

SANDRINGHAM MASONIC HALL



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of upper_foyer.JPG



Sandringham_Masonic_Hall_ci Sandringham_Masonic_Hall_vi Sandringham_Masonic_Hall_lo



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Sandringham_Masonic_Hall_d1 Sandringham_Masonic_Hall_s1 Diagram 2355.JPG



Sandringham_Masonic_Hall.JPG

Location

23 ABBOTT STREET SANDRINGHAM, BAYSIDE CITY

Municipality

BAYSIDE CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2355

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO772

VHR Registration

June 16, 2016

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 23, 2025

Sandringham Masonic Centre is located on Wurundjeri Country.

What is significant?

Sandringham Masonic Hall consisting of a large brick hall (1931), including interiors (main hall, lodge room, stairs and upper foyer) and adjoining rear brick addition (1956).

History Summary

The Sandringham Masonic Hall was built in 1931 to provide a purpose-built facility for five lodges operating in the locality. The first of these, Sandringham Lodge No 220, was founded in 1912. The site in Abbott Street, Sandringham was acquired by the newly formed Sandringham District Hall Co Ltd in 1924 and plans for a masonic hall were prepared by architect Gordon J Sutherland. On 27 May 1931 the foundation stone for the Sandringham Masonic Hall was laid by Lord Somers, in his capacity as Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge in Victoria. At its peak the Sandringham Masonic Hall provided a meeting place for fourteen lodges and the building was enlarged in 1956 to provide for increasing membership.

Description Summary

The Sandringham Masonic Hall is a two storey rendered brick building designed in an Egyptian Revival style. It is a large parapeted building with a concealed gabled roof above the main lodge room and a symmetrical front facade. The Egyptian Revival style is evident in the dominant projecting two storey central front porch which contains cavetto cornices, columns with palmiform capitals, papyrus-bundle capitals, side grilles with stylised columns, two winged solar discs and two flanking obelisks. Side elevations contain small window openings and a rear brick addition continues the two storey form of the original building.

The Sandringham Masonic Hall consists of a main hall and entrance foyer at ground level and a lodge room and foyer at first floor level. Panelled ceilings, wall pilasters, window and door frames and stained glass windows are decorated with Egyptian-themed motifs, including palmette and papyrus mouldings, astrological symbols, winged solar discs and pentangles. Masonic symbols, such as the compass and square, are incorporated into the decorative scheme. The lodge room contains original light fittings, ritual furniture and raised side platforms with timber bench seating. The 1956 addition at the rear of the building contains a small lodge room at the upper level

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

How is it significant?

Sandringham Masonic Hall is of historical, architectural and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion A

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

Criterion B

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

Criterion E

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

Why is it significant?

Sandringham Masonic Hall is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

Sandringham Masonic Hall is of historical significance due to its associations with freemasonry which played an important cultural role in Victoria. The large and substantial building illustrates the popularity of freemasonry particularly after World War I.

(Criterion A)

Sandringham Masonic Hall is a rare and distinctive example of the Egyptian Revival architectural style in Victoria. There are very few buildings that adopt this style in Victoria and the Sandringham Masonic Hall is one of only three known examples of this style applied to a masonic hall. It is of particular note as the style is applied to both the exterior and interior of the building. The adoption of the Egyptian Revival style demonstrates the ideological link between freemasonry and ancient Egypt. It reflects both the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb in 1922 and the return of Australian soldiers from World War I with Egyptian objects displaying such motifs as the winged disc.

(Criterion B)

Sandringham Masonic Hall is of aesthetic significance for its extensive and largely intact symbolic Egyptian-themed interior decorative scheme, particularly in the main hall, lodge room and upper foyer. It is a rare and unusual style of decoration in Victoria.

(Criterion E)

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:

It should be noted that Permit Exemptions can be granted at the time of registration (under s.42(4) of the Heritage Act). Permit Exemptions can also be applied for and granted after registration (under s.66 of the Heritage Act)

General Condition 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 Condition 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 Condition 3

All works should be informed by Conservation Management Plans prepared for the place. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan, and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.

General Condition 4

Nothing in this determination prevents the Heritage Council from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

General Condition 5

Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the relevant responsible authority, where applicable.

Specific Permit Exemptions

Exterior

- . Minor patching, repair and maintenance which replace like with like.
- . Removal of non-original items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc and making good in a manner not detrimental to the cultural heritage significance of the place.
- . Installation or removal of non-original external fixtures and fittings such as hot water services and taps in a manner not detrimental to the cultural heritage significance of the place.
- . Installation or repair of damp-proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method in a manner which does not affect the cultural heritage significance of the place.
- . Painting of previously painted surfaces provided that preparation or painting does not remove the original paint or other decorative scheme.

