



*Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works*

**REPORT**

relating to the

DEPARTMENT OF THE SENATE	
PARAGRAPH NO.	1866
DATE	16 NOV 1983
FILE NO.	
<i>W. H. ...</i>	
166	

**AUSTRALIAN WHEAT BOARD  
ACCOMMODATION AT  
CERES HOUSE,  
528 LONSDALE STREET,  
MELBOURNE  
FOR HEAD OFFICE AND  
VICTORIAN BRANCH**

(Seventh Report of 1983)

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THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA  
PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

R E P O R T

relating to the

AUSTRALIAN WHEAT BOARD  
ACCOMMODATION AT  
CERES HOUSE,  
528 LONSDALE STREET,  
MELBOURNE  
FOR HEAD OFFICE AND  
VICTORIAN BRANCH

(Seventh Report of 1983)

MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON PUBLIC WORKS

(Twenty-Seventh Committee)

Senator Dominic John Foreman (Chairman)

The Honourable Wallace Clyde Fife, M.P. (Vice-Chairman)

Senate

House of Representatives

Senator Gerry Norman Jones	David Bruce Cowan, Esq., M.P.
Senator Bernard Francis Kilgariff	Peter Hertford Drummond, Esq., M.P. Leonard Joseph Keogh, Esq., M.P. Eamon John Lindsay, Esq., M.P. John Saunderson, Esq., M.P.

EXTRACT FROM

THE VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
NO. 22 DATED 15 SEPTEMBER 1983

6. PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE - REFERENCE OF WORK -  
ACCOMMODATION FOR AUSTRALIAN WHEAT BOARD,  
MELBOURNE, VIC.: Mr Hurford (Minister for Housing  
and Construction), pursuant to notice, moved -  
That, in accordance with the provisions of the  
Public Works Committee Act 1969, the following  
proposed work be referred to the Parliamentary  
Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration  
and report: Australian Wheat Board accommodation at  
Ceres House, 528 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, for  
Head Office and Victorian Branch.

Mr Hurford presented plans in connection with the  
proposed work.

Question - put and passed.

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WITNESSES

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PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

AUSTRALIAN WHEAT BOARD ACCOMMODATION AT CERES HOUSE,  
528 LONSDALE STREET, MELBOURNE, FOR HEAD OFFICE  
AND VICTORIAN BRANCH

R E P O R T

By resolution on 15 September 1983 the House of Representatives referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration and report: Australian Wheat Board accommodation at Ceres House, 528 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, for Head Office and Victorian Branch.

The Committee has the honour to report as follows:

THE REFERENCE

1. The proposal referred to the Committee is for the construction of a further five levels to the existing building and extensive renovations to Ceres House, Melbourne, to enable the accommodation requirements of the Head and Victorian offices of the Australian Wheat Board to be met on the one site. The refurbished building will provide eight levels of office accommodation, a semi-basement and roof level plant room.
2. The estimated cost of the proposed work is \$7.17 million at June 1983 prices.

THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION

3. The Committee received written submissions and drawings from the Australian Wheat Board, the Department of Housing and Construction and the Department of Administrative Services and took evidence from their representatives at a public hearing in Canberra on 17 October 1983.

4. On 10 October 1983 a Sectional Committee inspected the present accommodation of the Australian Wheat Board Head Office, 179 Queen Street, Melbourne, and Victorian Branch at Marland House, 570 Bourke Street, Melbourne; technical facilities at 69 Yarra Bank Road, South Melbourne, and the existing facilities at Ceres House, 528 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne.

5. The Committee's proceedings will be printed as Minutes of Evidence.

BACKGROUND

6. The Australian Wheat Board is a Statutory Authority established to provide orderly marketing for the Australian wheat industry. Although the Board was created in 1939 under National Security Regulations to control the disposal of the Australian wheat crop in time of war it has, since 1948, derived its authority from complementary Commonwealth and State legislation, re-enacted at five-yearly intervals. The Board currently operates under the Wheat Marketing Act which received royal assent in November 1979 and will be effective until 1984.

