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# FORMER COMMERCIAL BANK OF AUSTRALIA



COMMERCIAL BANK OF AUSTRALIA SOHE 2008



H00422 commercial bank of australia collins street melbourne front elevation

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## Location

68 - 72 COLLINS STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

## Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0422

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO567

## VHR Registration

January 6, 1978

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 19, 1999

What is significant?

The Former Commercial Bank of Australia was erected in 1867 for the Melbourne surgeon, Dr John Wilkins, and originally served as his residence and consulting rooms. The matching three storey bay window wing on the Exhibition Street facade was probably added to the original structure at a later date. The architect is unknown. The building was constructed of brick with finely rendered stucco detailing. It was used as a residence and doctor's surgery until being purchased by the Commercial Bank of Australia in 1959. It has had commercial uses since then, although a flat was occupied upstairs into the 1960s.

How is it significant?

The Former Commercial Bank of Australia is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Former Commercial Bank of Australia is of historical significance as one of the very few remaining 19th century townhouses left in the city and as a reminder of the dominance of this part of the city in the 19th and early 20th century by medical practitioners. There are only two other comparable houses, Portland House and 61 Spring Street. From 1867 until well into the 20th century the building was occupied by doctors as a residence and surgery. The simple but elegantly styled building is typical of the premises built for the city's medical practitioners in this part of the city in the 19th century, and, as one of the few remaining, and one of the oldest, is an important reminder of the character and function of the Eastern end of Collins Street in the earlier years of the city's history.

The Former Commercial Bank of Australia is of architectural significance as a noteworthy example of a 19th century townhouse with a number of unusual decorative features. It has fine Renaissance Revival style detailing, particularly to the first floor windows and rusticated ground floor. On the ground floor the window and door mouldings are superimposed over the plain rusticated facade. On the first floor there are double arched window openings with single-arched drip mouldings terminated by a sprig of foliage. The motifs on both these floors are very unusual in Victoria, particularly at this early date. The building provides an important trace of the 19th century built form and is an integral component of the Collins Street streetscape, despite the modifications to the streetscape executed in conjunction with the Nauru House development.

## 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:

New tower element (80 Collins Street)

Interior: All works

Exterior: Repair and maintenance which replaces like-with-like and which maintains the existing materials/finishes, presentation and form of the building.

Exterior: Installation, removal or replacement of plant and associated services located on the roof.

Installation of temporary decorations for up to 60 calendar days (within one calendar year) inclusive of bump in and bump out, from the second Sunday of November (to enable installation before the Advent (four Sundays prior to Christmas), to the first Sunday to fall after the twelfth day of Christmas, the Epiphany). In accordance with s92(3) of the Heritage Act 2017, permit exemption issued by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria on 21 July 2025 (P41065).

Construction dates	1867,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	ROLEX BUILDING,
Hermes Number	717
Property Number	

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## History

Contextual History:History of Place:

This building was originally known as 121 Collins Street, and over its years as a doctor's surgery was occupied by several prominent Melbourne surgeons, including Dr John Wilkins, Dr Thomas Rushall, surgeon and oculist, D. J.W. Hooper, physician and surgeon, and Dr Michael O'Sullivan, gynaecological surgeon at the Women's Hospital and St Vincent's Hospital.

The number of the house was changed in 1890.

In 1959 the Commercial Bank of Australia purchased the building and converted it to a bank and offices.

## Extent of Registration

Historic Building No. 422, The Commercial Bank of Australia Ltd., 70 Collins Street, Melbourne.  
[Victoria Government Gazette No. 1 - January 6, 1978 p.51]

*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/>*