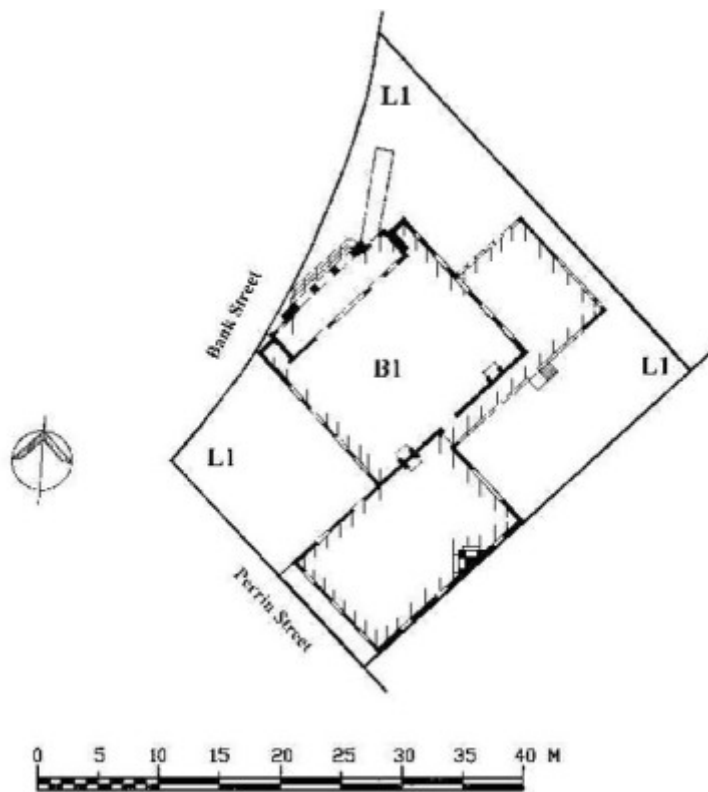


# FORMER SOUTH MELBOURNE POST OFFICE



FORMER SOUTH  
MELBOURNE POST OFFICE  
SOHE 2008

1 former south melbourne  
post office front view sep1998



Plan

## Location

195-207 BANK STREET SOUTH MELBOURNE, PORT PHILLIP CITY

## Municipality

PORT PHILLIP CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1771

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO27

## VHR Registration

January 7, 1999

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 31, 1999

What is significant?

The former South Melbourne Post Office, built in 1912 is a single storey brick building designed in the Beaux-Arts style by Horace J MacKenna, Director of Works, Commonwealth Department of Interior in the post - Federation/pre World War I era. It has red brick walls as a backdrop to the rendered front facade portico with its deeply expressed banded rustication and colonnade of decorated ionic columns and pilasters, the pilasters being close to either side of the porch opening. The cornice line over is broken by a loosely formed pediment. Within the porch, behind the colonnade, is a large semicircular window. The rusticated render finish carries round to the side walls to almost window head level with red brick above. The side windows have rendered cornices over. A domed rendered fleche centrally straddles the ridge of the slated roof.

The adjoining 1918 building to the south west of the 1912 building, originally designed and used as a pensions office, is in a sympathetic style. It is of red brick, with rendered quoins and render details around door and window openings and with slate roof over. Above each of the symmetrically arranged vertical window and door openings are circular "porthole" windows.

How is it significant?

The former South Melbourne Post Office is of architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The 1912 former South Melbourne Post Office is of architectural significance as a rare example of a building designed in the Beaux Arts style, especially at a diminutive scale. It achieves monumentality with the ionic columns and pilasters of the main entrance porch, its curved pediment and other neo-classical details to the front parapet. The interior of this 1912 building helps to encapsulate the Beaux-Arts style by utilising the prevailing technology to create large spans thereby enabling an impressive open room. It is perhaps the finest and most intact example in a single storey brick post office of the post -Federation/Pre World War I era of the work of the Commonwealth Department of Works, which took over the design of post offices in all States after Federation in 1901. The 1918 addition to the south-west, while not of significance if taken in isolation, is of note as a very sympathetic addition. The former South Melbourne Post Office is also of significance for its contribution to the Emerald Hill precinct, being located directly opposite the Neo-classical South Melbourne Town Hall in Bank Street.

