

---

# EMERALD HILL MECHANICS INSTITUTE AND HALL OF COMMERCE



ITALIAN CLUB CAVOUR  
SOHE 2008



1 italian club cavour cecil  
street south melbourne front  
view jan1980

---

## Location

170-172 CECIL STREET SOUTH MELBOURNE, PORT PHILLIP CITY

## Municipality

PORT PHILLIP CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0537

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO79

## VHR Registration

July 14, 1982

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

---

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 22, 1999

The building at 170-172 Cecil Street, south Melbourne was built in 1857 as the Emerald Hill Mechanics Institute and designed by architects Knight & Kerr, the designers of Victoria's Parliament House. In 1884 the council commissioned local architect, Frederick de Garis, to design a new facade for the Cecil Street frontage. This was constructed in that year and in 1887 the council opened a free reading room in the building.

The two-storey building is constructed of bluestone with a slate roof and brick quoining and window surrounds. The original design incorporated an entrance hall, an assembly room, a library and two classrooms. The assembly room has a fine timber truss roof which is, at present, hidden by a later suspended ceiling. The Cecil Street facade is a simple Renaissance Revival composition with a rusticated lower floor, arch-headed windows, string course abridged eaves and a simple parapet over. The design is enriched by the use of vernacular keystone, nailhead reveals to the upper windows and roundels alternated with the brackets to the eave. The bluestone construction of the original building is apparent from the side elevations.

The building is significant as an example of the work of the influential architects, Knight & Kerr, and as an important building in the history of South Melbourne through its links with the early development of local government in that area and the growth of the city. Further, that the building is of great significance in the development of Mechanics Institutes in the state of Victoria, and in particular as an important and early example.

[Historic Buildings Council]

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must [notify](#) the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

Construction dates      1857,

Architect/Designer	Knight & Kerr,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	CLUB CAVOUR, ITALIAN CLUB CAVOUR, HALL OF COMMERCE, MECHANICS INSTITUTE,
Hermes Number	1035
Property Number	

---

## History

Associated People:

## Extent of Registration

### AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 537 Italian Club Cavour, 170-172 Cecil Street, South Melbourne (to the extent of the external fabric and the trussed ceiling of the main hall).

[Victoria Government Gazette No. 71 14 July 1982 p. 2358]

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*