7. Essentially, the legislation provides for wheat marketing, the main features of the system being

- delivery of grain by growers to Authorised Receivers; the Australian Wheat Board becoming sole owner of the delivered wheat;
- borrowing of funds by the Board to make first advances to growers;
- the initial payment to growers for their wheat on delivery;
- further payment as the proceeds from sales are received;
- fixing price of wheat sold for human consumption under provisions of the Wheat Marketing Act 1979 according to an index of costs, and setting the price of wheat for stockfeed and industrial prices.

8. Each State has a single bulk handling authority which acts as sole receiving agent for the Australian Wheat Board. Most shipping terminals and port storages are owned and operated by the State authorities.

9. Functions of the Australian Wheat Board The functions of the Australian Wheat Board are:

- to acquire and market the Australian wheat crop (other than wheat retained for on-farm consumption) and return the net proceeds to wheat growers through seasonal pools;

(4)

- to control the export of wheat and wheat products from Australia;
- to manage and control the receipt, handling, storage, treatment and transfer of wheat in liaison with the Bulk Handling Authorities in the States; and
- to provide an administrative base for the implementation of stabilization and assistance arrangements.

10. In addition to the major marketing function, the Head Office is involved in policy formulation, overall management of Board offices including co-ordination of the activities of the six State Branch Offices, the borrowing and investment of Board funds, planning and economic research, the provision and co-ordination of technical services and the provision of centralised accounting systems.

11. The State Branches are concerned with payments to growers, local field operations, shipping and stocks programming, domestic marketing and relations with the Bulk Handling Authorities and other bodies associated with the wheat industry at State level.

12. Wheat is Australia's most valuable crop and Australia is a major producer of wheat for international trading. Funding requirements have been as much as \$2000 million for a single year, and are forecast to be even higher in 1983/84. In view of the large amounts involved, significant returns can accrue to growers by achieving marginal savings in funding the crop and by enhancement of marketing capabilities.

(5)

13. Accommodation History The Australian Wheat Board acquired Ceres House in 1961 to accommodate Head Office and Victorian Branch staff. Due to accommodation pressures, Victorian Branch moved to leased premises at Marland House, 590 Bourke Street, in 1980, and Head Office to leased premises at Security House, 179 Queen Street, in 1982. Both of these premises are now at or near capacity.

14. The decision to redevelop Ceres House is a recent development. The option of extending Ceres House to its full structural capacity was considered in 1971 but not pursued. In 1980 the Board sought to acquire land in Royal Parade, Parkville, but, that site proving to be unsuitable, the Board subsequently purchased land at 20-22 Queens Road, South Melbourne, in 1981. However, after an extensive evaluation of accommodation options, during which the Board consulted with the Department of Housing and Construction, the decision was taken in 1982 to proceed with the re-development of Ceres House. Head Office and Victorian Branch laboratory facilities were subsequently moved to leased premises at 69 Yarra Bank Road, South Melbourne.

#### THE NEED

15. Growth in Activities The last decade has seen most significant increases in the Board's Head Office activities, reflected in the legislative provisions of the Wheat Marketing Act 1979 and the Wheat Marketing Amendment Acts of 1982 and 1983. Major features in this development have been

- operations on the domestic and international money markets to fund the crop acquired from growers and to invest temporarily surplus funds;
- operations on the wheat and financial futures markets;



- greater flexibility and increased complexity of marketing operations;
- increased requirements for technical infrastructure such as laboratory facilities and computing to support the increasingly sophisticated operations of the Board.

16. Reflecting this development of the Board's activities, the staff has increased markedly. The combined Head Office/Victorian Branch staff had increased from 99 in 1970 to 161 in 1981 and to 197 in 1983. Forecast staff required in the year 2000 is 240.

17. Existing Facilities Ceres House provides some 2950 square metres of available office space compared to a minimum requirement of 4240 square metres at present, increasing to an estimated 4410 square metres in 1985. The building is some 25 years old and in need of refurbishment.

