

# EMULATION HALL



Emulation Hall, Canterbury  
2011



General view from north east  
2011



detail of scarab, front facade  
2011



detail of window, front facade  
2011



Entrance gates 2011



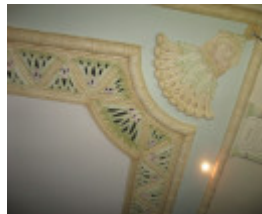
Decoration above entrance  
2011



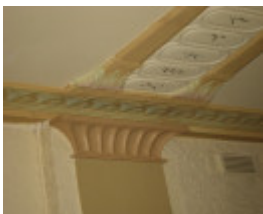
Lodge Room, general view to  
east 2011



Lodge Room, general view  
2011



Lodge Room, detail of ceiling  
decoration 2011



Lodge Room, detail of  
decoration 2011



Lodge Room furniture 2011



Lodge Room, light fitting 2011



First floor foyer ceiling 2011



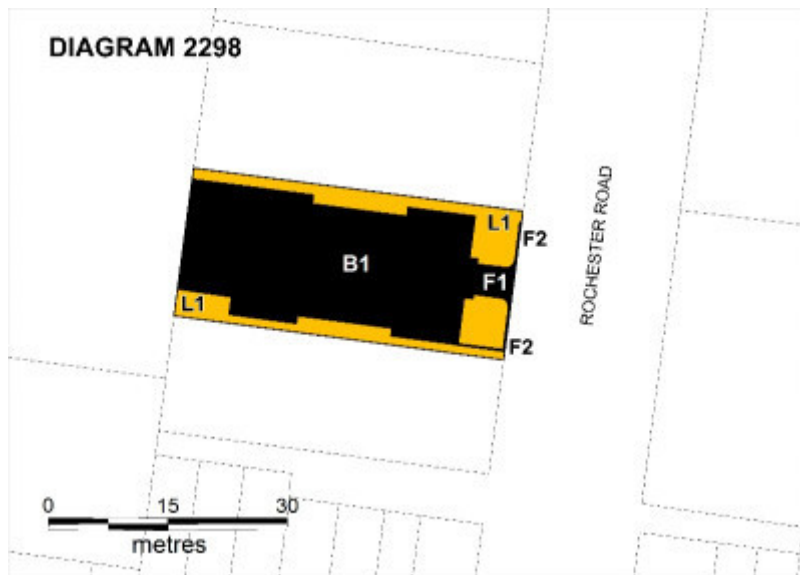
Ground Floor Hall, view to east 2011



Ground Floor Hall, detail of decoration 2011



Ground Floor Hall, decorative detail 2011



emulation hall plan.jpg

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## Location

3 ROCHESTER ROAD CANTERBURY, BOROONDARA CITY

## Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2298

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO561

## VHR Registration

March 8, 2012

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - December 8, 2011

What is significant?

Emulation Hall, Canterbury is a two storey brick building that was constructed in 1927-28 by the freemasons.

Built by the established Emulation Lodge No 141, this masonic temple was designed by architects Dunstan Reynolds & Partners and provided a facility for both the freemasons and the local community. Founded in 1889, Emulation Lodge met in public halls in Box Hill, Canterbury and Surrey Hills before constructing this permanent temple facility. Since its construction Emulation Hall has provided a temple for a number of lodges that were sponsored by Emulation Lodge and also provided a public venue for club meetings and functions such as dances.

Designed in the Egyptian Revival style, Emulation Hall is a large two storey rendered brick building with small window openings and a concealed corrugated iron roof. The symmetrical front facade is in the form of an Egyptian temple pylon, with two battered towers flanking a recessed bay and lower framed gateway. Fluted gorge cornices crown the building, central entrance and small side openings. Symbolic Egyptian motifs adorn the front facade with a large scarab motif in the central recessed bay and three disc motifs with outstretched wings and uraei, or sacred serpents, under the cornices. The entrance porch contains recessed piers, a wrought iron gate with masonic compass and square symbol, double timber doors and a second scarab motif. Side elevations are simpler in detail.

The building contains a main hall at ground level and a lodge room above, both of which are decorated with Egyptian themed motifs, including palmette, lotus and papyrus mouldings, astrological symbols, winged solar disc and the eye of Horus. The lodge room contains raised side platforms with timber bench seating, ritual furniture and glass and metal light fittings.

An addition was made at the rear of the building in 1958 and minor internal modifications were made to accommodate this, however generally the building remains highly intact. Emulation Lodge disbanded in the 1990s and one of its sponsor lodges, Chatham Lodge No 459, acquired the temple.

