



## ACT Heritage Council

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION FORMER COMMONWEALTH BANK BUILDING (BLOCK 2 SECTION 13, CITY)

At its meeting of 2 June 2022 the ACT Heritage Council decided that the Former Commonwealth Bank Building was eligible for provisional registration.

The information contained in this report was considered by the ACT Heritage Council in assessing the nomination for the Former Commonwealth Bank Building against the heritage significance criteria outlined in s10 of the Heritage Act 2004.

### HISTORY

The Former Commonwealth Bank Building (FCBB) opened in 1967. On the southern corner of Ainslie Avenue and London Circuit, it is located in a prominent position on a corner opposite Civic Square. It reflects a distinctive phase of National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) direction of inner city and private commercial development, seeking to achieve a balance of spatial forms and a harmony of architectural forms in those areas lining London Circuit. With significant reference back to Walter Burley Griffin's original concept for the area radiating out from City Hill, the planning and design language of the FCBB clearly reflect this specific stage in the development context of Canberra.

#### The early development context of Canberra

Walter Burley Griffin's plans for Canberra included Ainslie Avenue as a prominent axis of the urban plan originating at City Hill (Figure 1). The area directly around City Hill was intended for municipal activities including commercial buildings.

The early implementation of Griffin's plans was influenced by many factors. The relocation of the Commonwealth Parliament to the city in 1927 resulted in substantial construction efforts, only to be followed by much reduced activity because of the Great Depression and World War II (WWII). There are a few early surviving buildings near City Hill from this early period, including the Sydney and Melbourne Buildings that were constructed between 1926–1946 (Marshall et al. 2011, pp. 16-30). However, construction in Canberra, particularly in the Civic Centre, largely languished until the late 1950s.

#### National Capital Development Commission

In 1957 the Commonwealth Government created the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) to encourage and provide adequate planning for the growth of the city (NCDC 1970). Consequently,



**Figure 1: Walter Burley Griffin's 1913 plan showing axial lines and block structure around City Hill (Reid, 2002:110).**

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compared to the earlier decades, the 1960s saw rapid development in the city, particularly in the City Hill and adjacent commercial areas.

In order to achieve coherence in planning and design, the NCDC was committed to core elements that aimed at providing “tangible meaning for the central areas of the city” (NCDC 1967, p. 11). They promoted and endorsed a distinctive repertoire of architectural design elements, including palette and textures, emphasising strong horizontal elements softened by rhythmic vertical lines so that a suite of buildings would “exhibit good manners towards each other in the use of colours and materials” (NCDC 1965, p. 7). The NCDC desired to co-ordinate these features among “groups of related buildings to achieve a total design composition” within defined precinct areas in the city centre (NCDC 1965, p. 7). In turn, within these precincts, the NCDC favoured the use of ‘portal buildings’ to balance road access and amenity, and to achieve balance and proportion within groups (NCDC 1967, p. 11). In managing these elements, the NCDC was also envisaging later multistorey office developments to the east of the Civic Square area where the FCBB is located.

The NCDC was also actively encouraging private enterprise investment while seeking an ideal of “civic dignity” in assessing designs put forward by eminent private architects. That ideal was reflected in ensuring “high standards” in “the use of proposed materials and shape and colour”, and “in relation to neighbouring development” (NCDC 1963). This encouragement also extended to the inclusion of sculptural works within new buildings as appropriate for “a capital of national and international stature. Keen to ‘encourage a wide variety of art treatment’ in new buildings, the NCDC expressed its particular ‘appreciation [of] the growing interest in sculpture displayed by the private sector’ (NCPC 1967, p. 1; NCDC 1967, p. 13).

At the time that the NCDC began operations in 1958, Griffin’s proposed hexagonal shaped road around City Hill had been built, but few buildings had been constructed in the surrounding area. In 1962 the NCDC released plans to further develop this area and The Future Canberra (1964) offered further detail on groupings retail, office and recreational blocks balanced by civic and cultural buildings (Figure 2).

The administrative and community focal point of the NCDC’s developments was Civic Square, completed in February 1961. The square was designed to the dimensions of Ainslie Avenue and is situated as the terminating urban element on that axis (Figure 3). This strong symmetry in urban form was heightened by the Canberra Theatre Centre (1965) and extended to the commercial zone on the outside of London Circuit, which had lower building forms flanking the avenue which were in turn adjacent to symmetrical tall building forms further away from

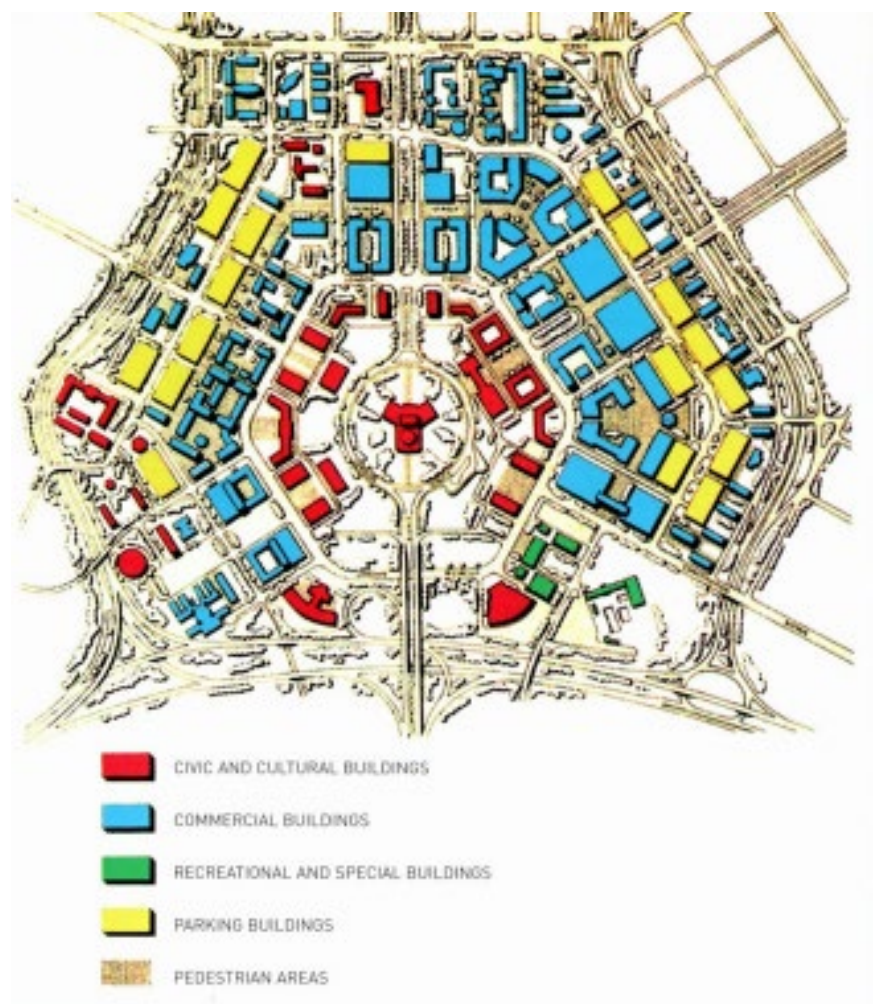


Figure 2: NCDC Plan of Civic Centre 1962 (NCA, 2004:105).

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the avenue. The FCBB was arguably the most prominent of the lower, 'portal' buildings, due to its corner position on Ainslie Avenue, opposite Civic Square.



**Figure 3: View along Ainslie Avenue towards Mount Ainslie in 1967 (NAA: A1200, L62722). Civic Square is located in the foreground and the FCBB is to the right in the middle distance.**

Developments in Civic, particularly around City Hill, led to substantial changes in the surrounding urban environment in the 1960s (Figure 4). Other prominent developments in the area during the 1960s included:

- North and South Buildings (former Civic Offices, 1961);
- Canberra Centre, part (former Monaro Shopping Mall/Monaro Mall, 1963);
- Bright Consulting Building (former MLC Building, 1958 and 1963);
- ACT Supreme Court (former Law Courts of the ACT, 1963), Reserve Bank Building (1965) and ACT Police Headquarters (1968);
- Former ANZ Bank (1963);
- Canberra Theatre Centre (1965); and
- 221 London (former Electricity House, 1968, designed by Peddle, Thorp and Walker).



**Figure 4: A view of the centre in (a.) 1958 and (b.) 1969 showing the development in the intervening period, including Civic Square and the development of commercial building on the outside of London Circuit that included the FCBB (NCDC 1970).**

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### The Former Commonwealth Bank Building (FCBB)

The FCBB was constructed within the framework of the NCDC's planning and development guidance during the 1960s. The architects were Peddle, Thorp and Walker, the structural engineers were Rankine & Hill and the builders were Civil and Civic.

There were rentable office spaces in the FCBB, but its primary function was as a bank. It was the second branch of the Commonwealth Bank in Civic and opened on 27 November 1967 (Canberra Times 1967b). It was known as the Civic Square Branch.

