

# FORMER VICTORIAN RAILWAY HEADQUARTERS



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former victorian railway headquarters spencer street melbourne front view railway headquarters



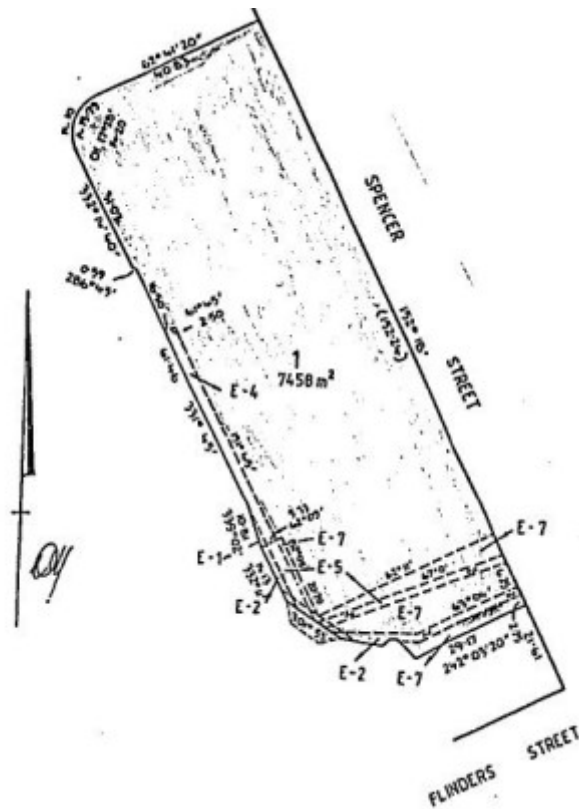
former victorian railway headquarters detail of front pillars



former victorian railway headquarters spencer street melbourne detail of top windows of railway headquarters



1 former victorian railway headquarters spencer street melbourne vline head office



h00699 plan h0699

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## Location

33-67 SPENCER STREET DOCKLANDS, MELBOURNE CITY

## Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0699

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO498

## VHR Registration

August 20, 1982

## Heritage Listing

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 13, 2000

What is significant?

The former Victorian Railways Administrative Headquarters were opened in 1893. They were built by James Moore to the design of the Victorian Railways Department Engineering Office. The building extends 120 meters along the west side of Spencer Street. The design specified a bluestone construction but instead it was finished with stuccoed brick load bearing walls and stone cores. The building is symmetrical in plan, with the Spencer Street facade divided into five bays. The central bay projects slightly, incorporating the main entrance with heavy banded rustication. The end bays are similarly executed with secondary. The basement walls are rusticated and support three levels with pilasters framing rectangular windows at first floor level, round arched windows at second floor level and segmental arched windows at the third level. Original embellishments above the cornice were removed when additional floors were added and the present building is now capped by segmental pediments and cupolas reminiscent of the design for Flinders Street Station. The fourth floor was added in 1912 and the neo-French style attic was added in 1922. The western facade is largely devoid of decoration. Internally there is a grand staircase flanked by cast iron balusters with a timber balustrade.

How is it significant?

The former Victorian Railways Administrative Headquarters are of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The former Victorian Railways Administrative Headquarters is historically significant as the head office of the Victorian Railways Department from 1888 until 1985. It demonstrates the extraordinary expansion of Victoria's railways during the 1880s, and of the administration required to operate it. The site of the Headquarters has a long association with the railways, having been developed as the site of the first railway terminus in 1852.

The former Victorian Railways Administrative Headquarters is architecturally significant as the largest nineteenth century office building in Victoria.

## 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:

Note only: Conversion to apartments occurred in 1993 (P0824). Most of the original detailing remains on the external facades and common entrance areas.

Construction dates	1888,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	GRAND CENTRAL APARTMENTS, GRAND HOTEL,
Hermes Number	800
Property Number	

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## History

### History of Place:

The original Railway Offices were located to the north of the existing Administrative Offices, and were built by the Melbourne, Mt Alexander and Murray River Railway Company in 1854. Two years later the Government of the day purchased the works of the Company and formed the Victorian Railways Department. The old offices were demolished when the existing Outwards Parcels Office was built in 1926. Before 1893, the Victorian Railways Department was paying 2,500 pounds a year for the use of outside offices. It was the opinion of the Commissioners that it would prove more economical to build new offices. This would improve efficiency, and greater public convenience would likewise be secured by the concentration of the various branch offices. The plans were prepared under the direction of Mr Green, Chief Engineer of the Railways. Mr James Moore, timber merchant of South Melbourne, signed the contract for the building's erection on September 13th, 1888. The building was completed at a cost of 133,000 pounds on January 30th, 1893 and when it was opened it was the largest office building in Melbourne. The railway administration was moved to Transport House in 1988. (RNE)

The site of the Victorian Railways Administration Building is very close to where John Batman built his prefabricated cottage in 1835. Prior to the railways it was the site of the first gunpowder magazine. (Allom Lovell Conservation Plan)

Associated People:

## Extent of Registration

### AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 699:

Former Victorian Railway Headquarters, 67 Spencer Street, Melbourne

to the extent of all of the buildings and the whole of the land entered in the Register Book Certificate of Title Volume 9808 Folio 878 according to the plan (Appendix A) held by the Ministry for Planning and Environment. [Victoria Government Gazette G39 12 October 1988 p.3104]

*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/>*