpark is one of Melbourne's best examples of Japanese-inspired Brutalist architecture where off-form concrete is employed in emphatic structural and functional expression. The balustrade treatment and clear expression of load and support is comparable with Kenzo Tange's Prefectural Offices, Japan (1958). The mixed-use building, with an office block resembling a giant television set supported on cruciform concrete beams above a series of floating parking decks, is also possibly the first building in Australia to combine a multi-storey carpark, an office building above, shops at ground level and a theatre in the basement. With Bernard Joyce as project architect, the Total Carpark was one of a number of this firm's innovative designs which included the boldly expressive Mid-City Cinemas, 194-200 Bourke Street, Melbourne (1977); St James Church of England, Glen Iris and St Vincent's Private Hospital, Victoria Parade, Fitzroy (c1972).

The Melbourne Heritage Action website [<http://www.melbourneheritage.org.au/news/total-carpark-modernist-landmark-under-threat/>] notes:

... the use of bold forms and expressed unpainted concrete, influenced by Japanese avant-garde of the late 1950s/early 1960s. The strong cantilevered horizontals of the car park deck topped by a floating TV-like box of offices on cantilevered supports introduced bold new modern forms into what was still a largely Victorian low-rise cityscape. Unlike later sculptured bare concrete examples of Brutalist design, there are plenty of refined details.

It is also important as one of a rush of car parks built between 1955 and 1966 in response to the huge rise in car use and consequent city congestion. This is one of a number of a number developed by the City of Melbourne to meet this demand at the fringes of the shopping area, while others were developed privately and Bogle & Banfield had a hand in most, designing some and developing others.

There was also a nightclub in the basement, the first of its type in the city - it opened as the Lido in 1965, providing dinner and a 'Paris-type' show, complete with feathers, high kicks and scanty costumes, something that Melbourne hadn't seen before. The space is now occupied by Billboard, an important live music venue.

#### KEY REFERENCES USED TO PREPARE ASSESSMENT

Nomination report by Melbourne Heritage Action

D Klose, *Multi-storey car parks and garages*, London 1965

Jennifer Taylor, *Australian Architecture Since 1960*, Red Hill [ACT] 1990

Robin Boyd, *Kenzo Tange. Makers of Contemporary Architecture*, NY and London, 1962

Philip Goad, *Melbourne Architecture*, Sydney 1999

Goad & Willis, *Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Melbourne 2012

J M Richards, *An architectural journey in Japan*, London 1963

## Plaque Citation

Reflecting the post-World War II increase in car ownership, this carpark complex is one of the earliest expressions of the Brutalist style in Victoria. Influenced by Japanese Brutalism, it displays the massive raw concrete forms which typify the style.

## Assessment Against Criteria

### Criterion

Total House satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

#### Criterion A Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history

Total House reflects the massive increase in car ownership in the post-World War II period and the infrastructure developed to accommodate the large numbers of cars in the City of Melbourne. The construction of off-street car parking facilities became essential to the economic well-being and growth of the Central Business District to relieve congestion and provide access for shoppers and businessmen.

#### Criterion D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects

Total House is a landmark of post-World War II modernist design and is one of the earliest and best expressions of Brutalist architecture in Victoria. Brutalism incorporated ideas of the integrity of expression of materials, structure and function. Total House reflects these ideals in differentiating the functional parts of the building and the 'honest' display of its materials and structure. Total House is also an outstanding example of Japanese influence on architecture in Victoria in the post-war period. Until then local architects had been inspired largely by the buildings of Europe and the United States, but the innovative Brutalist concrete architecture of post-war Japan was widely admired and published in the west, and inspired the project architect for Total House, Bernard Joyce, to visit Japan in 1962 to research its architecture and landscapes.

Total House is also significant for the following reasons, but not at the State level:

#### Criterion A Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history

Total House demonstrates the involvement of the Melbourne City Council in the development of car parking facilities in the city in the 1950s and 1960s. The theatre is significant as the only purpose-built nightclub opened in Melbourne in the post-war period, and during its time as the Lido offered the most extravagant nightclub experience in the city.

#### Criterion D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects

Total House is the most architecturally interesting of the multi-storey car parks constructed in Melbourne in the 1950s and 1960s, and the design of the office section with its box-like form with a protruding frame was to become a continuing theme in architecture in Victoria.

#### Criterion H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

Total House is significant for its association with the architectural firm of Bogle & Banfield Associates which was responsible for some of Melbourne's most important buildings in the post-war period. Gordon Banfield was described in the mid-1970s as the largest landowner in the city, and his companies owned or developed many car parks and entertainment venues in the city in the 1960s and 1970s.

## Extent of Registration

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 1995**, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian

Heritage Register is amended by including Heritage Register Number H2329 in the category described as Heritage Place.

Total House

170-190 Russell Street

Melbourne

Melbourne City

1. All of the land marked L1 on Diagram 2329 held by the Executive Director being all of Lot 1 on Title Plan 320291, Lot 1 on Title Plan 681552, Lots 1 and 2 on Title Plan 580160, Lot 1 on Title Plan 109888 and Lots 1 and 2 on Title Plan 891700.

2. All of the building marked B1 on Diagram 2329 held by the Executive Director.

Dated 29 May 2014

TIM SMITH

Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette G 22 29 May 2014 p.1046]

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*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*