



## MELBOURNE PLACE

**Address:** 130 Russell St, Melbourne VIC 3000  
**Architects:** Kennedy Nolan  
**Completed:** 2025

The award-winning Melbourne Place references the distinct brick-and-masonry identity of the city's east end. It demonstrates a thoughtful response to place, borrowing language from its adjacent buildings, such as the T&G Building, Cavendish House and the neighbouring Hero Apartments. From its urban response to its interior details, the building reinforces a delightful composition of space, volume, light, colour and texture to establish a highly intricate and expressive interpretation of place.

**Features to observe:**

- Texturally rich materials contributing to a highly expressive and distinct building
- Exceptional consideration of design detail and the human scale
- Interiors showcasing locally sourced materials and custom-designed fixtures and furnishings

Photo credit: Kristoffer Paulsen



## 120 COLLINS STREET REVITALISATION

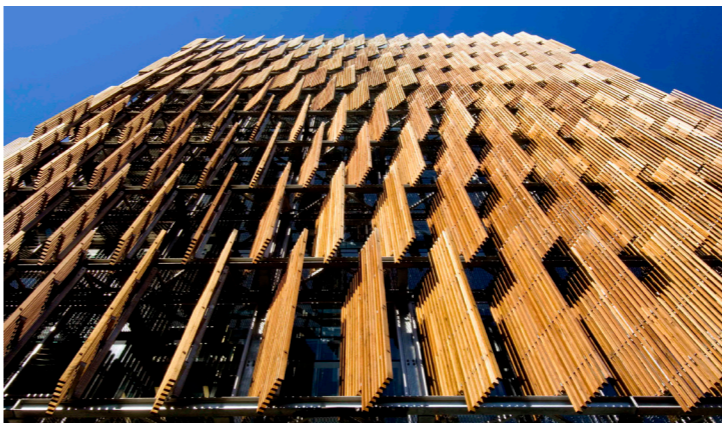
**Address:** 120 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000  
**Landscape Architects:** Hassell Studio  
**Completed:** 2024

Awarded by the AILA 2025 Landscape Architecture Award for Small Projects, this courtyard garden demonstrates the civic value of small green spaces. Thoughtfully designed as a secluded retreat, it offers a quiet respite amid the city's office towers. This showcases the civic importance of small-scale gardens in the renewal of commercial precincts. Publicly accessible, contextually responsive, green, and human-scaled, this space exemplifies a welcoming public space.

**Features to observe:**

- Thoughtfully arranged urban seating, contributing to spatial experience and sense of comfort
- Well-considered urban lighting, contributing to safety, activation and accessibility
- Use of timber for sustainability and adaptability overtime

Photo credit: Peter Bennetts and Hassell Studio



## COUNCIL HOUSE 2

**Address:** 240 Little Collins St, Melbourne VIC 3000  
**Architects:** City Design and DesignInc  
**Completed:** 2016

Council House 2 (CH2) is an innovative pilot building driven by City of Melbourne's Zero Net Emissions by 2020 Strategy. Completed in 2006, CH2 was a 'lighthouse project' aiming to raise the benchmark on sustainable initiatives of future commercial office buildings. Through experimentation, trial and observation, CH2 contributed to the progress of biophilic design, environmentally sustainable practices and co-design charrettes that exemplify the value of interdisciplinary collaboration.

**Features to observe:**

- High quality indoor environment and amenities
- Retail tenancies contributing to an activated ground floor
- Ambitious sustainable building initiatives

SELF-GUIDED TOUR



Photo credit: Peter Clarke

# DESIGN EXCELLENCE POCKET BOOK



## HERO APARTMENTS

**Address:** 118 Russell St, Melbourne VIC 3000  
**Architects:** Fender Katsalidis  
**Completed:** 2001

The heritage listed Hero Apartments building, previously the Russell Street Telephone Exchange and Post Office, played a crucial role for City of Melbourne's planning policy: Postcode 3000. Initiated in the early 1990s, this policy aimed to attract residential population back to the city during a time when retail moved out to suburban shopping malls, and the city was seen as a place for work. The building helped support the policy by providing attractive apartments for people to live in.

**Features to observe:**

- Retail tenancies to create an active ground floor
- Use of brick as a durable material, allowing for adaptability over time
- Billboard-scale public art installation invites local artists to showcase art on the prominent street frontage

Photo credit: Peter Berzanskis



## THE LYCEUM CLUB

**Address:** Ridgway Pl Melbourne VIC 3000  
**Architects:** Kerstin Thompson Architects  
**Completed:** 2018

This award-winning adaptation of Ellison Harvie's modernist building critically engages with the established landscape of the Melbourne Club across the lane. Framing the neighbouring trees through a mullion window, the facade brings the outside in, while establishing a considered dialogue between the old and new. This project demonstrates an excellent contextual response, underpinned by its sensitive approach to heritage, resulting in an elegant celebration of place, building and history.