### Property Sale and Building Restrictions

The lease for Block 2 Section 13 City, upon which the FCBB was developed, was auctioned on the 27th January 1965. The sale documents prepared by the Department of the Interior (as found in building file 011747-01) stipulated a range of requirements for the building that would be constructed on the site. Stipulations in this document that may be considered to have influenced the final building form include:

- Proposed use of the property for commercial and professional offices, other than retail shops;
- The building must cover the whole block;
- The height of the main parapet and eaves is stipulated (RL1897'), as well as the fact that it must be an unbroken line at the stated height.
- The building must contain a lower ground floor, ground floor and two upper floors;
- Rooftop services must be contained in a superstructure set back from the London Circuit-Ainslie Avenue building lines and must not cut a sightline from the top outer edge of the main parapet (heights and distances are specified). Furthermore, any proposed rooftop structure must be coherent with the architectural design of the building and have regards to heights of adjacent buildings and buildings in related areas of the city;
- Vehicular access will not be permitted from London Circuit or Ainslie Avenue;
- The architectural design must have regard to the abutting buildings on Blocks 1 and 3.

The following is directly quoted from this document with regards to the approval of the building design,

Building proposals will be considered for approval having regard to the form, silhouette and the colours and textures of the finishing materials proposed, as well as to the adjacent buildings in Section 13, Section 14 and Civic Square. All external features, including signs and, insignia, sculpture, external lighting and similar features will be subject to specific approval.

This document therefore makes clear the quite stringent design restrictions that were imposed on the purchaser of the property.

### Architects

The architectural practise of Peddle, Thorp and Walker (now known as PTW Architects) was contracted by the Commonwealth Bank to design the building for the site. This practise was founded in Sydney in 1924 and has since completed a wide range of projects in Australia and overseas (Goad and Higham 2012, pp. 535–536). The firm's design for the Sydney headquarters of AMP, completed in 1962, brought them to international attention and marked an era of skyscraper design. Other substantial Canberra projects of note by Peddle, Thorp and Walker include the Swedish Embassy (in association with E G H Lundquist, 1951, awarded the Sulman Medal in 1952), 221 London (former Electricity House, 1968), QT Canberra (former Lakeside International Hotel, 1972) and National Gallery of Australia extensions (1997 and 2010).

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### Design of the Former Commonwealth Bank Building

The planning for the six-level building was as follows:

- Lower basement was under only part of the building, and included plant/service and store areas;
- Upper basement included rentable space to the street edges, with service areas including a strong room in the back (east) corner of the building (Figure 5);
- Ground floor included the banking chamber at the splayed street corner, rentable space to the south, and an entrance lobby, service areas and vehicle dock at the back of the building (Figure 6);
- First and second floors comprised rentable space to the street and rear service court frontages, with the service core centrally placed at the back of the building (Figure 7); and
- Third floor comprised a plant room at the rear of the building with the remainder as roof area.

The intended appearance and finishes for the FCBB are described in a Canberra Times article published at the time that the contract was awarded (Canberra Times 1966). Inside the building a spiral staircase was to connect the ground and upper basement floors, constructed of precast terrazzo treads suspended from bronze rods to achieve an impression of lightness. The ceiling of the banking chamber was to feature dropped plaster panels modelled in relief and providing an interesting interplay of planes. The overall structure was to be steel-framed and concrete, and the building was to be fully air-conditioned. Not all these plans were realised, for instance the spiral staircase, was shown in the original architectural drawings supplied by PTW Architects (see pages 16-25), but they are not on the approved plans (as shown below).

The façade of the FCBB was divided into bays with prominently expressed horizontal louvres to the ground floor, and strongly vertical intermediate fins within bays (Figure 8). The materials included white marble cladding, columns clad in polished reconstituted Anarel Russet granite<sup>1</sup>, bronze Kal-colour aluminium window frames, and non-actinic bronze glass. The building had flat roofs. In addition, the ground floor external façade included 10 large decorative relief panels by Silvano Mariti, having a concrete construction with a copper coating (NCDC 1980, p. 39).

### Celdek Flooring

It was reported that, for the first time in Canberra, the construction of the FCBB used cellular steel decking, called Celdek, for the upper floor structures (Canberra Times 1966*b*). The decking provided ducting for wiring and services, as well as a permanent formwork for the concrete floor slabs of the building. Limited historical information has been found about this flooring system. Celdek was manufactured by John Lysaght (Australia) Pty Ltd. It was one of at least six steel decking systems that they developed over 40 years from the 1960s. Celdek was advertised from as early as 1960, including in Canberra. However, no information has been found about the use of the flooring system elsewhere in Canberra. Nonetheless, it was being used in major and much larger multi-story office buildings elsewhere in Australia, such as the AMP Building in Sydney from 1959, also designed by Peddle, Thorp and Walker, the State Office Building in Sydney from 1961, and the Commonwealth Centre Block 2 in Melbourne from 1964.

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<sup>1</sup> Anarel Russet was the trade name of a fine-grained pink granite that was quarried by F Arnold & Sons P/L at Anarel (Wallace 1969).

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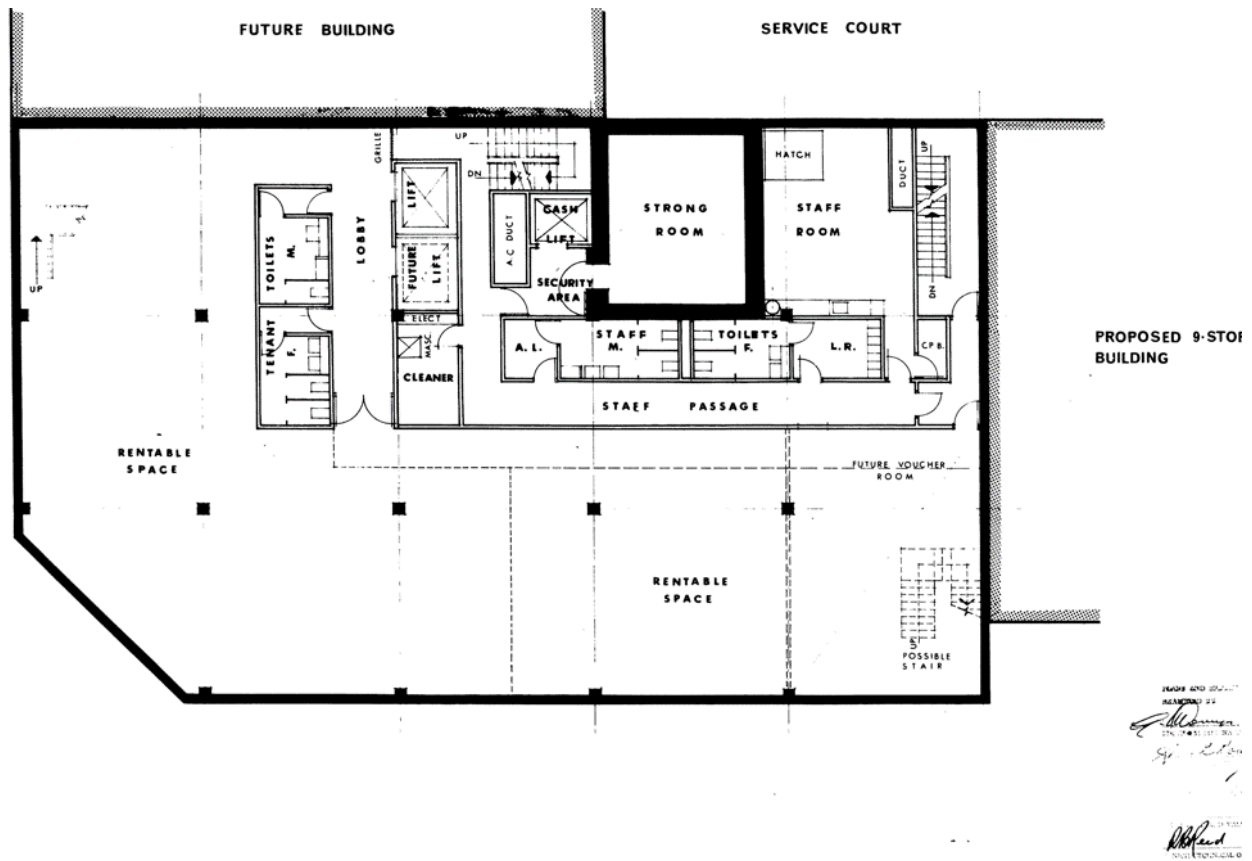


