FORMER CBC BANK

ADDRESS: 69 High Street, Wodonga

STUDY NUMBER: 2C HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

DATE: 1960

CONDITION: Good

INTEGRITY: Good



(RBA, June 2024)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

What is significant?

The Former CBC Bank at 69 High Street, Wodonga is significant. It was designed in 1960 by the noted Melbourne-based architects Turner and Stephenson with innovative foundations (to limit damage from traffic vibrations) and constructed by B M Griffiths & Co of Albury.

The significant elements of the International style building are the massing, gabled roof clad in sheet metal, the concrete frame, symmetrical configuration of the main elevation with panels of cream brick in stretcher bond, and others with tiles, aluminium-framed openings, and two to High Street with black granite tiles. The rear elevation, single storey wing and South Street brick boundary wall are also significant.

How is it significant?

The former CBC Bank at 69 High Street, Wodonga is of historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Wodonga.

Why is it significant?

The former CBC Bank is historically significant as it a key building that reflects the post war development and expansion of the commercial centre and the township more broadly. At this time, Modernist buildings were strongly associated with progress and as such represented growing confidence in the economic future of the region. (Criterion A)

The former CBC Bank is of aesthetic significance as a fine and intact example of the International style in the commercial centre of Wodonga. Designed by leading architects, it displays an array of characteristics of Modernist design of the late postwar period in its largely cuboid form which has been articulated in a rational/ordered way with a variety of materials including cream brick, tiles, black granite, and aluminium-framed openings. (Criterion E)

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The former CBC Bank located on the corner of High Street and South Street, Wodonga, on a L-shaped parcel of land.

The International style two-storey building has a low-pitched gable roof clad in corrugated sheet metal, which is generally concealed by a parapet though visible to the rear. The building has a reinforced concrete-frame with infill panels of either cream brick in stretcher bond or aluminium-framed openings with dark cladding (tiles or marble).

There are two main elevations with the longer front façade to High Street and shorter elevation to South Street divided into equal width bays– five to the former and three to the latter. Both are symmetrical but the inverse of each other – that is, the High Street, with five bays separated by concrete piers, has brick to the outer bays whereas the South Street, with three, has brick to the central bay, currently overpainted with a mural. The South Street elevation lacks the intermediate piers so that the central brick panel sits forward of the flanking ones with openings.



Detail of tiling and relationship to brickwork and frame (RBA, June 2024)

The detailing of the bays with openings varies to each elevation, though all with three distinct bands. The uppermost band features black (ceramic) tiles in a stacked configuration with two large, fixed pane windows to the middle band. There is some variation in the lower band – to High Street there are doors and sidelight to the central bay flanked by bays with polished black

granite cladding (larger square tiles) with a narrow band of hoppers to the upper part. This format is repeated on the South Street elevation however with black (ceramic) tiles to the lower part rather than granite.

The banking chamber is reportedly a double height space within the front half of the building, and two levels of offices in the rear half.



South Street and rear elevations (RBA, June 2024)

The rear elevation is partly visible from the public domain and is largely cream brick with an upper band of aluminium-framed multi-paned windows. There is a single storey, brick section along the South Street with a recessed entry, currently infilled, and a narrow window. Both its wall and the low brick wall that extends along the street boundary have been overpainted. The rear yard is otherwise concreted for car parking.

HISTORIC THEMES

5.5 Banking and finance

HISTORY

The Bank of Victoria was established in Wodonga during 1873, at the time that the railway was extended to the township. (Dunlop, *Wodonga – over river and plain*, p94). It later became the CBC or Commercial Banking Company (Sydney).

The previous two storey bank was constructed on the site in 1876 as described in the following article (*Albury Banner and Wodonga Express*, 1876):

> *Work has been commenced by the contractor, Mr. Nation, for the erection of a new building for the Bank of Victoria, at Wodonga. The site secured for the bank is in the best portion of the town, at the corner of South and Sydney-streets, and immediately opposite the new Post and Telegraph Offices. Judging from the plans, the edifice that has been commenced will throw into the shade all the other banking institutions on the bonier, not even excepting the more pretentious*

buildings in Albury. It is to be of brick, faced with stucco, and will bear a close resemblance in dimensions and other features to the branch bank at Beechworth.



c.1943 view of original CBC Bank (Wodonga Historical Society)

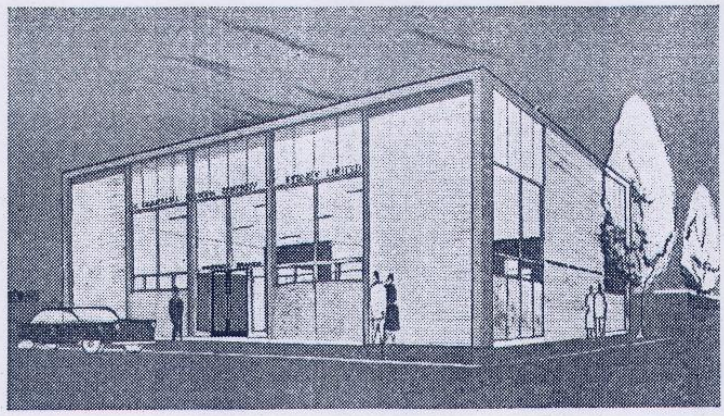


Demolition of original CBC Bank on the site, late 1950s (Wodonga Historical Society).