18. The Board is currently leasing space at three locations.

- Head Office is located at Security House, 179 Queen Street. Space available is 3297 square metres spread over four floors. There is very little flexibility to allow for future growth in staff. The accommodation is occupied under a three-year lease terminating in January 1985 at an annual rental of \$298,800. There is only limited provision for car-parking and the presence of other tenants in the building with access to the Board's area presents security problems. There is no strong-room.

- The Victorian Branch of the Board is accommodated in Marland House, 570 Bourke Street, Melbourne. Currently, 34 staff are accommodated in rather cramped conditions in 465 square metres of space. The current lease extends to June 1985 at an annual rental of \$72,500.
- Preparatory to the Ceres House redevelopment, the Victorian Branch and Head Office quality monitoring facilities have been moved to Commonwealth premises at 69 Yarra Bank Road, South Melbourne. The premises are also used for records storage and will provide space for parking Wheat Board Vehicles during the redevelopment. The lease on this accommodation expires in December 1984 and rental is on a "peppercorn" basis.

19. Present leased office accommodation provides little scope for future expansion and the separation of Head Office, Victorian Branch, laboratory facilities and car parking leads to inefficiencies and increased costs.

20. Summary of Accommodation Space available and required, is set out below:

	<u>Square metres</u>
<u>Available</u>	
- leased accommodation at 179 Queen Street	3297
leased accommodation at 570 Bourke Street	465
leased accommodation at 69 Yarra Bank Road	<u>800</u>
	4562
- presently available at Ceres House	<u>2950</u>

Future Needs

- 1985 Head Office/Victorian Branch requirement	4410
- Year 2000 Requirement	4670
- Total space after development of Ceres House (See paragraph 42)	<u>5795</u>
- Space available for leasing/expansion	<u>1125</u>

21. Accommodation Requirements Development of the Board's financial operations requires extensive contact with major financial institutions located in the central business district of Melbourne. Location of the Head Office of the Board in the central business district significantly assists the Board's financial operations.
22. Co-location of Head Office and Victorian Branches will bring about greater efficiency and enable economies to be achieved through the sharing of facilities and services.
23. The Australian Wheat Board operates in a sophisticated and competitive international market. The accommodation should be of a standard appropriate to receive, negotiate with and provide hospitality to delegations and visitors and to reflect Australia's position as a significant wheat trading country.
24. The accommodation must provide security arrangements to safeguard conferences, negotiations, documents and communications which are politically, economically or commercially sensitive at a national and international level. Also, strongroom protection is required for a large volume of negotiable securities, accounting documents and computer data. Adequate security is more readily achieved in premises occupied or controlled solely by the Board and designed to enable access to be controlled and tenants to be isolated from Wheat Board accommodation.

25. Car parking within the premises is an important requirement both from the point of view of efficiency of operations and to provide discrete access for sensitive visiting delegations. 25 spaces are required.

26. A ground floor location is desirable for Victorian Branch to promote access for significant numbers of the public associated with the wheat industry. Ground floor space should also be provided to accommodate promotional displays. Confinement of such public activity to the ground floor is also desirable from a security viewpoint.

27. There is an expanding requirement for technical facilities to support the Board's competitive position in the market. There is a need for increased quality monitoring activity to improve product knowledge, quality control procedures and customer servicing. An increased need for grain storage and hygiene monitoring facilities is also foreseen. Location of the associated laboratory facilities together and in close proximity to the marketing organisation will accelerate the development of the Board's capability in this area and enhance the corporate image of the Board.

28. Summary There has been a growth of the Australian Wheat Board's activities. There are a number of costs and inefficiencies of conducting these activities in three separate locations.

29. Committee's Conclusion There is a need to provide accommodation for the Head Office, Victorian Branch and quality monitoring facilities of the Australian Wheat Board in the one location.

CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

30. In 1981 the Australian Wheat Board had purchased land at 20-22 Queens Road, South Melbourne, with a view to its possible development to meet the accommodation needs of the Board. Optimal development of the site would have required a building considerably larger than required. Its location outside the central business district also made the site unattractive. The site is currently on the market and the proceeds of the sale will be offset against the cost of the project.