Figure 5: Former Commonwealth Bank Building, original upper basement floor plan

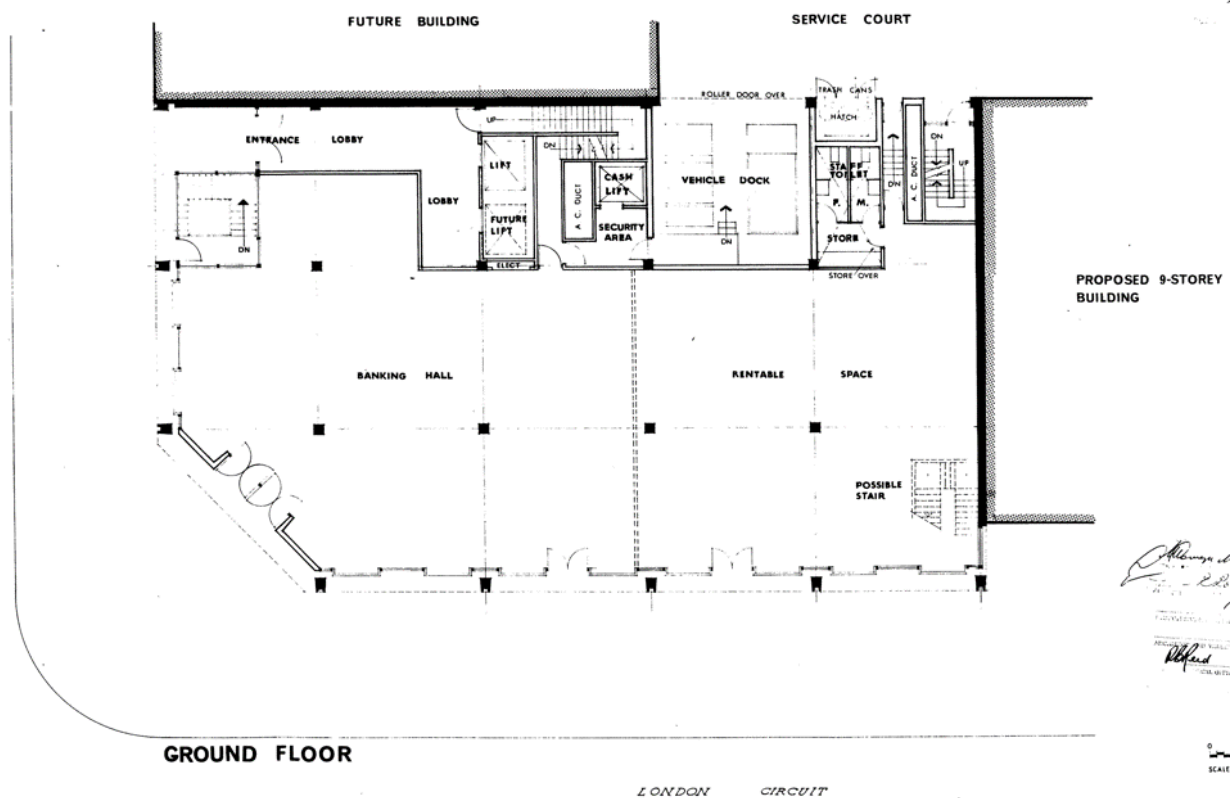


Figure 6: Former Commonwealth Bank Building, original ground floor plan

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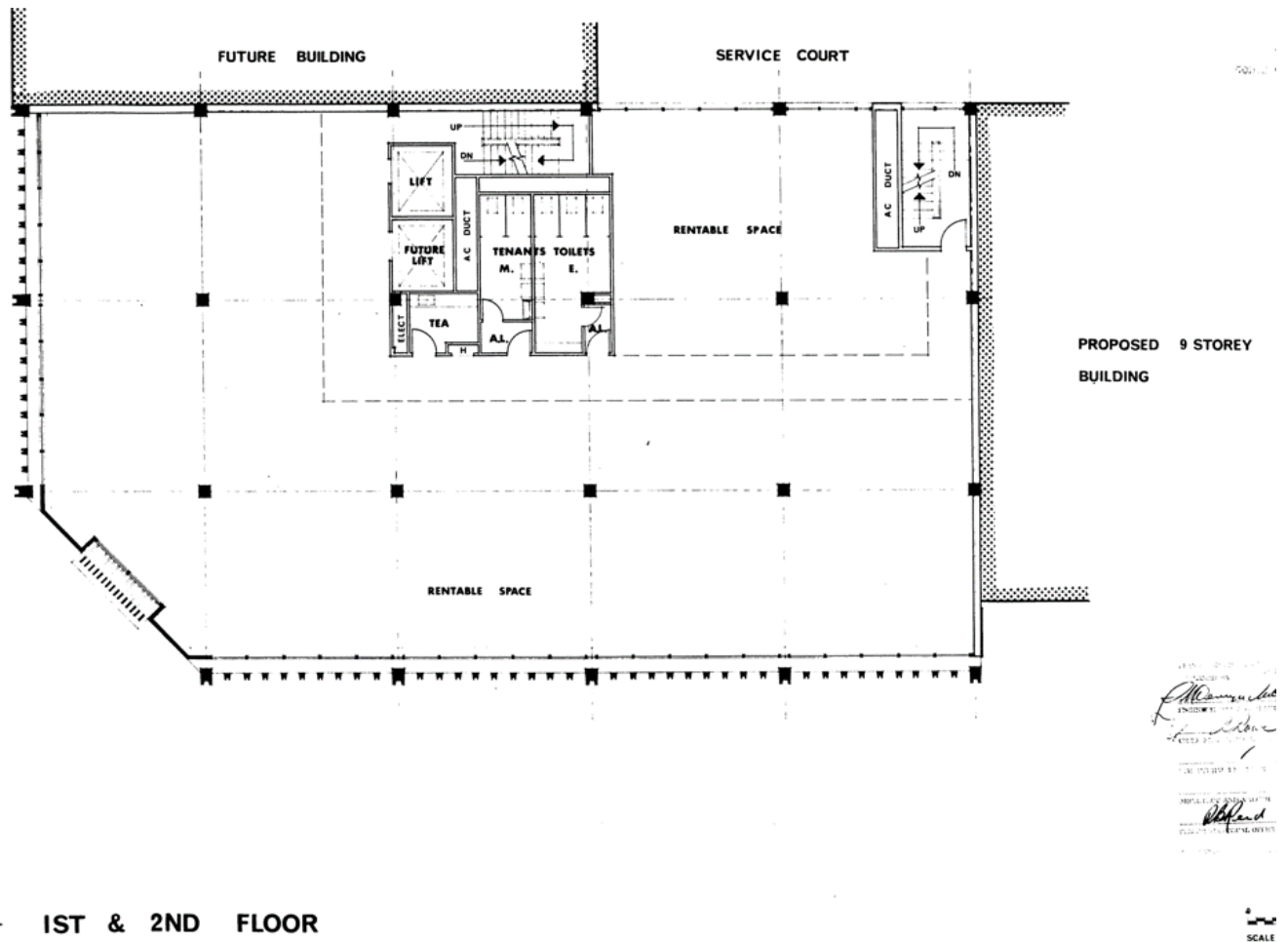


Figure 7: Former Commonwealth Bank Building, original first and second floor plans

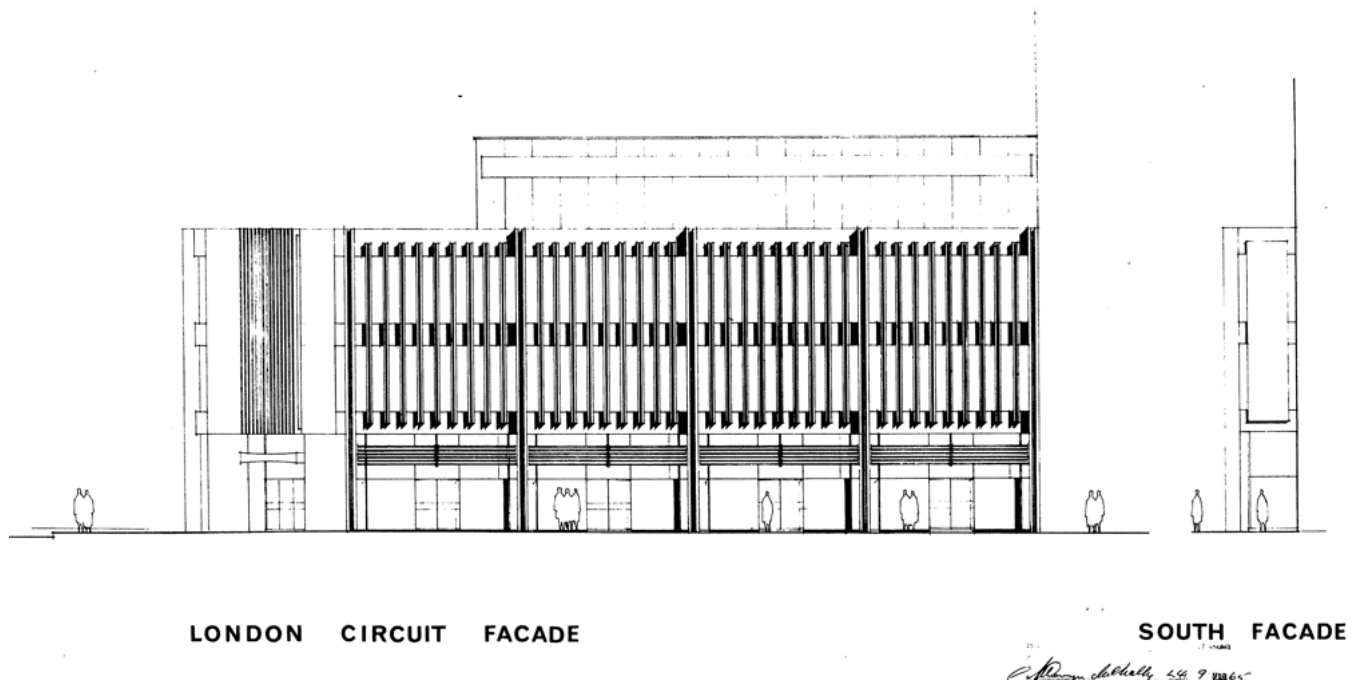


Figure 8: Former Commonwealth Bank Building, original south elevation

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### Decorative Façade Panels

The street level façade of the FCBB incorporated decorative relief panels. These panels were designed by Silvano Mariti who has been referred to as, “an Italian-born industrial chemist and interior decorator, who has been making decorative panels by hand in a small Marrickville factory for four years...” (Getty Images n.d.). The panels on the façade of the FCBB are Mariti’s only known public artworks in Canberra (NCDC 1980). In the early 1960s, Mariti had contributed artworks to the Menzies Hotel in Sydney, also designed by Peddle, Thorp and Walker (TKD Architects 2019, p. 75). He also designed the interiors of the Hacienda Espresso Bar in Hunter Street, Sydney, in 1957 (Design and Art Australia Online 2016).