The new building was constructed with innovative foundations designed to prevent damage from vibrations caused by heavy transport vehicles along High Street (http://historywodonga.org.au/a-centre-of-commerce). That part of High Street was then part of the Hume Highway with a heavy traffic load (Wodonga Historical Society).

A contemporary newspaper article provides detail of the new bank. The well-lit building with open banking offices was designed by Melbourne architects, Turner and Stephenson, and combined a bright and attractive appearance with a stream-lined working layout. The banking chamber was screened from the street with panels of polished granite, light was introduced with large areas of aluminium framed glass above, and the ceilings were treated with acoustic material to reduce noise.

NEW BANK IS VERY MODERN



Special foundations will prevent this modern new building from being damaged by vibrations caused by heavy transports in High street, Wodonga.

Pictured is the new premises which are being built for the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Ltd. on the corner of High and South streets.

The new type foundations are not the only up-to-date features in the building. It has been designed by Melbourne architects Stephenson and Turner along very modern lines.

The well lit, open banking offices will combine a stream-lined working layout with a bright and attractive appearance.

Panels of polished granite will screen the banking chamber from the street and large areas of aluminium framed glass above them will allow the maximum light into the office.

Brick panels from ground to roof at each end of the High street frontage and in the centre of the South street frontage will complete the clean simplicity of the design.

LARGE BANKING CHAMBER

The banking chamber will be a large open space with a 15 feet ceiling, entered through a glazed porch on High street.

Ceilings will be treated with acoustic material to reduce noise and other modern installations will include flush-fitting fluorescent lighting and sun-resistant glass windows.

Fittings will be of Queensland maple, with glass screens supported in extruded aluminium standards and flooring will be vinyl tiling. Modern color schemes will aid working efficiency by forming a restful and attractive background.

Amenities rooms, including a lunch room with conveniences, have been designed for the staff.

The manager, Mr A. S. Blackett-Smith, said yesterday that the growth of the district and the bank's business had made the old premises unsatisfactory because of insufficient space.

Provision had been made for a mechanised ledger system to provide customers with convenient statements instead of the old hand written pass books.

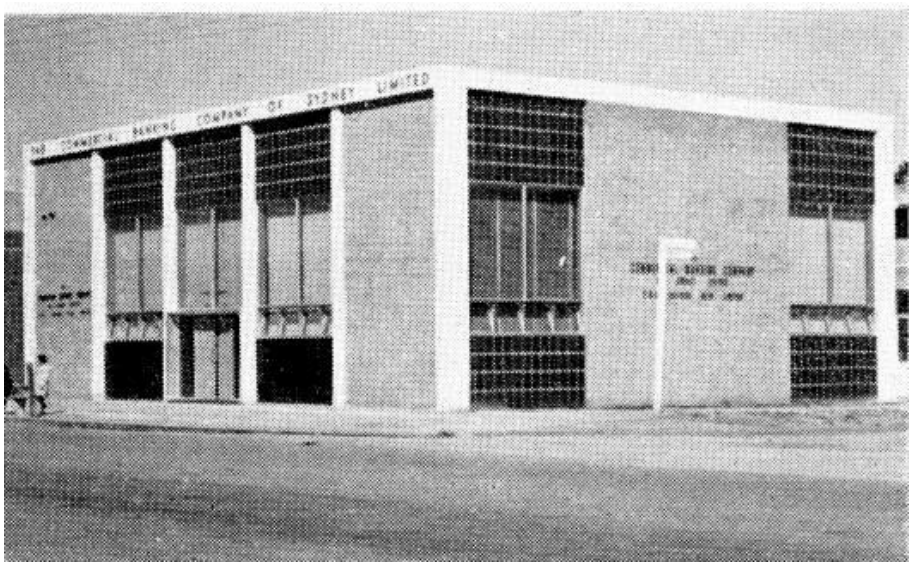
Provision had also been made for the bank's subsidiary, the CBC Savings Bank Limited.

MANAGER'S HOME COMPLETED

A manager's residence at the rear of the bank, facing South street, has been completed. It is a two-storey brick building, concealed behind a five-foot brick wall giving a pleasant background for the garden view from the lounge and ensuring privacy on the ground floor.