31. The Board investigated the availability of a building which could be wholly leased. No suitable building could be identified. Such a solution would have required substantial investment to fit the building out to meet its special requirements. On the basis of a discounted cash flow analysis the Department of Administrative Services believed that the redevelopment of Ceres House was more economic than leasing alternative premises.

32. In 1982 the Board considered the purchase of another building, ACI House at 550 Bourke Street, Melbourne. However, at an asking price of \$12 million, and a further \$4.5 million being required to refurbish it to meet the Board's requirements it was considered uneconomic. When the asking price was reported to have dropped to \$8.5 million the Board was prepared to initiate negotiations but the building was sold before these were commenced. In the opinion of the Department of Administrative Services a building suitable for the Wheat Board's purposes would only rarely become available for purchase.

33. The Department of Administrative Services also evaluated the development of yet another site, 251 William Street, which was on the market at \$1.2 million. Due mainly to savings which could be achieved by using existing structural fabric and foundations at

Ceres House, the additional cost of providing a similarly sized building at the William Street site was estimated to be \$0.95 million. This evaluation satisfied the Department that redevelopment of Ceres House was at least as economic as development at another site.

34. A range of possible developments at the Ceres House site was evaluated by the Department of Administrative Services. These included demolition of the present building with an optimal redevelopment, and a four floor extension which would meet the forecast accommodation requirement to the year 2000. The former would cost some \$3.5 million more than the development proposed, would be considerably larger than required, and would have taken longer to complete than any other option. Discounted cash flow analysis indicated that a five floor extension had a considerable economic advantage over a four floor extension.

35. The Preferred Option Ceres House is wholly owned by the Australian Wheat Board and located in the central business district in a block bounded by Lonsdale, William, La Trobe and King Streets. When Flagstaff Station is completed this area will become increasingly attractive to developers, and property values are expected to increase. The site is well situated in terms of access to transport facilities and several international hotels are conveniently located nearby.

36. The building consists of a semi-basement carpark and plant room, a ground floor and two upper floors. The original design allowed for the future vertical additional of six floors. The general condition of the building is good, although upgrading of the existing services would be required with the redevelopment. The Department of Housing and Construction has tested the present building and found it adequate to take the additional structure.

37. Summary The Australian Wheat Board has investigated a number of options and recommended that redevelopment of Ceres House, 528 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, was the best solution.

38. Committee's Conclusion The Committee agrees that the redevelopment of Ceres House is the best alternative.

#### THE PROPOSAL

39. The proposal is to renovate and extend the Australian Wheat Board building, Ceres House, at 528 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, to accommodate Head Office and Victorian Branch.

40. The existing building will be extensively renovated and the structure extended by five floors set back from the Lonsdale Street boundary. The extension is within the design capacity of the existing structure.

41. The service core of the existing building will be relocated to improve the flexibility of partitioning layouts on all floors and two additional lifts, service ducts, fire escape stairs and toilets will be provided. The facades will be reconstructed to match those of the extension, using low maintenance materials.

42. The redeveloped building will provide a usable floor area of 5795 square metres and parking space for 25 cars. The planned utilisation of the building is as follows:

- the semi-basement will contain carparking, electrical sub-station, switchboard and fire services plant and equipment;
- the ground floor will contain the main entrance foyer and offices for the Victorian Branch;

- the first to sixth floors will provide office space for use by the Head Office. Initially, surplus space of the order of 1100 square metres will be available for rental;

- the seventh floor will contain executive functions including the Boardroom, Board Members lounge and dining facilities, the Chairman's suite and the General Manager's suite;

- the roof will house the main plant room for the building.

43. Provision will be made for computing activities and laboratory facilities. Built-in fitments to special areas are included in the limit of cost estimate. Standards of finish will be incorporated appropriate to the commercial and representational role of the Board.