The details and context for the commissioning of Mariti to provide the panels are not known. However, as mentioned previously, it was the policy approach of the NCDC to include artworks in buildings. Given the role of the NCDC, most examples were Commonwealth buildings, with the earliest being at Lyneham High School. Apart from the FCBB, other examples of non-government buildings which included artworks are the Canberra Rex Hotel (1960), former Monaro Shopping Mall (1963) and National Jewish Memorial Centre (1971). A comprehensive understanding of the practice at the time and subsequently is not available, but the practice continues to the current day, with recent non-government examples including the NewActon precinct. Although a comprehensive history for public artworks in Canberra does not exist, the sculptural panels included in the FCBB they confirm the NCDC’s concern to promote the use of artworks in buildings, including those being constructed by private sector developers.

### Architectural style

The design of the FCBB displays a number of the features of the Late Twentieth Century International style as described in Apperly *et al* (1989, p. 234), including:

- Cubiform overall shape;
- Structural frame expressed;
- Plain, smooth wall surface;
- External sun control device; and
- Contrasting texture.

But, there are also transitional characteristics that link the FCBB to the earlier inter-war architectural styles.

These earlier, inter-war styles, especially as applied to commercial and institutional buildings, often employed traditional materials such as stone for facades even as the influence of modernity tended to reduce or simplify decoration. The post-war styles extended this influence to the materials of buildings, especially with the use of glass, aluminium and especially concrete. Traditional materials were still used on occasion, but it would seem with decreasing frequency. Other examples of the Late Twentieth Century International style in Canberra, all constructed a little later than the FCBB, are mostly expressed through the extensive use of concrete. Contrasting with these, the FCBB uses stone or reconstituted stone on the façade and sun control is achieved with lightweight and relatively delicate metal fins and louvres rather than heavy concrete members. Therefore, the FCBB appears to be a transitional example of the style, linked to inter-war architectural styles through the use of materials, yet connected to other examples of the Late Twentieth Century International style through form and other qualities.

### Final Design and Construction

In recommending approval for the building in September 1965, the National Capital Planning Committee (NCPC) noted its “high standard” of design (NCPC 1965, p. 7).

The builder for the project was Civil and Civic and the project was valued at approximately \$950,000. A call

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for tenders for the construction of the Commonwealth Savings Bank of Australia (now the FCBB) was published on 20 April 1966 (Canberra Times 1966a). On 3 October 1966, it was reported that a contract had been awarded for a new building, which was to be “among the most impressive of the new commercial buildings in the capital” (Canberra Times 1966b, p. 8).

### Subsequent use of the building

The building opened as a branch of the Commonwealth Bank in November 1967, and it continued in this role until 2020. Retail branch services were provided on the ground floor and foreign currency exchange was provided in the upper basement of the building.

The plans indicate the possibility of part of the ground floor, as well as the first and second floors, being used as rentable office space. There are a number of submissions to the building office concerning the partitioning of these spaces, particularly in the early years (Folder 011747-01). But, by later years the bank was using all these spaces, including offices on the first and second floors, at least partly for corporate banking.

As might be considered normal for a building of this age, the Commonwealth Bank Building underwent many changes over the intervening years since its construction. The internal fitout was modified many times. Some changes were also made to the exterior façade of the building (building file 011747-2). In 1982, the original sun fins, that contribute to the prominent verticality in the buildings appearance, were replaced. These fins were originally made of concrete, which were replaced with aluminium fins in a similar size and dimension. In 1992, a new entry canopy was installed, which was thicker and circular in shape in contrast to the original rectangular design. Despite these documented changes to the façade of the FCBB, these modifications are largely faithful to the original façade style and design.

Changes to the decorative panels on the exterior façade are evident, but undocumented. This includes the removal of at least one panel on the Ainslie Place façade and modifications to their original appearance through re-painting.

The building has been unoccupied since late 2020 and is no longer owned by the Commonwealth Bank.

### **Contextual and Comparative Analysis of the FCBB with other places in Canberra**

#### Late Twentieth Century International style

According to Apperly *et al* (1989, p. 232), the Late Twentieth Century International style is the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most significant form of architecture. The style was rational, comprehensible, and simple. This made it attractive to business enterprises “which sought unpretentious efficiency and economy in their buildings” (Apperly *et al* 1989, p. 232).

Other surviving examples of the Late Twentieth Century International architectural style in Canberra, some also containing Brutalist features, include:

- ANZ Bank Building (former ES&A Bank);
- Former MLC Building (Bates, Smart & McCutcheon, 1958 and 1963);
- Former Victorian Employees Federation Building, now the Mantra Macarthur Canberra, corner Northbourne and Macarthur Avenues (McConnel Smith and Johnson, 1970);
- Cameron Offices (John Andrews International, 1970-76);
- Edmund Barton Building (Harry Seidler and Associates, 1974);
- University of Canberra Student Residence Group 2 (John Andrews International, 1975);
- National Press Club (McConnel Smith and Johnson, 1976);

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- Benjamin Offices (McConnel Smith and Johnson, 1978-79); and
- Belconnen Library (Robin Gibson and Partners, 1982).<sup>2</sup>
- Other examples have now been demolished.

Many of these buildings have received recognition for their architectural expression of the Late Twentieth Century International architectural style through inclusion on statutory heritage lists, or are recognised in the architectural community. Part of the original Cameron Offices Complex is listed on the Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL 2005a), the Australian Institute of Architect's (AIA) Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture (RSTCA No. R101) and nominated to the International Union of Architects (UIA) World Register of Twentieth Century Australian Architecture. It combined the Late Twentieth Century International style with elements of the Late Twentieth Century Brutalist style. The Edmund Barton Building is also included on the CHL (2005b) and the RSTCA (No. R090). Another three places, the ANZ Bank Building (ACT Heritage Council 2004), Former MLC Building (ACT Heritage Council 2015) and University of Canberra Residence Group 2 (ACT Heritage Council 2009), appear on the ACT Heritage Register. The Former MLC Building (No. R123), the ANZ Bank Building (No. R060), University of Canberra Student Residence Group 2 (No. R053), and the Belconnen Library (No. R125) also appear on the AIA's RSTCA. The FCBB is not yet included in the RSTCA list, however the Heritage Council has reviewed a draft citation, dated 1 October 2021, that will be considered by the AIA in the future (RSTCA No. R143). This citation does not include any additional information to that included in this background document and the associated Statement of Reasons. Even if the FCBB was to be included on the RSTCA, and despite showing aspects of the Late Twentieth Century International architectural style, it does not have the architectural recognition through articles, publications, or awards of the previously discussed examples that formed the basis of their inclusion in widely recognised heritage or architectural lists.

### Banking Buildings – Commonwealth Bank

The Commonwealth Bank of Australia was established by Commonwealth legislation in 1911 and its first branch opened in 1912 in Melbourne (Gollan 1968, p. 111). Soon after, the first Canberra branch of the bank opened in 1913 in a weatherboard building at Acton (Gollan 1968, p. 112; Canberra Times 2021). Bank branches were an early and important part of banking operations in Australia, although the Commonwealth Bank also used post offices as branches (Gollan 1968, pp. 15, 81). In 1926 the bank purchased a lease in what was to become the Melbourne Building, with the intention of establishing a new branch. The site was at the corner of London Circuit and Northbourne Avenue, and its premises were partly occupied in 1927 and completed in 1928. The bank occupied this site until 2020 (Marshall et al 2011, pp. 26-36, 122; Canberra Times 2021).

Initially the Commonwealth Bank operated as a trading/savings bank, as well as a central bank from 1920. In 1957 steps were taken to separate the commercial banking operations from central banking functions, with the process being completed in 1960. One part of the commercial operations was undertaken by the Commonwealth Savings Bank of Australia (Wikipedia, n.d.; Commonwealth Bank n.d.), which is the entity that built and occupied the FCBB until its sale in 2020.

### Banking Buildings - Other banks in the City

By way of context, other banks also constructed and operated branches in the City/Civic area from the 1920s.

