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## Location

2 COLLINS STREET AND 69 - 81 SPRING STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

## Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0500

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO559

## VHR Registration

July 29, 1981

## Amendment to Registration

September 9, 1981

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - October 29, 1999

What is significant?

Alcaston House was designed by the firm of architects, A. and K. Henderson and erected by T Donald and Co. in 1929-30. The building was erected for the trustees of Dr. EM James, whose home had previously occupied the site. Alcaston house is a seven-storey building with basement and is constructed of reinforced concrete columns, beams and floors with a freestone base and brick walls above, all rendered with a sand finish stucco. All the windows are steel-framed and those on the ground floor are double-glazed to prevent noise intrusion. The building was designed with a rusticated base of two floors expressing the professional nature of Collins Street, with the upper floors in an "E"-plan, exposing the light wells on the Spring Street facade. The light wells are both a functional and expressive device, denoting the residential nature of the upper part of the building. This is further enhanced by the provision of balconettes to the French windows of each of the flats. Each of the towers is marked by deep cornices and the tall multiple-chimney stacks. The timber pergolas that shaded the roof garden and the urns on the parapet have since been removed. Prominent features of the lower facade are the semi-circular arched windows on the ground floor with stylised voussoirs and carved key-stones, the chevron string course and the cantilevered canopy over the Spring Street entrance.

How is it significant?

Alcaston House is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Alcaston House is of architectural significance for its combination of Renaissance Revival motifs within an essentially "modern" framework and for the way in which its design expresses its mixed uses. The use of detailing such as the smooth rustication and round-headed windows and the colour of the main structure complement the other buildings in this important precinct, especially the Old Treasury. The main body of the building is broken into three parts, reducing the impact of the large surface areas, as well as providing light bays for the flats. The Collins Street facade, with its bracketed overdoors and masks set into keystones depicting Aesculapius and Hygeia, reflects the fact that this is the entrance to the professional chambers which make up the base of the building. The Spring Street facade, the entrance to the flats, with its grouped chimneys and E-shaped form, is reminiscent of English great house design. Alcaston House is not only a successful architectural statement in its own right; it is also an attractive, urbane component of the Treasury Precinct and the Collins Street streetscape.

Alcaston House is of architectural significance as an important work of the architectural firm A. and K. Henderson, an influential company known for its sympathetic designs.

A & K Henderson were responsible for, amongst other things, the T&G Building, the first major building in Melbourne to reach the 132-foot height limit and raise a tower above it as an architectural feature.

Alcaston House is of historical significance as an early and important example of multi-storey residential accommodation in the city at a time when the post-war preference for flat living in Europe and the USA was becoming manifest in Australia.

Alcaston House is of historical significance as a reminder of the professional character of the top end of Collins Street in the early decades of this century, a character that persists today, due in no small part to Alcaston House and its professional rooms. As such, Alcaston House has played an important role in the history of the medical profession in Melbourne.

## 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	1929,
Architect/Designer	Henderson, A & K,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	711
Property Number	

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## History

### Contextual History:History of Place:

The site of Alcaston House was occupied by a Dr James' family home. It was demolished in early 1920 to make way for the new building.

Alcaston House has provided rooms for physicians, dentists, merchants, graziers and, in 1939, the celebrated artist Daryl Lindsay.

The prestige nature of the flats was reflected in their innovative appointments. Each flat had built-in cupboards, hot and cold water, gas stoves, electric light and power, exhaust ventilation, plenum heating and cooling, stainless steel sinks, two delivery cupboards for parcels, fuel and refuse, a garbage chute feeding a basement incinerator, a fireplace in each room, canvas sun blinds folding neatly out of sight into the window heads and two passenger lifts off a barrel-vaulted hallway which itself possessed a small boutique. The ground floor windows were double glazed.

Associated People: Daryl Lindsay

## Plaque Citation

Constructed in 1929-30 to accommodate both professional chambers and residential apartments, this building was designed in a modern Renaissance style by A. & K. Henderson. It is an early example of multi-storey flat accommodation in the city.

## Extent of Registration

Historic Building No. 500 - Alcaston House, 2 Collins Street, Melbourne (to the extent of the external fabric, the entrance foyer off Spring Street and the lift foyer off Collins Street as defined by a plan held by the Historic Buildings Preservation Council).

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No.91 9 September 1981 pp.2972-2973]

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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/>*