This site is part of the traditional land of the Kulin Nation.

How is it significant?

Emulation Hall, Canterbury is of architectural, historical and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Emulation Hall, Canterbury is of architectural significance as a rare and distinctive example of the Egyptian Revival style in Victoria. It adopts the style in its strictest sense, recalling ancient temples such as that of Isis,

Philae and Horus, Edfu and is important for its application of the style both externally and internally. Emulation Hall is one of very few examples of the adoption of this style in Victoria, demonstrating the ideological link between freemasonry and ancient Egypt.

Emulation Hall is of historical significance due to its associations with freemasonry which played an important cultural role in Victoria. The large and impressive building illustrates the popularity of freemasonry particularly after World War One, and the adoption of the Egyptian Revival style reflects both the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb in 1922 and the return of Australian soldiers from World War 1 with Egyptian objects displaying such motifs as the scarab and winged disc.

Emulation Hall is of historical significance as the first purpose-built temple erected for Emulation Lodge No 141. This was the first such lodge established in Victoria, after the particular division was established in England in 1823 and it remained the only Emulation Lodge in Victoria until the 1930s.

Emulation Hall is of aesthetic significance for its extensive symbolic Egyptian-themed decorative scheme applied to the exterior and interior, in particular the main hall and the lodge room.

## 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](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: A Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where

applicable. Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works must submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

## Theme

### 8. Building community life

Construction dates	1927,
Architect/Designer	Reynolds, BD,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	MASONIC HALL CANTERBURY,
Hermes Number	13345
Property Number	

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## History

### CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

#### Freemasonry

The basic organisation of freemasonry is the masonic lodge and masonic halls were constructed to provide a meeting place for these groups as they were established in Victoria. When individual lodges were first established they often initially met in existing buildings such as recreation halls, and a lodge room was set up within these buildings to suit their needs. A number of different lodges often used the same rooms for their separate meetings. Once finances permitted, often a number of years later, individual lodges purchased either an existing building for their use, or purchased land and constructed a purpose-built hall, or temple. Again a number of individual lodges often met in the same building.

The first lodge meeting in Victoria was held in 1839. The United Grand Lodge of Victoria was established in 1889, bringing together lodges that had previously worked under separate constitutions. This prompted the formation of additional suburban lodges, although most were formed after World War 1 with a large increase in the popularity of freemasonry in Victoria in the early 1920s. This increase resulted in a need for more meeting places and more than 12 temples were built across Victoria between 1922 and 1925 (Brunswick, Greensborough, Ivanhoe, Oakleigh, Prahran, Avoca, Colac, Kaniva, Maffra, Nagambie, Wycheproof and Yarrowonga).

#### The site

The first land in the Canterbury area was purchased by Elgar in 1841 and in 1853 large tracts of Crown land were sold. The suburb of Canterbury began to develop after the railway station was opened in 1882, and the southern end of Rochester Road where Emulation Hall is located was originally part of Shrublands Estate. By the turn of the century some commercial development had occurred in the vicinity centred on Canterbury Road, and significant development occurred over the next twenty years. By the time Emulation Hall was constructed in Rochester Road in 1927-28, the suburban centre had developed significantly with the addition of both commercial and community facilities.

#### The style

The Egyptian Revival style became popular in the western world from the late 1700s. It reached Australia in the 1820s, remaining popular into the 1840s and was generally reserved for monuments and synagogues. These

included an obelisk designed by Francis Greenway and constructed in Macquarie Place, Sydney in 1818 and synagogues in Sydney (1841), Hobart (1843-45), and Launceston (1844-46). As Melbourne was settled largely after this, the style remains highly rare in the State. It was then rare in Australia until its return in the inter-war period when it was generally applied more abstractly in the Art Deco and Free Classical styles. This was after Australian soldiers returned from World War 1 with Egyptian objects incorporating scarab and winged disc motifs, and after the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb in 1922.

A strict application of the style however was generally still reserved for monuments or for building types that had a philosophical connection with Egyptian culture, notably masonic temples. The usage and customs of freemasonry have an affinity with those of the ancient Egyptians and it is believed that the ceremonies and rituals have at least in part descended from their religious beliefs and practices. Externally Emulation Hall recalls such ancient temples as that of Isis, Philae and Horus, Edfu and the symbolism of the motifs includes the scarab as a symbol of the sun, regeneration and good fortune; and the winged disc as a symbol of protection. The eye of Horus is a symbol of protection, royal power and good health. The facade at Emulation Hall also bears some similarity to Egyptian Revival buildings of the nineteenth century such as the London Egyptian Hall (1811-12) and the Devonport Library (1823).