The Reserve Bank of Australia building was constructed on the opposite side of London Circuit, at the termination of University Avenue in 1963-1965. Previously the operations had been located with the Commonwealth Bank services in the Melbourne Building. The Reserve Bank of Australia Building was constructed in the aftermath of the aforementioned actions to separate the central bank and commercial

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<sup>2</sup> A nomination is currently being assessed for possible inclusion on the ACT Heritage Register.

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operations of the Commonwealth Bank. The new building was seen as a major national institution and a competition was held to design the premises. The building is included on the Commonwealth Heritage List and amongst other characteristics the listing recognises features of the building that reflect the “money handling nature of banking in a cash orientated society” including the internal layout of the banking chamber and the strong room (CHL 2004).

The Bank of New South Wales (now Westpac) acquired part of the Melbourne Building in 1926, at the corner of London Circuit and West Row, and the premises were completed in 1927 (Marshall and others 2011, pp. 30, 36). This branch appears to have operated until about 1997. A second branch in Civic opened in 1958 at the corner of what is now City Walk and Petrie Plaza and appears to have operated until the last decade (Canberra Times 1958).

The National Australia Bank (NAB) opened a branch on the corner of London Circuit and Ainslie Avenue (Ainslie Place) in 1959 (Canberra Times 1959 *a and b*). This is directly comparable to the FCBB in terms of position, as it was constructed on the opposite street. The NAB opened at this location earlier than the Commonwealth Bank and still occupies the same location today. However, the current building is different in appearance to the one they moved into in 1959 indicating that a new building was constructed at some point in the intervening years.

The ANZ constructed a City branch at the corner of Ainslie Place and City Walk in 1960, and the ES&A Bank constructed a branch at the corner of London Circuit and University Avenue in 1963 (Canberra Times 1960; ACT Heritage Council 2004). The ANZ and ES&A Banks merged in 1970, becoming just the ANZ Bank.

In addition, other surviving examples of bank branches from this period seem likely to exist in town, district and local centres in Canberra developed in the same period as the FCBB. For example, Curtin was established in 1962 and its shops once had branches for Westpac, ANZ and the Commonwealth Bank. The Commonwealth Bank branch opened in 1967 (Canberra Times 1967*a*). The building associated with several of these branches survives. It is noted such examples may have changed use or now be the premises of different banks to their original.

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### DESCRIPTION

The building is located at the southern corner of London Circuit and Ainslie Place, 187 London Circuit in Canberra. Noting the building is currently vacant, it has six levels:

- Lower basement – plant/service and store areas, occupying only part of the building footprint;
- Upper basement – former banking chamber, office accommodation, strong room, associated service areas/amenities;
- Ground floor – former banking chamber, office accommodation, vehicle dock, associated service areas/amenities;
- First and second floors – former office accommodation with associated service areas/amenities; and
- Third floor – main roof, as well as a plant room and storage occupying part of the area towards the rear.

The former banking chambers and office areas are generally located on the street frontages, with service areas located on the back or east side of the building. The main entry is located on the corner of London Circuit and Ainslie Place, office and upper basement access is provided from a second entry on Ainslie Place. Service access is provided from the rear of the building on Hillside Lane. There are two lifts and three sets of stairs providing access between various floors.

The building has a concrete and steel framed structure with reinforced concrete suspended floor slabs, the upper floors employing permanent Celdek formwork. The main roof structure is a reinforced concrete deck with an asphalt membrane and gravel layer.

The main ground floor elevations have polished reconstituted Anarel Russet granite cladding to columns, moulded concrete sculptural panels, composite cladding, single glazed aluminium framed windows and high-level metal louvres. The upper main street facades have horizontal white marble cladding to floor beams, polished reconstituted Anarel Russet granite cladding to columns, with recessed single glazed aluminium windows. These facades also have vertical composite aluminium section fins spanning the first and second floors, providing a screen to the windows. The splayed corner ground floor elevation has polished reconstituted Anarel Russet granite cladding, an automated glazed sliding double door to the main entry with a metal clad awning extending over the doors. The upper levels of the corner elevation are clad in white marble with recessed single glazed aluminium framed windows behind a screen of bronze-coloured fins.

The ground floor façade also features nine remaining large decorative concrete panels. The copper finish is no longer evident, and they appear to have been painted.

The rear of the property has painted in-situ and coloured pre-cast concrete panels, painted reinforced concrete framing and single glazed aluminium framed windows.

The current internal building finishes are generally consistent with a relatively modern commercial fit out. Internal walls are a variety of rendered masonry, framed plasterboard and glazed walls. Suspended ceilings are used throughout the main spaces in the building. The strong room retains many original features. Several stairwells appear to be relatively original, with terrazzo treads, metal handrails and painted rendered wall finishes. Some toilets retain apparently original finishes, such as terrazzo flooring, but the toilets have otherwise been modernised.

### Physical condition and integrity

Generally, the structure appears to be in good condition for a building of its age. Other fabric and building

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services vary in condition. The relatively modern interior fit-outs are generally in fair to good condition, although some have been damaged by water leaks. Some plant and equipment are approaching the end of their serviceable life.

There is some minor damage to the ground floor decorative panels, and one panel appears to have been removed on the Ainslie Place façade. The original copper finish is no longer evident, and the remaining panels appear to have been painted.

The ground floor external concrete topping to the perimeter has cracked, also allowing water to leak into the upper basement.

The main roof appears original, and the asphalt roof membrane has become embrittled. Various repairs to cracks have also been carried out to the floor of the plant room on the third-level. These various defects would appear to be the possible cause of some water leaks evident in the interiors. The window seals are generally aged and degraded. There is minor cracking to a soffit beam in the central stairwell.

The exterior of the building appears mostly intact. Although the sun fins and the canopy over the ground floor main doors have been replaced, these are largely in keeping with the original styling and design of the building. The structure and general layout of the interiors is also intact, although much of the fit-out and detailed aspects of the layout are modern. Surviving interior fabric includes the strong room, two stairwells, and some finishes in toilet areas. The stair connecting the ground floor and upper basement is a modern replacement to a different configuration.

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### SITE PLAN



Image 1: Former Commonwealth Bank Building site boundary

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### IMAGES



Image 2: Aerial view of Civic Square and Ainslie Avenue with the Former Commonwealth Bank Building centre left, late 1960s (ACT Heritage Library, Reference No. 000936).



Image 3: Elevated view of the eastern part Civic looking towards the lake, late 1960s (ACT Heritage Library, Reference No. 007145). The Former Commonwealth Bank Building is at the lower left.

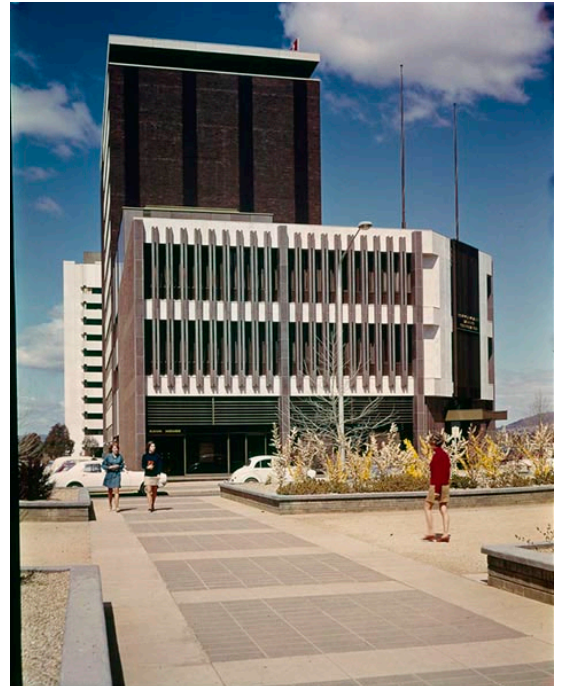


Image 4: Former Commonwealth Bank Building, late 1960s (ACT Heritage Library, Reference No. 007146).