44. The design will provide for the sharing of facilities by the Victorian Branch and Head Office. These facilities will include:

- technical library;
- training room;
- recreation and canteen area;
- personnel and office services;
- computer;
- strong room.

45. The building will be accessible to disabled people. The main entrance will incorporate a suitably graded and surfaced pedestrian ramp and a lift will serve the semi-basement carpark. Toilet and washroom facilities will be provided in accordance with Australian Standard AS1428 - "Design Rules for Access by the Disabled". Construction details are contained in Appendix "A".

46. The building will be designed with consideration being given to known or likely development of adjacent sites. Siting details and building sketches are at Drawings A-C.

47. The Department of Home Affairs and Environment has advised that the proposal does not require an Environmental Impact Statement. State and Local Authorities have been consulted to ensure that the project complies with relevant regulations.

48. Committee's Conclusion The scope of the development should meet the Wheat Board's expanding requirements, and enable the Head Office and Victorian Branch to be co-located, resulting in increased efficiency including the sharing of facilities and services.

#### ESTIMATED COST

49. The estimated cost of the proposed work is \$7.17 million at June 1983 prices made up as follows:

	\$M
Building work	4.050
Mechanical and Fire services	1.500
Electrical services	550
Lifts	550
Fitout	<u>520</u>
TOTAL	7.170

#### PROGRAM

50. The anticipated time for documentation and construction is 2 years from the approval to proceed.

51. Committee's Recommendation The Committee recommends the construction of the work in this reference.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

52. The recommendations and conclusions of the Committee and the paragraph in the report to which each refers is set out below:

	<u>Paragraph</u>
1. THERE IS A NEED TO PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION FOR THE HEAD OFFICE, VICTORIAN BRANCH AND QUALITY MONITORING FACILITIES OF THE AUSTRALIAN WHEAT BOARD IN THE ONE LOCATION.	29
2. THE COMMITTEE AGREES THAT THE REDEVELOPMENT OF CERES HOUSE IS THE BEST ALTERNATIVE.	38
3. THE SCOPE OF THE DEVELOPMENT SHOULD MEET THE WHEAT BOARD'S EXPANDING REQUIREMENTS, AND ENABLE THE HEAD OFFICE AND VICTORIAN BRANCH TO BE CO-LOCATED, RESULTING IN INCREASED EFFICIENCY INCLUDING THE SHARING OF FACILITIES AND SERVICES.	48
4. THE ESTIMATED COST OF THE PROPOSED WORK IS \$7.17 MILLION AT JUNE 1983 PRICES.	49
5. THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WORK IN THIS REFERENCE.	51

*D.J. Foreman*  
(D.J. FOREMAN)  
Chairman

Parliamentary Standing Committee  
on Public Works,  
Parliament House,  
CANBERRA

