

## TITLES OFFICE



TITLES OFFICE SOHE 2008 1 titles office queens street  
melbourne side elevation

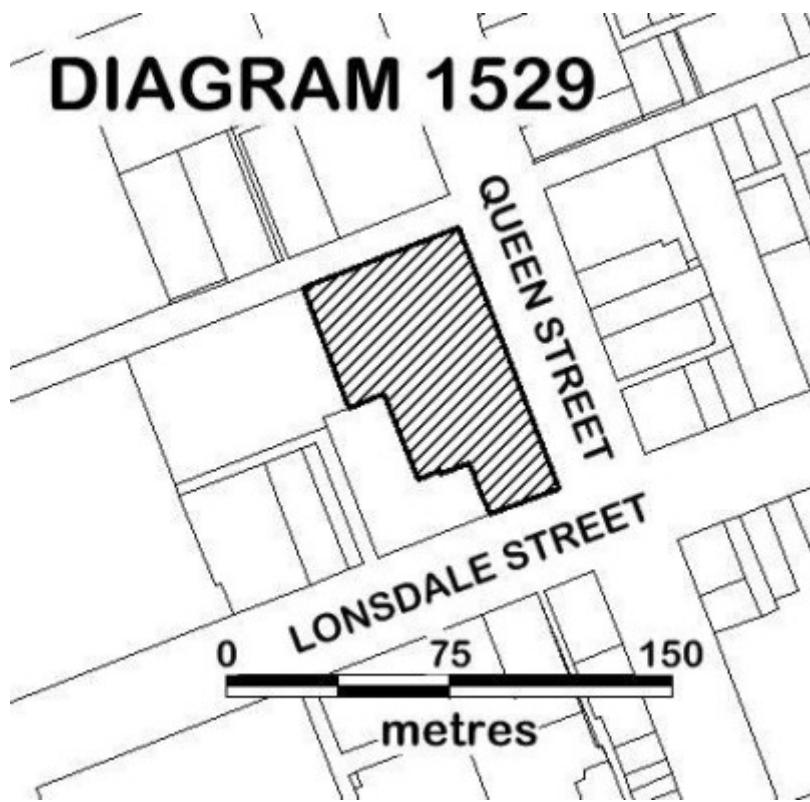


Diagram 1529.JPG

### Location

247-283 QUEEN STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

### Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## **Level of significance**

Registered

## **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H1529

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO732

## **VHR Registration**

August 20, 1982

## **Amendment to Registration**

April 12, 2018

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - February 10, 2000

What is significant?

The Titles Office, 283 Queen Street, was erected in three stages. The first stage, begun in 1874 and finished in 1877, comprised an L-shaped two storey office building built around the strong room. The strong room was extended to its present size in 1884-85. Between 1887 and 1889 the perimeter office building was completed to give the current external appearance occupying the full length of a block to Queen Street. The designs for the perimeter structure were undertaken by the Public Works Department and are attributed to J J Clark. The main facade is symmetrical about a central three storey block, and sits on a bluestone plinth. The two storey wings are recessed and terminate in pavilions that project to the same line as the central block. The facade employs the Doric style in a quite severe and plain manner. The rhythm of the paired round arch windows on the ground floor is mimicked by paired columns on the first storey and by pairs of urns on the balustraded parapet. Construction is of rendered brick. The Old Law Office (formerly the Strong Room) has an interior incorporating arched, fire proof floor construction, known as the Dennett system. Fire precautions were essential to protect the irreplaceable Certificate of Titles and other land-related documents that the building houses.

How is it significant?

The Titles Office is of architectural, technical and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Titles Office is architecturally significant for exemplifying the dictum of the Public Works Department, led by William Wardell until 1878, that architectural style needed to be as simple as possible so long as proper architectural effect was preserved. The restraint is clearly evidenced by the severity of the Doric order employed by architect JJ Clark, and decoratively the building is in contrast to his masterpiece, the Treasury Building of 1858. However, the composition of the Titles Office still draws on the Italianate style and on Renaissance palazzos for inspiration to produce a building with serene and sedate grandeur, and one of the most extensive public building facades in Melbourne.

The Titles Office is technically significant for the range of fire precaution measures employed. The strong room with its superb interior is an exceptional example of early high security and fire-proof construction in Victoria. The floor, built on the Dennett system, is a development of fire resistant construction employing iron bressumers connected by brick arching and covered with a layer of cement.

The Titles Office is historically significant as a building signifying the change of law for the recording of land ownership. The 1862 Real Property Act introduced the Torrens System to Victoria and dealings under the new Act were dealt with exclusively from the new building.

## 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](#).

Construction dates	1874,
Architect/Designer	Clark, John James,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	FORMER LAND TITLES OFFICE,
Hermes Number	2975
Property Number	

## History

### History of Place:

The Office of Titles came into existence with the introduction of the Torrens System by the enactment of the Real Property Act 1862. The Act was first administered from a building subsequently demolished to make way for the Law Courts on William Street. It was originally intended for the Titles Office to be located with in the Law Courts

but it was soon realised there would be insufficient space.

The first part of the present building was finished in 1877. It consisted of the north wing along Little Lonsdale Street and 115 feet along Queen Street. This included the north Strong Room. The South Strong Room was added in 1885.

The main building was extended in 1890 along the whole block from Little Lonsdale Street to Lonsdale Street.

Further additions and alterations followed in 1931.

Associated People: Owner VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT;

## Extent of Registration

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 2017**, I give notice under section 53 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by modifying the following places in the Heritage Register:

Number: H1529

Category: Heritage Place

Object: Titles Office

Location: 247-283 Queen Street, Melbourne, Melbourne City

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 1529 encompassing all of Crown Allotment 22, Section 30, City of Melbourne, Parish of Melbourne North.

Dated 12 April 2018

STEVEN AVERY

Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette G 15 12 April 2018 679*]

*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/>*