**Image 5: Former Commonwealth Bank Building from London Circuit (collection of PTW Architects).**



**Image 6: Streetscape image including the FCBB, taken in 1969 soon after the building was constructed (NAA: A1200, L82110).**



**Image 7: Streetscape image including the FCBB, taken in 1969 soon after the building was constructed (NAA: A1200 L82109).**



**Image 8: Former Commonwealth Bank Building from London Circuit.**



**Image 9: Former Commonwealth Bank Building from Ainslie Place.**



**Image 10: Detail of London Circuit façade, including an example of one of the Mariti decorative relief panels.**

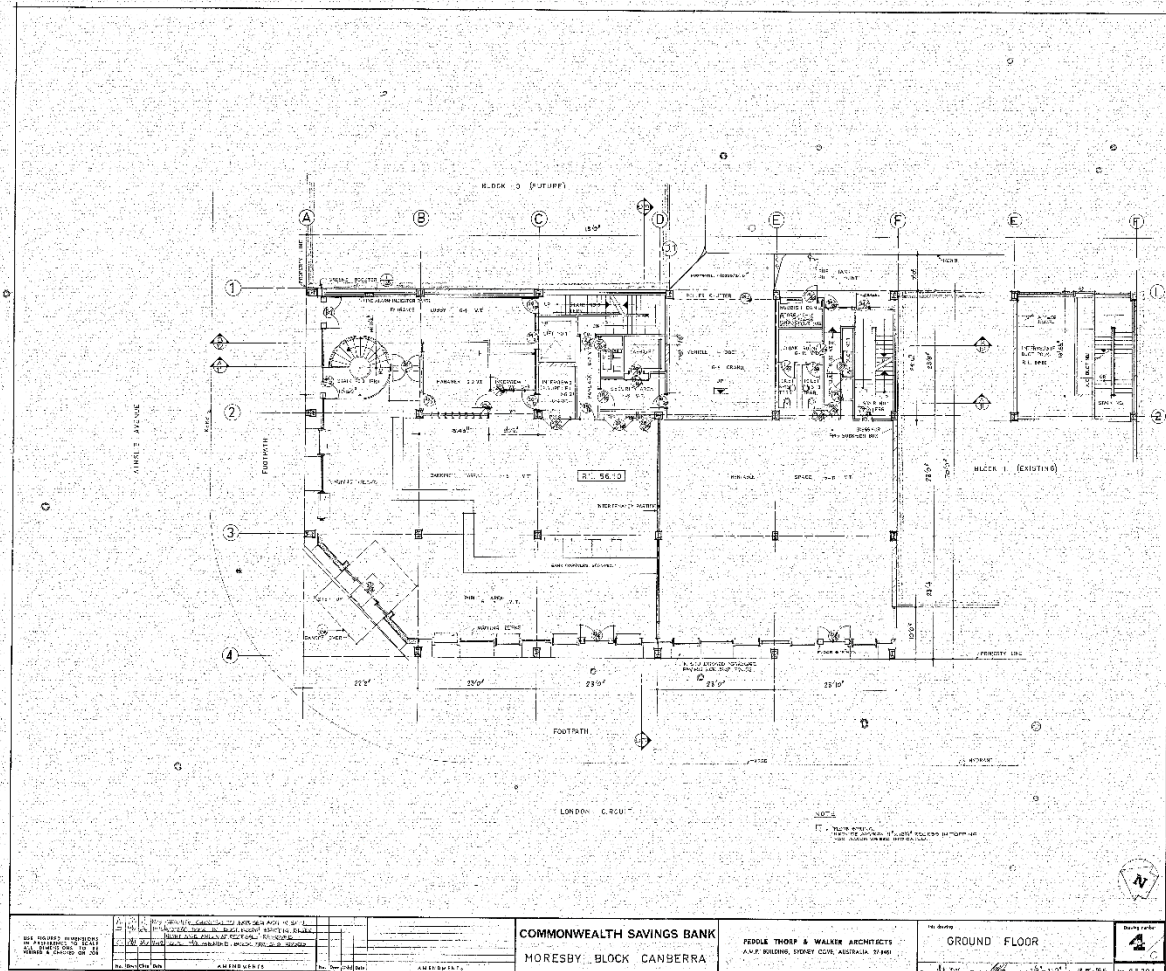


**Image 11: Former Commonwealth Bank Building rear elevation from Hillside Lane.**

**Pages 16-25: Architectural plans relating to the original building design, supplied by PTW Architects.**

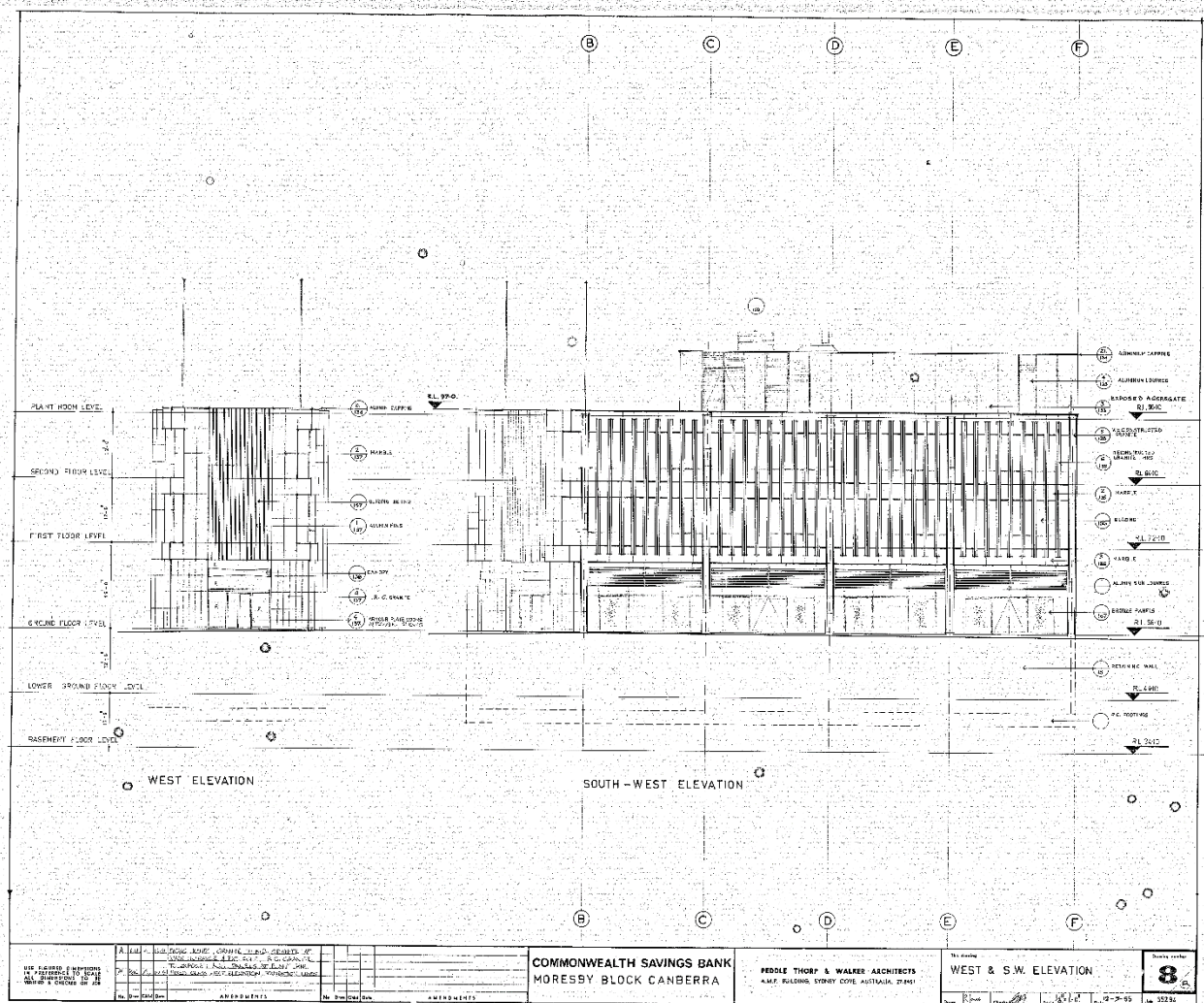