10 November 1983

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

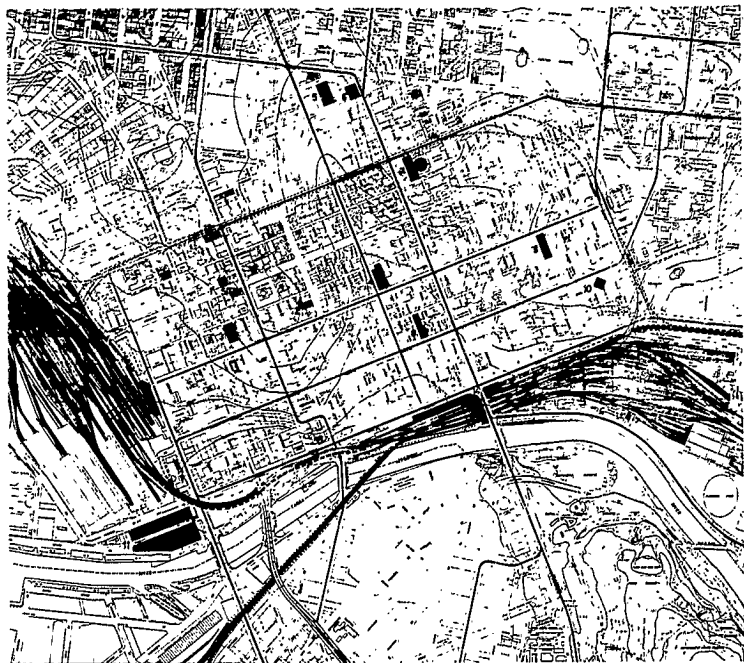
1. Materials and Finishes The external walls will be clad with insulated light weight metal panels. The east and west boundary walls, will be in situ concrete rendered and painted to match the colour of the panels. Windows will be tinted glass to the north elevation and clear glass to the south elevation.
2. Internal walls to offices will be finished with painted plasterboard. Acoustic walls will be provided to special areas and rendered concrete block walls to core areas and plant rooms.
3. Floor finishes will consist of carpet for the general office areas, board rooms, conference room and library, vinyl will be used for kitchen and research and testing areas, ceramic tiles have been selected for tea rooms, shower and toilet areas, and paving slabs will be used for the front entrance and forecourt.
4. Suspended acoustic ceilings will be used for all occupied areas. Ceiling for the carpark, stores and plant rooms will be off-form concrete.
5. The roof will be insulated metal decking and terraces will be paved as outdoor accessible areas.
6. Structural Engineering The existing structure, consisting of a concrete encased steel frame with precast concrete "inverted U" floor units spanning between the steel beams, will be retained and the extension will consist of a reinforced concrete frame with flat slab floor construction. Lateral stability will be achieved by concrete shear walls on the east and west sides of the building and around the new service core.

(2)

7. Air conditioning General office areas, executive area, research and quality control areas and computer area will be air conditioned. Central chilled water and gas fired heating plant together with central air handling units serving the office areas and a separate air handling unit serving the executive area, will be located in the roof plant room. A number of air handling units serving the quality monitoring areas will be located in or adjacent to the space being served. The computer area will be independently air conditioned by package air conditioning units located within the computer area.
8. Quality Monitoring Facilities Fume cupboards, exhaust hoods and exhaust systems for various items of equipment and processes will be provided.
9. Domestic Hot Water Hot water will be provided by gas fired storage units.
10. Fire Protection The building will be protected throughout by sprinklers. Booster pumps will be provided and hydrants and hose reels installed. The computer area will be protected by a gas extinguishing system under the false floor and a combined sprinkler and smoke detection system within each room. Battery powered emergency lighting will be provided. Portable extinguishers will be located as required.
11. Miscellaneous Equipment Bakery equipment for the testing of various types of dough will be provided.
12. Conservation Measures Airconditioning systems will be energy efficient and will be automatically controlled. The air handling system serving the office areas will be of the low velocity variable volume type capable of economic operation on a full outside air cycle when outside conditions permit.

(3)

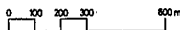
13. Power Supply The existing substation on the site will be relocated and expanded to meet the additional load of the redevelopment. The electrical installation will include new switchboards and cabling, internal lighting to Australian Standard AS 1680, external lighting for security and safety, general power, and Telecom block cabling.
14. Lifts Two passenger lifts and one goods/passenger lift operating as an automatic transport system will serve all levels from the ground to the seventh floor, with the goods/passenger lift also serving the semi-basement (carpark) level.
15. Hydraulic Services The hydraulic installation will comprise the collection of stormwater and sewage, and the supply of cold water.