**Features to observe:**

- Sensitive and critical approach to heritage
- Exceptional urban response, connecting the building to its wider landscape
- Careful consideration of materiality and structure resulting in robust and enduring design

Photo credit: Derek Swalwell



## 80 COLLINS STREET

**Address:** 80 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000  
**Architects:** Woods Bagot, Seventh Wave, UN Studio, Jouin Manku  
**Completed:** 2020

80 Collins Street is the first mixed-use city block introduced to this end of Collins Street in over two decades. The design of this retrofitted development reinforces the street wall character of Little Collins Street and addresses the human-scale through use of high-quality textural materials. The internal links are an excellent example of publicly accessible, privately owned space that improves ground floor connectivity and activation.

**Features to observe:**

- Through-block laneways improve the walkability of the broader city block
- Improved safety through activation and elimination of dark undercrofts
- Continuous grade public space connects seamlessly to its surrounding streets

Photo credit: Trevor Mein

This pocket book illustrates examples of excellent design in central Melbourne.

The buildings and spaces encompass old and new, demonstrating how architectural styles and approaches have evolved, and continue to evolve, in the city.



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## DESIGN EXCELLENCE WALKING TOUR

Begin at the award-winning **(1) Council House 2**, Australia's first 6-star Green Star project. Completed in 2016, the building was a collaboration between the City of Melbourne's City Design team and local practice DesignInc.

Head east to the intersection of Little Collins Street and Russell Street. **(2) The Hero Apartments** designed by Fender Katsalidis champions adaptive reuse, where six stories of additional built form were added to the top of the 1948 Melbourne Telephone Exchange and Post Office, to create one of Melbourne's most iconic inner-city apartments.

Stop at the recently opened **(3) Melbourne Place** on Russell Street, designed by Kennedy Nolan. The new mixed-use development offers urban lifestyle accommodation, exemplary dining experiences and contemporary retailers in the heart of the city. A rooftop dinner at Mid Air offers amazing views of the city skyline, through a distinct pair of round, brick eyes!

Head south to the corner staircase between Russell Street and Little Collins Street, entering the recently revitalised **(4) 120 Collins Street** by Hassell Studio. Alternately, make your way around to St. Michael's Walk by the side of the Uniting Church for a ramped access.

Find yourself in the lush secluded garden, pause, and enjoy a moment of respite while sitting on one of the slatted timber nooks. Explore the newly revitalised foyer, noticing the heritage backdrop of the old Professional Chambers building, now contained in a modern interior fitted with a series of new stainless-steel canopies.

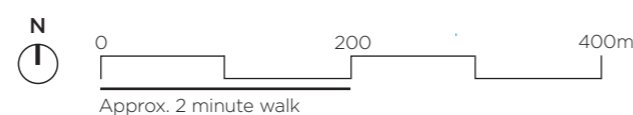
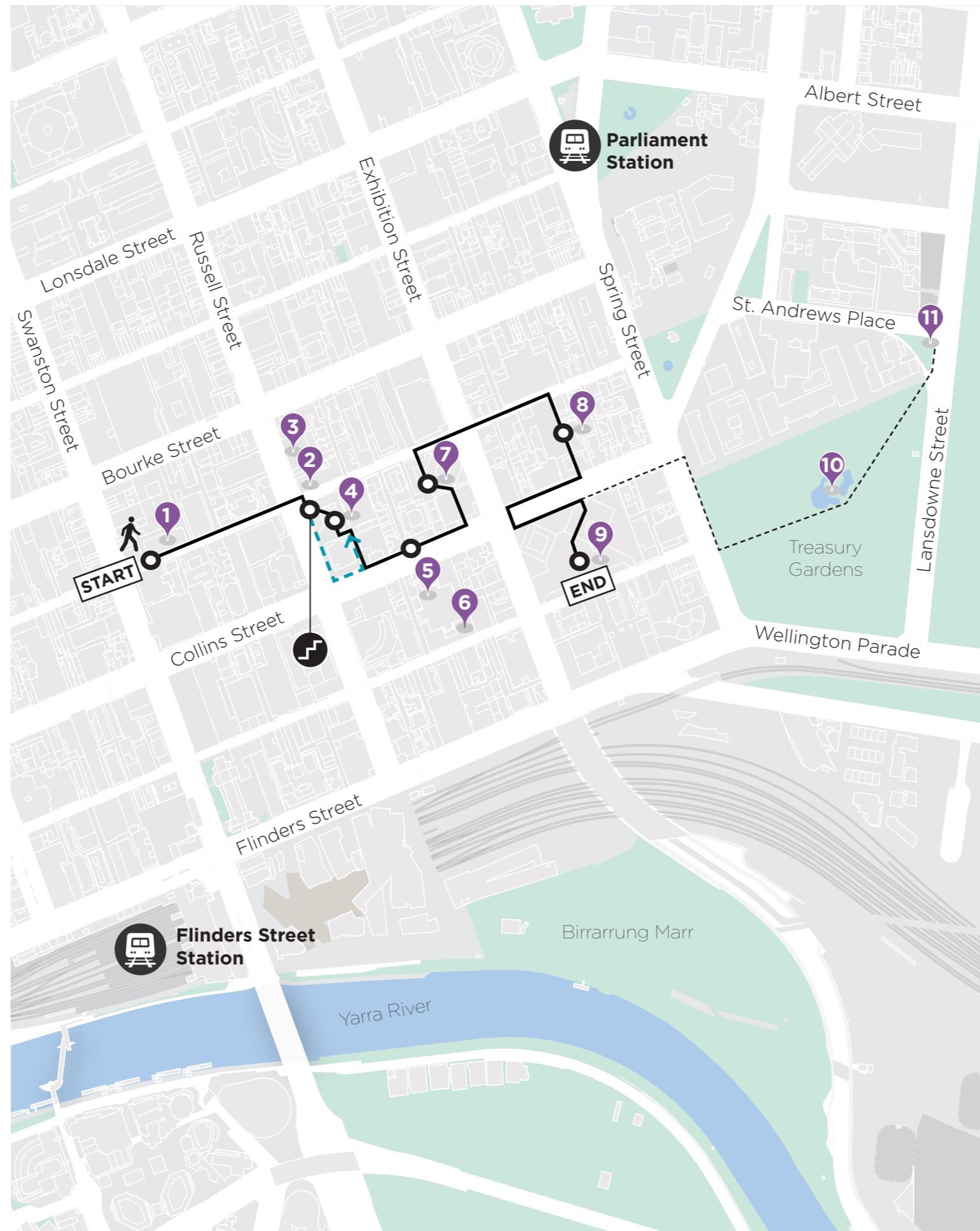
Make your way to the grand entrance of **(5) 101 Collins Street**, designed by Denton Corker Marshall and completed in 1991. Marvel at the grand podium of one of Melbourne's most prestigious office towers, and peek into its recently refurbished foyer by Bates Smart. Publicly accessible during the week, enjoy the expansive foyer filled with notable artworks and a hidden **(6) East Garden** by landscape architects Openwork.