# BACKGROUND INFORMATION – FORMER COMMONWEALTH BANK BUILDING

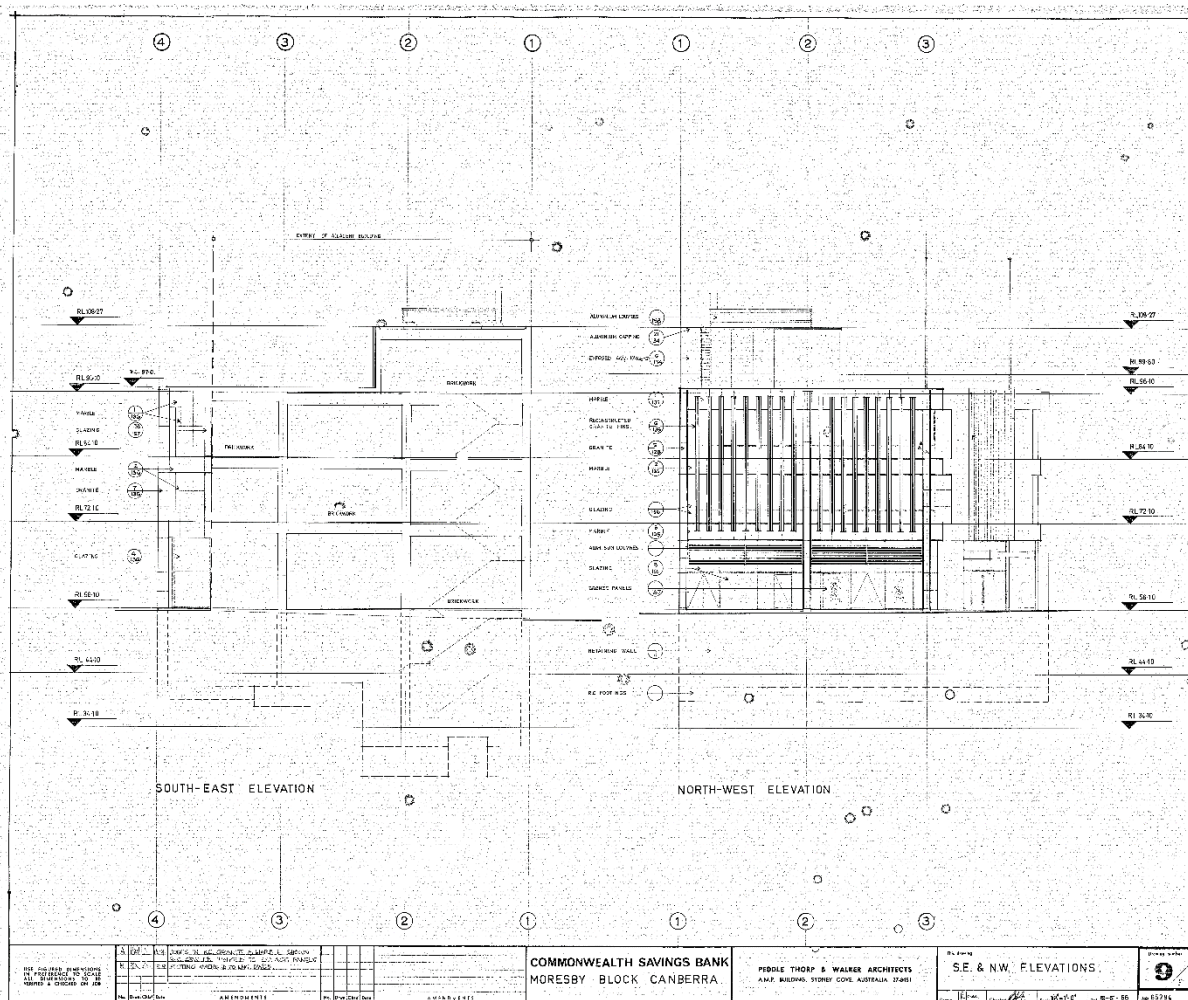


Peddle Thorp & Walker Architects:		MICRO-REPROGRAPHICS PTY. LTD. Sydney		Date
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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION – FORMER COMMONWEALTH BANK BUILDING

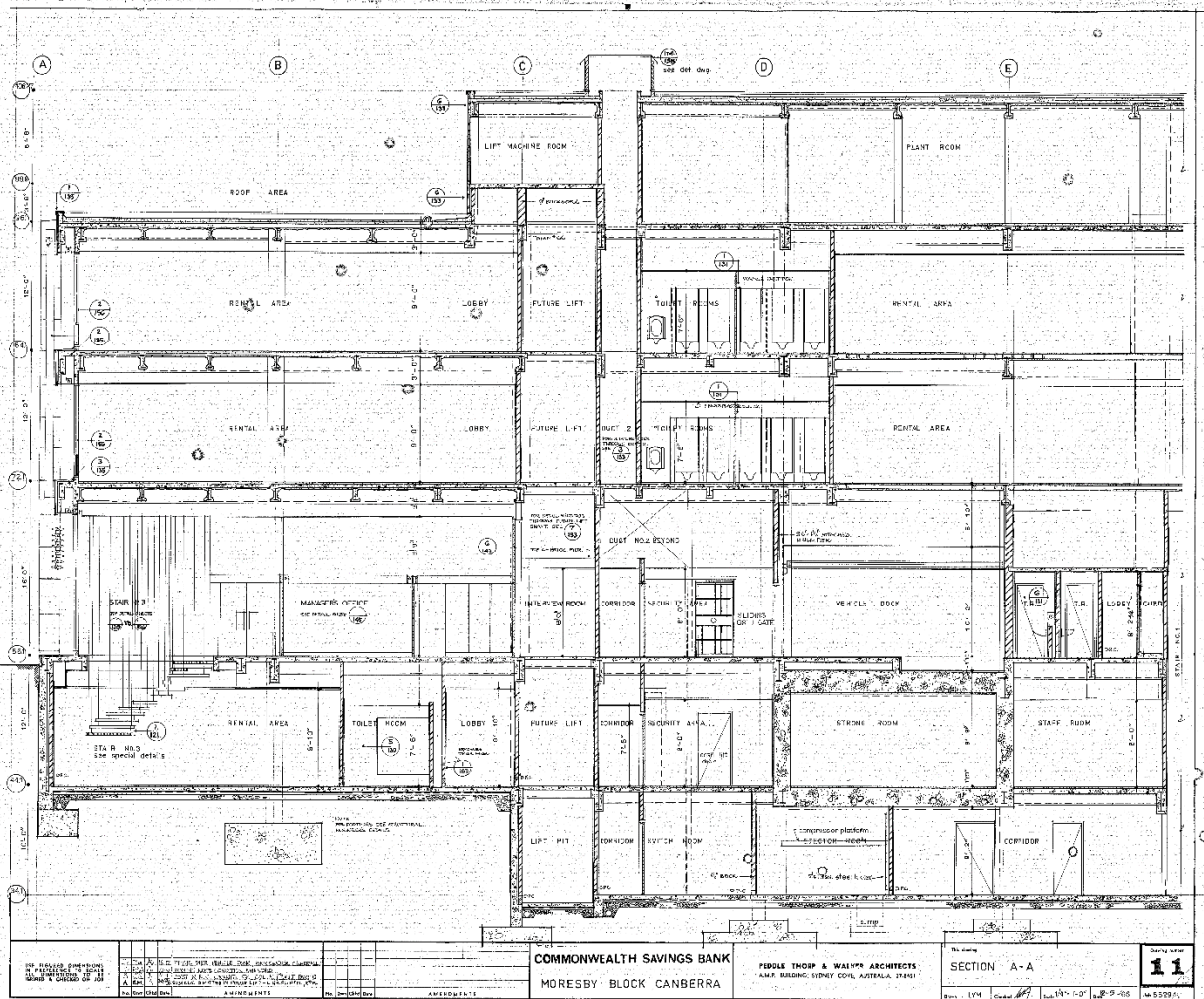


## BACKGROUND INFORMATION – FORMER COMMONWEALTH BANK BUILDING



Peddie Thorp & Walker Architects										MICRO-REPROGRAPHICS PTY. LTD Sydney										Date								
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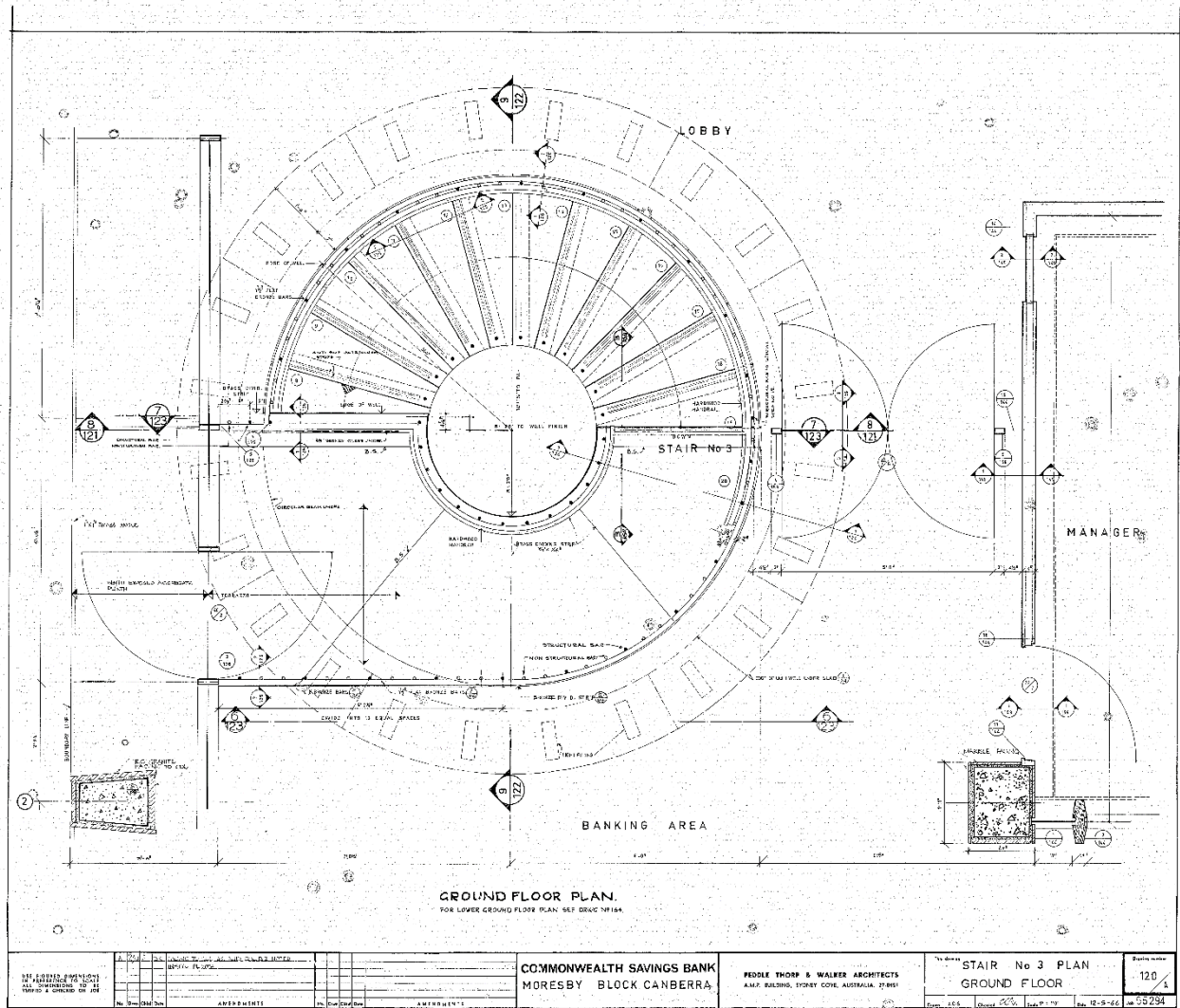
# BACKGROUND INFORMATION – FORMER COMMONWEALTH BANK BUILDING