### Legend

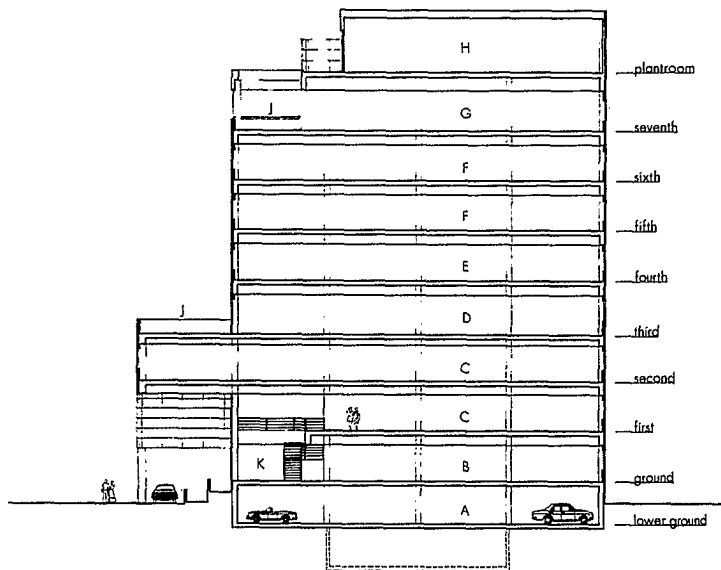
- 1 Ceres House
- 2 179 Queen Street
- 3 Marland House
- 4 G.P.O.
- 5 TAA Airline Terminal
- 6 Ansett Airline Terminal
- 7 State Library & Museum
- 8 Australia Hotel
- 9 Southern Cross Hotel
- 10 Wentworth Hotel
- 11 World Trade Centre
- 12 Flagstaff Station
- 13 Spencer St. Station
- 14 Flinders St. Station

### LOCALITY PLAN



A.





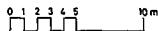
### LEGEND

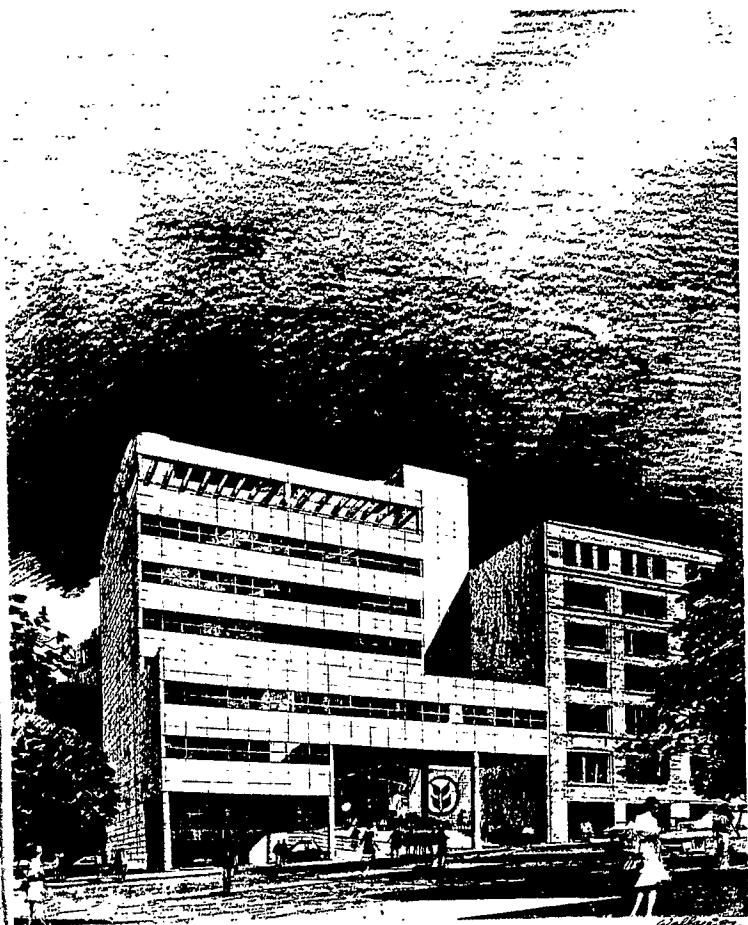
- A Carpark and Substation
- B Victorian State Office
- C Surplus (future expansion)
- D Staff Amenities and General Office
- E Wheat Quality / Grain Storage & Hygiene
- F General Office
- G Boardroom, Executive Offices, Lounge & Dining
- H Plantroom
- J Terrace
- K Foyer

B.



### SECTION A





Perspective from Lonsdale Street.

C.