## HISTORY OF PLACE

Emulation Lodge No 141 was one of the first lodges established in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. It was established in Box Hill in 1889 and was the only lodge meeting between Hawthorn and Lilydale at this time. The Emulation Lodge of Improvement was a division of freemasonry created in England in 1823 and this Emulation Lodge was the first in Victoria. It remained the only Emulation Lodge in Victoria until No 436 was established in Richmond in the 1930s.

The Emulation Lodge first met in a lodge room set up in a recreation hall in Whitehorse Road, Box Hill. In 1912 the Emulation Lodge moved to new premises in Maling Road, Canterbury and in 1919 the Trustees of the Lodge purchased Surrey Hall in Union Road, Surrey Hills and moved to their first owned property. The lodge outgrew this hall and in July 1927 Emulation Lodge No 141 sold Surrey Hall and purchased a site at 3 Rochester Road, Canterbury.

Plans for the new building in Rochester Road, Canterbury were prepared by architects Dunstan Reynolds & Partners. The principal architect Bennet Dunstan Reynolds lived locally in Balwyn, was a Lodge member and had already designed the Ivalda Masonic Temple in Ivanhoe in 1923-24. His first recorded works were residential designs in 1922 and these were followed by designs for residential flats in Brighton (as illustrated in the *Argus* in 1928) and the Plaza Theatre, Kyabram in 1929. His private practice commenced in 1920, became Dunstan Reynolds and Partners in 1926 and Craig, Reynolds & Garrett by the mid-1930s.

Tenders for the new masonic temple in Canterbury were called in August 1927 and the contract was awarded to Reginald S Jones. A memorial stone was laid on 12 May 1928 and it was reported at the time that the building in progress 'promises to vie with any of our most imposing Masonic edifices'. The design was clearly Egyptian Revival which related to freemasonry, but was a highly unusual style in Victoria. The building was to house both the Emulation Lodge No 141 and its two sponsored lodges, Canterbury Lodge No 312 and Surrey Hills Lodge No 315.

As required, existing lodges sponsored the establishment of new lodges in particular areas and the Emulation Lodge No 141 sponsored a number of such lodges in the region. These included Box Hill 221 (1912), Canterbury 312 (1922), Surrey Hill 315 (1922), Chatham 459 (1930), Gratitude 592 (1946) and Wattle Park 624 (1947). These often met in the same building and Emulation Hall built at Rochester Road, Canterbury in 1927-28 provided a temple for 19 lodges in total over a number of years. The hall was also used for monthly meetings by the Canterbury Horticultural Society from 1929, and by 1934 the society had been allocated its own rooms in the building. It was also used for various celebrations, lectures, film screenings, dances and plays and was particularly popular in the 1930s and 1940s for balls and dances. Because it was used for a variety of purposes other than masonic needs, the temple was not consecrated at the time of construction.

Emulation Lodge disbanded in the 1990s and Chatham Lodge No 459 acquired the temple.

## Plaque Citation

Designed in a highly unusual Egyptian Revival style, this masonic hall was built for Emulation Lodge in 1927-28. It became the meeting place for a number of masonic lodges and community groups.

## Assessment Against Criteria

a. Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history

Emulation Hall, Canterbury clearly demonstrates the role that freemasonry played in Victoria. Emulation Lodge No 141 was one of the first lodges established in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne in 1889 and was the first Emulation Lodge in Victoria. It remained the only Emulation Lodge in Victoria until another was established in Richmond in the 1930s.

b. Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

Emulation Hall, Canterbury is a rare and intact example of the Egyptian Revival style in Victoria. It adopts the style in its strictest sense and applies it both externally and internally.

c. Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.

d. Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or environments.

Emulation Hall, Canterbury is of architectural significance as an unusual and fine example of a masonic hall built in the inter-war period. The adoption of the Egyptian Revival style demonstrates the ideological link between freemasonry and ancient Egypt.

e. Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

Emulation Hall, Canterbury displays a consistent Egyptian-themed decorative scheme both externally and internally. This includes scarabs; winged sun discs; palmette, lotus and papyrus mouldings; astrological symbols and the eye of Horus.

f. Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

g. Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.

h. Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

Emulation Hall, Canterbury has associations with freemasonry which played an important cultural role in Victoria.

## Extent of Registration

1. All of the land marked L1 on Diagram 2298 held by the Executive Director being all of Lots 1, 2 and 3 on Title Plan 663711.

2. All of the building and features marked as follows on Diagram 2298 held by the Executive Director:

B1 Hall

F1 Steps

F2 Walls

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*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/>*