Peddie Thorp & Walker Architects		MICRO-REPROGRAPHICS PTY LTD Sydney												Date	
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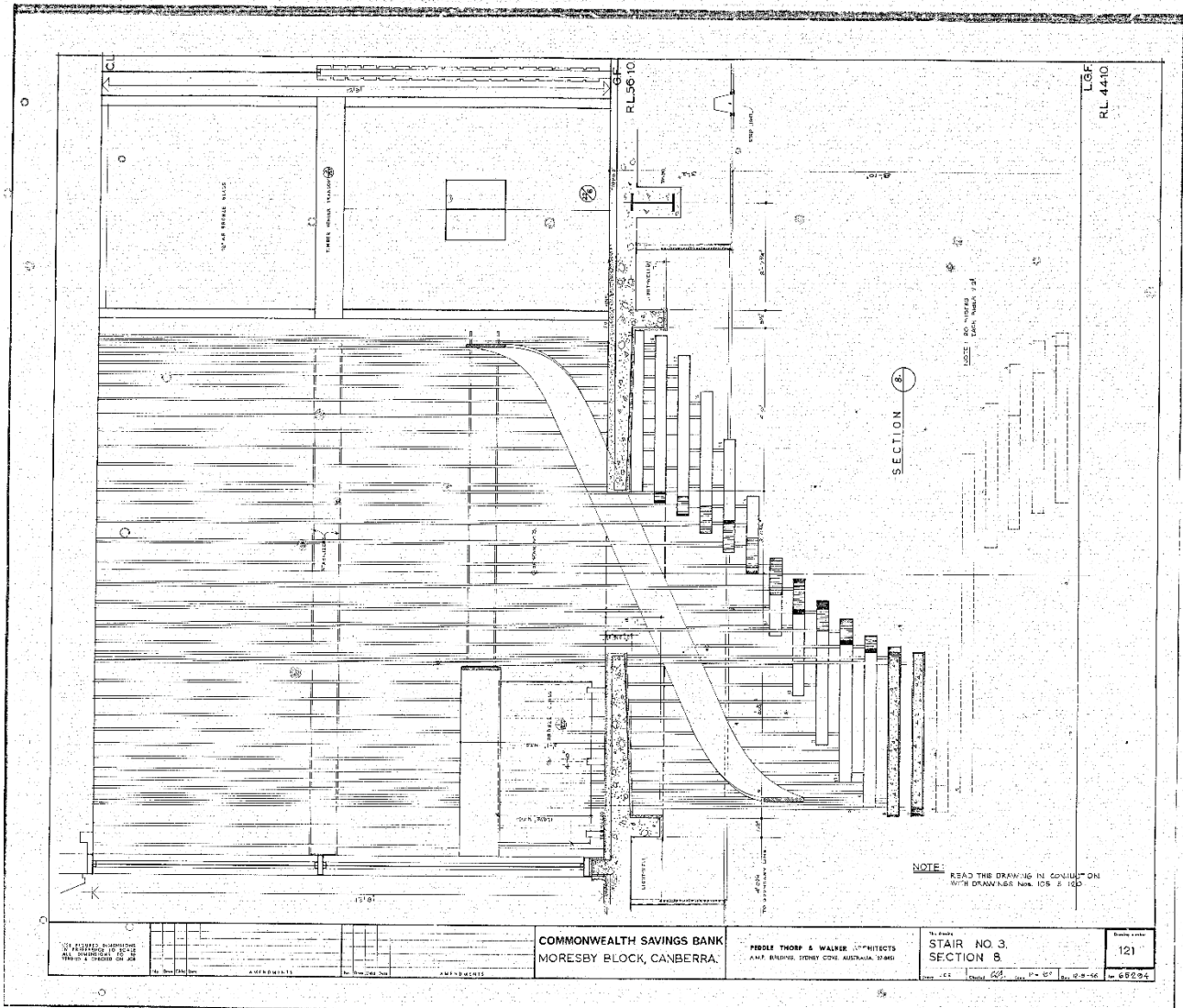
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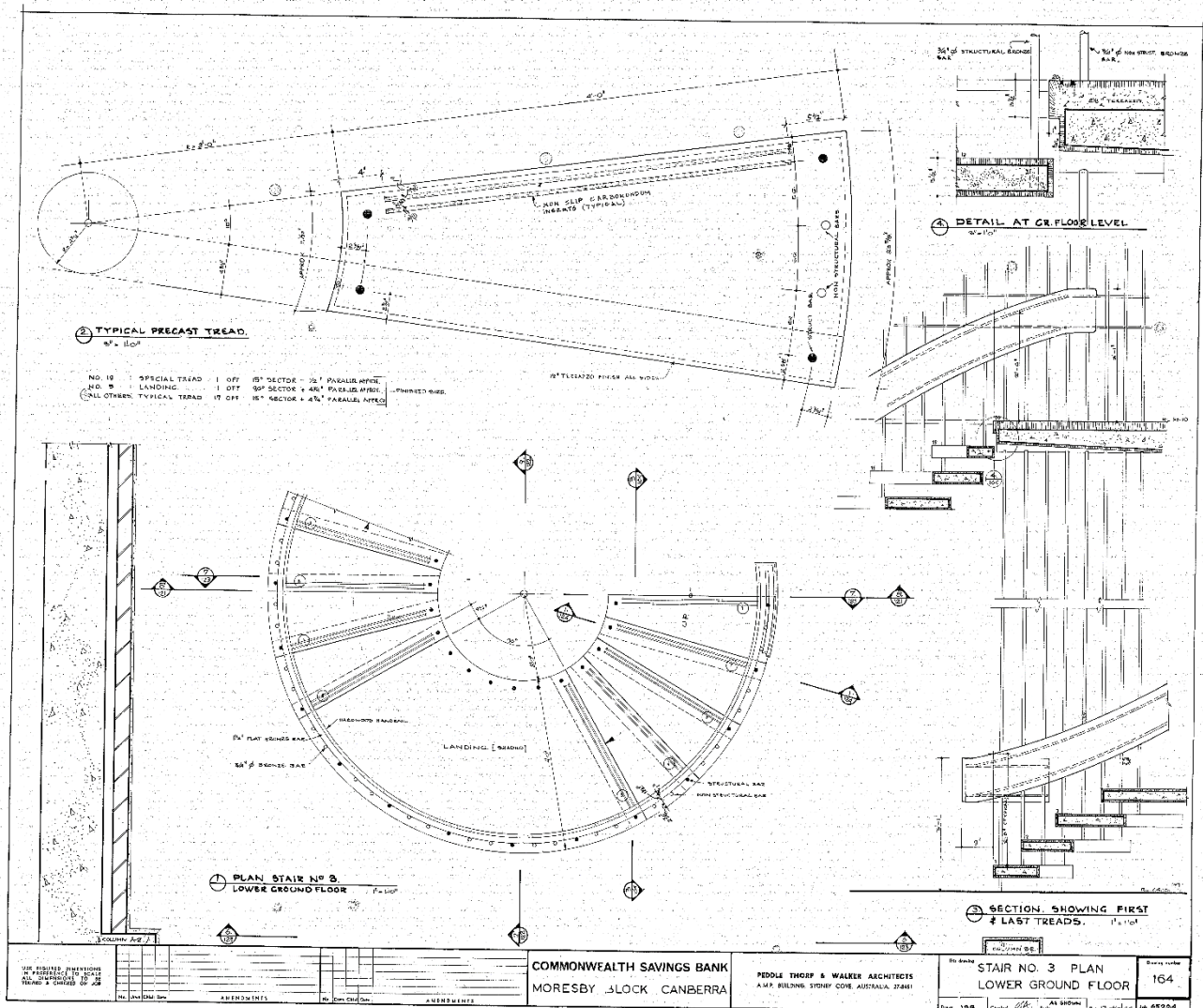
# BACKGROUND INFORMATION – FORMER COMMONWEALTH BANK BUILDING



Peddle Thompson & Walker Architects		MICRO-REPROGRAPHICS PTY. LTD. Sydney		Date
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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION – FORMER COMMONWEALTH BANK BUILDING



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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION – FORMER COMMONWEALTH BANK BUILDING

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