## 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.
2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations 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 alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.
5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

#### Exterior

- \* Demolition or removal (but not replacement or additions) to flat roofed extensions to east and south of 1912 and 1918 built buildings.
- \* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- \* Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.
- \* Installation or repair of damp-proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method.
- \* Repair or replacement of boundary fences and gates with similar.
- \* Regular garden maintenance.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of garden watering systems, provided the installation or replacement of the watering system/s do/does not cause short or long term moisture problems to the building or coal house.
- \* Laying, removal or replacement of paving in the courtyard.
- \* Repair, removal or replacement of existing garden structures.

#### Interior

- \* Interior of flat roofed extensions provided such works do not damage 1912 and 1918 buildings' fabric.
- \* Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative scheme.
- \* Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves, skirtings and decorative strapping.
- \* Repair of plasterwork provided that all new work matches good adjacent work in style, detail and finish.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings, eg vinyl.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted artworks.
- \* Refurbishment of bathrooms, toilets and or en suites including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of kitchen benches and fixtures including sinks, stoves, ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers etc and associated plumbing and wiring.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves and provided that the location of the heating unit is concealed from view.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ. Note: if wiring original to the place was carried in timber conduits then the conduits should remain in-situ.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors.

Construction dates            1912,  
 Architect/Designer            MacKenna, Horace J,  
 Heritage Act Categories    Registered place,  
 Hermes Number                2203  
 Property Number

## History

### Contextual History:History of Place:

The first South Melbourne Post Office, originally known as the Emerald Hill Post Office and Telegraph Office until 1883, and which operated from what is now 319-321 Clarendon Street, opened for business on 03 October 1857. It later moved to within the south-east corner of the newly completed Town Hall. From its operations out of the Town Hall, the next 20 years or so saw a tremendous growth in postal and telegraph services.

### History of Place:

The contract for the former South Melbourne Post Office was let in late 1911 and the building opened for service in 1913. The adjoining building to the south west of the 1912 building was erected some five years later in 1918 for use as a pensions office. About the 1960s-70s (precise date not known) an unsympathetic flat roof single storey structure, with a single room and toilet facilities, was constructed to the east of the 1912 building with a connecting enclosed corridor wrapping around the south side and connecting with the 1918 structure. The 1912 building was designed by Horace J. MacKenna, Director of Works, Department of Interior.

The Australia Post Survey of Historic Properties in Victoria by G. S. Warmington and A. C. Ward, dated August 1990, identified four Post Office buildings as being of the "Beaux Arts" style.

1. Casterton (1907-10) Not recorded on database.

Two storey, red brick with overpainted stuccoed dressings.

2. Brunswick (1909) Not recorded on database.

Large two storey brick Edwardian building with two entry porches and a central projection.

3. South Melbourne (1912) As described above.

4. Melbourne Mail Exchange (1915-17) HBR881. Note Architects Horace J. MacKenna, the same architect as for former South Melbourne Post Office, and John Smith Murdoch, a recognised "Beaux Arts" practitioner. Five storey red brick with three storey high Ionic columns.

The above study also identified a further five post offices with elements of the "Beaux Arts" and American Romanesque styles applied in a debased form,

1. Clifton Hill (1910)
2. Violet Town (1910)
3. Cobram (1911)
4. Carlton North (1912)
5. Surrey Hills (1912)

Associated People:

## **Extent of Registration**

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1771 in the category described as a Heritage Place:

Former South Melbourne Post Office, 199-207 Bank Street, South Melbourne, City of Port Phillip.

EXTENT:

1. All of the building known as former South Melbourne Post Office marked B1 on Diagram Number 601591 held by the Executive Director.
2. All of the land marked L1 on Diagram Number 601591, held by the Executive Director being all of the land described in Certificate of Title Volume 9538 Folio 960.

Dated: 3 December 1998.

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G 41 7 January 1999 p.37]

*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/>*