

Victoria, Australia

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International working party for
documentation and conservation
of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the
modern movement

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composed by working party of:

- | | | |
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| 1 | Identity of building/group of buildings/urban scheme/ landscape/garden | ICI House |
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View of ICI House
Source <http://www.environment.gov.au>

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|------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1.1 | current name of building | Orica House |
| 1.2 | variant or former name | ICI House |
| 1.3 | number & name of street | 1-4 Nicholson St, East Melbourne |
| 1.4 | town | Melbourne |
| 1.5 | province | Victoria |
| 1.6 | zip code | 3002 |
| 1.7 | country | Australia |
| 1.8 | national grid reference | |
| 1.9 | classification/typology | Commercial |
| 1.10 | protection status & date | Victorian Heritage Register H0786 National Heritage Register 105747 |
| 2 | History of building | |
| 2.1 | original brief/purpose | Office building for ICI |
| 2.2 | dates: commission/completion | 1955-58 |
| 2.3 | architectural designers | Bates Smart & McCutcheon |
| 2.4 | others associated with building | John Stevens (Landscape Architect) Gerald Lewers (Sculptor) |
| 2.5 | significant alterations with dates | The building's main entrance is now off Albert Street, through a foyer that was remodeled in 1989 by the original architects. This was originally the secondary entrance whereas the main entrance was originally through the landscaped garden off Nicholson Street. The building is essentially intact externally but has been refitted internally. Limited information is available about the integrity of the garden and landscape generally. |
| | current use | Commercial |
| | current condition | The building is in good condition |
| 3.0 | Description | |
| 3.1 | general description | The building is described by Philip Goad in his <i>Guide to Melbourne Architecture</i> , "ICI House was one of the first free-standing fully glazed curtain wall commercial skyscrapers in Australia. As one of the nation's most stylish skyscrapers, it represented the most refined example of Bates Smart & McCutcheon's efforts in the 1950s to perfect high-rise office design. Raised on pilotes, the blue glazed linear slab of open-plan offices, with its lift core expressed as clearly |

separate, broke the city's 132-foot height limit and changed Melbourne's previously consistent skyline forever." (Goad: 1999: 178)

3.2 construction The building is an open plan concrete encased steel framed structure elevated on pilotes over what was originally an open undercroft. The main body of the building is clad with framed glazed curtain walling. The floors of the building are of precast concrete flat panels. The building is comprised of nineteen stories, including the ground floor and two floors below ground. The service core is separated from the main glass clad body of the building and is clad in precast concrete panel curtain walling. (AHD entry for ICI House)

3.3 context Its height, combined with its position on the eastern hill of the central business district, terminating the axis of Lonsdale Street, made the building a landmark. (VHR entry for ICI House)

4 Evaluation

4.1 technical ICI House is of architectural significance due to its considerable advancements in local construction techniques. These include the framed glazed curtain walls and innovative use of concrete, including precast reinforced units in structural members and flooring. The division of the glazed office space from the solidly clad service tower predates similar developments overseas. (VHR entry for ICI House)

4.2 social ICI House is also of architectural significance as it was a landmark in the planning of the city of Melbourne. The building was more than double the previous height restriction enforced in Victoria and the design was permitted under the uniform building regulations because the site coverage was examined as a percentage of the total site area. This led to plot ratio determinations for city sites and the eventual redefinition of the central Melbourne skyline. (VHR entry for ICI House)

4.3 cultural & aesthetic ICI House is of historical significance because from its completion in November 1958 until 1961, ICI House was the tallest building in Australia. At 84m it broke the 40.2m Victorian height restriction by 43.6m and set a new precedent in height controls in the city of Melbourne. (VHR entry for ICI House)

4.4 Historical When completed in 1958, the 21-storey ICI Building in Melbourne, with its height, modern materials and tight skinned, technological aesthetic, presented the most progressive architectural statement in Australia. (AHD entry for ICI House)

5 Documentation

5.1 principal references Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) entry ICI House
<http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/>
Australian Heritage Database (AHD) entry for ICI House

<http://www.environment.gov.au>

Goad, Philip, *Melbourne Architecture*, Watermark Press, Sydney, 1999

5.2 visual material attached

5.3 rapporteur/date

Andrew Murray June 2014