Continue to **(7) 80 Collins Street**, a mixed-use precinct designed in collaboration with international firms Jouin Manku, Seventh Wave, UNStudio and local practice Woods Bagot. Four separate uses, including a new commercial tower, hotel, existing commercial tower renovation and a new permeable ground floor podium, have been intimately woven to form a precinct. An internal laneway lined with cafes, shopfronts, doors and windows invites the city's street life within and contributes to a unique public offering.

Head towards Ridgway Place, where Kerstin Thompson Architect's addition of **(8) The Lyceum Club** hovers quietly over the laneway. It peers into the landscape hidden behind Melbourne Club's brick wall, bringing the outside in, as if transforming its interiors into a conservatory. Notice the contemporary addition to Alison Harvie's modernist building, a contrasting and distinctive mullion window wall with rhythms that take cue from the original building. An example of excellent design that showcases the evolution of Melbourne's existing structures.

Finally, head to **(9) The Great Space** on Collins Place. This mixed-use plaza was designed by international architect I.M. Pei in collaboration with Bates Smart and completed in 1981. One of Melbourne's best examples of city-shaping podiums, where mixed commercial uses are connected with a network of internal streets to form a public plaza. Take note of **35 Collins Street** by Grimshaw, a recent urban transformation of the podium's façade and forecourt. End your trip with a coffee at **Dame**. Grab a seat and marvel at the cool glazed space frame, reminiscent of Pei's famous Louvre Pyramid, at Melbourne's 'Paris End'.

Want to keep exploring? Take detours to some of the city's most thoughtful landscape additions, including **(10) Victorian Emergency Services Memorial** by Rush Wright Associates and **(11) Victorian Family Violence Memorial** by Openwork and MUIR Architecture.



Access and opening hours for all venues and spaces may vary. Please check with the venue before arriving.

Information correct at time of printing, July 2025.

# WHAT IS DESIGN EXCELLENCE?

The City of Melbourne's Design Excellence Program promotes the value of excellent design across Melbourne's built environment. Every new building and public space has the potential to improve our quality of life, attract investment and elevate the city's reputation as a design city.

The program responds to our Council Plan 2021-25 and includes the Melbourne Design Review Panel, the Design Excellence Advisory Committee, design competitions, awards and advocacy. These initiatives work to improve the quality of Melbourne's architecture, landscape architecture and urban design by:

- Advocating for design excellence across industry, academia and the community
- Recognising and rewarding design excellence
- Shaping and influencing significant private developments
- Supporting creativity and innovation in design
- Promoting the value of excellent design in contributing to thriving communities

## Legend

- Design Excellence location
- Guided tour route
- Guided tour stops
- Optional route
- Accessible entrance
- Stair entrance
- Train station

## Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners

The City of Melbourne respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land we govern, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong / Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge and honour the unbroken spiritual, cultural and political connection they have maintained to this unique place for more than 2000 generations.

We accept the invitation in the Uluru Statement from the Heart and are committed to walking together to build a better future.