The builders are B. M. Griffiths and Co. Pty. Ltd., of Albury.

Contemporary newspaper article detailing the new CBC bank (Wodonga Historical Society).



Newspaper cutting of completed building in 1960 (Wodonga Historical Society)

The bank closed in the early 1980s and has since operated as several retail (including video hire and framing shop), commercial and community functions.

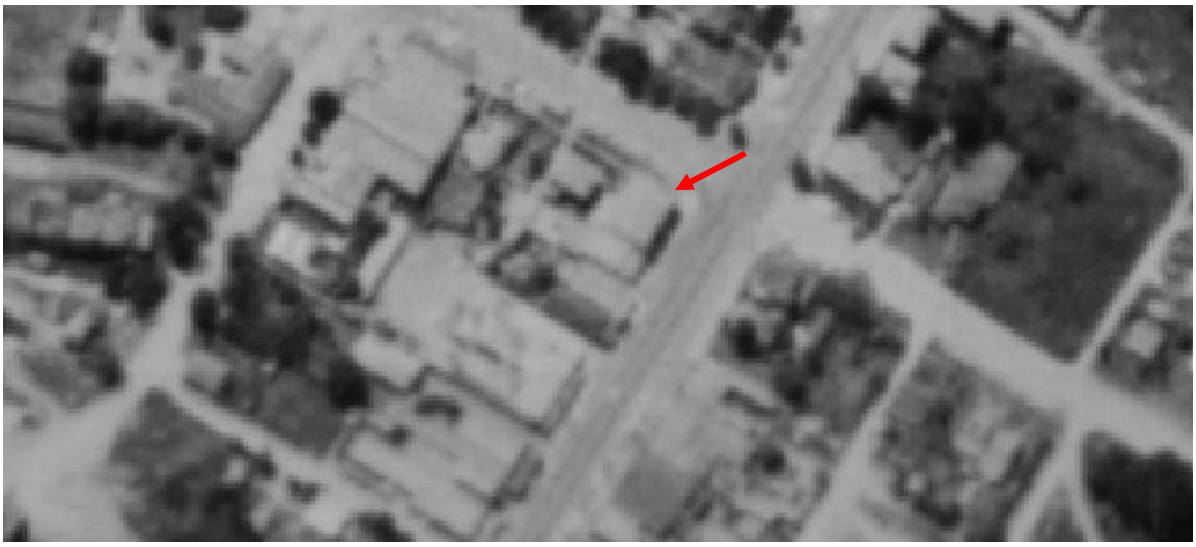
Vertical aluminium louvres (brise-soleil) were installed to the main windows during the late 20th century but were removed circa 2020.



View of former CBC Bank in 2003, including window awnings, since removed (Randell & Pennay, 2004)



View of former CBC Bank in 2005 (Wodonga Historical Society)



1963 aerial with arrow indicating location of subject place. (CAD8, Run 2, Frame 269, Geoscience Australia)

COMPARISON

The former CBC Bank at 69 High Street, Wodonga is rare as a distinctive example of the International style in the municipality. It is one of only a few buildings from the second half of the 20th century to be included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay, with others of a similar time being.

- HO35: Peacock Smash Repairs, 79 Elgin Boulevard, Wodonga. Built during the 1950s, this two storey office/showrooms has a skillion roof and a main elevation which is largely glazed with timber-framed openings beneath a wide soffits. (not sure about the address, inconsistency with image in one of the versions of the citation)
- HO47: Former Council Office (Café Grove), 198A High Street, Wodonga, 1957. This two storey brick building has curved walls and banks of steel-framed windows and is indicative of the Functionalist style, popular during the mid-20th century.

EXTENT OF LISTING

The existing former bank building, adjoining brick retaining wall and surrounding land located within a portion of Crown Allotment2 TP819128.



(Nearmap, 22 June 2024)

PLANNING SCHEME CONTROLS

Planning Controls	Y/N
External Paint Controls Apply?	N
Internal Alteration Controls Apply?	N
Tree Controls Apply?	N
Solar Energy System Controls?	Y
Outbuildings or Fences Not Exempt Under Clause 43.01-4?	Y – Wall to South Street
Included on the Victorian Heritage Register Under the Heritage Act 2017?	N
Prohibited Uses Permitted?	Y
Aboriginal Heritage Place?	N

REFERENCES

Alan J Dunlop, *Wodonga – over river and plain (*1976), Hawthorn Press

Randell, F. & Pennay, B. (2004) Stage 1 Wodonga City Council, Victorian Heritage Study, Volume I, Thematic Environmental History.

Wodonga Historical Society Archives, 2022.

A Centre of Commerce, Wodonga Historical Society (historywodonga.org.au)

'NEW BANK AT WODONGA', *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express*, 19 August 1876, p12