Interior

- . Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove any original paint or other decorative scheme.
- . Installation, removal or replacement of non-original curtain tracks, rods and blinds.
- . Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted art.
- . Installation of honour boards and the like.
- . Removal or replacement of non-original door and window furniture including, hinges, locks, knobsets and sash lifts.
- . Refurbishment of existing bathrooms, toilets and kitchens including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.

. Removal of tiling or concrete slabs in wet areas provided there is no damage to or alteration of original structure or fabric.

. Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves and that the central plant is concealed, and is done in a manner not detrimental to the cultural heritage significance of the place.

. Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ. Note: if wiring original to the place was carried in timber conduits then the conduits should remain in situ.

. Installation, removal or replacement of electric clocks, public address systems, detectors, alarms, emergency lights, exit signs, luminaires and the like on plaster surfaces.

. Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.

. Installation of plant within the roof space.

. Installation of new fire hydrant services including sprinklers, fire doors and elements affixed to plaster surfaces provided it is done in a manner not detrimental to the cultural heritage significance of the place.

LANDSCAPE:

. The process of gardening, including mowing, hedge clipping, bedding displays, removal of dead shrubs and replanting the same species or cultivar, disease and weed control, and maintenance to care for existing plants.

. Pruning, lopping or removal of trees and vegetation.

. Subsurface works involving the installation, removal or replacement of watering and drainage systems or services outside the canopy edge of significant trees in accordance with AS4970 and on the condition that works do not impact on archaeological features or deposits

. Removal of plants listed as noxious weeds in the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994

. Vegetation protection and management of possums and vermin.

Theme

8. Building community life

Construction dates 1931,

Architect/Designer Sutherland, Gordon J.,

Heritage Act Categories Registered place,

Other Names FREEMASONS HALL, MASONIC HALL,

Hermes Number 197956

Property Number

History

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

Freemasonry

The basic organisation of freemasonry is the masonic lodge of members 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 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. 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 which had previously worked under separate constitutions and this resulted in increased numbers of suburban lodges. A large increase in the popularity of freemasonry in Victoria in the early 1920s resulted in the formation of many suburban and country lodges and the necessity for meeting places. More than twelve masonic halls were built in Victoria between 1922 and 1925 including halls at Brunswick, Greensborough, Ivanhoe, Oakleigh, Prahran, Avoca, Colac, Kaniva, Maffra, Nagambie, Wycheproof and Yarrawonga.

The Egyptian Revival style

Napoleonic discoveries in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century brought accurate representations of Ancient Egyptian art and architecture to Europe. As a result the Egyptian Revival style was adopted in a variety of the arts, including the design of buildings, furniture and jewellery.

In Australia the style was used in the design of structures and buildings in the 1820s and remained popular until the 1840s. It was generally reserved for monuments and synagogues. Examples include 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 largely settled after this period there are no early examples of this style in Victoria and the Egyptian Revival style remains rare in the state.

Two early twentieth century examples of the Egyptian Revival style in Victoria are the Syme Memorial in the Boroondara General Cemetery (Walter Butler, 1908, VHR H0049) and the internal decoration of Zetland Lodge, Kyneton, (1905-11, VHR H1988). However the style remained rare in Victoria. Following both the return of Australian soldiers from World War I, who brought Egyptian objects incorporating scarab and winged disc motifs, and the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb in 1922, Egyptian motifs appeared as part of Art Deco and Free Classical decorative schemes.

A strict application of the style was generally reserved for monuments or building types that had a philosophical connection with Egyptian culture, notably masonic halls. The belief that freemason ceremonies and rituals descended at least in part from the religious beliefs and practices of the latter, led to the adoption of this style in the design of masonic halls. Motifs found at the Sandringham Masonic Hall include the winged disc with uraeus (sacred serpent) which is an Egyptian symbol of protection.

Freemasonry and the Egyptian Revival Style

The relationship between Ancient Egypt and freemasonry has been discussed at length by a number of academics and appears to be complex. RG Carrott suggests that Ancient Egypt provided a main source of Freemasonic legend and wisdom and much of the dependency of the latter upon Egyptian rites and emblems can be traced back to their introduction in the late eighteenth century in Europe. He suggests they became part of the standard operating procedure of Freemasonry from this time. Despite this there were few masonic lodges built in Europe, or elsewhere, in an Egyptian style before the mid-nineteenth century.

A number of papers on the subject of freemasonry were delivered in Australia in the mid to late nineteenth century, addressing the interconnection between freemasonry and Ancient Egypt. For example in the lecture 'The Lost Mysteries of Freemasonry Explained' in 1862, Louis L Smith stated that 'It is generally considered among Masons that the ceremonies of the Order have ever corresponded with the Egyptian Mysteries . That Masons to this day may be governed by the same ceremonies as were the Egyptians is probable'.

The adoption of the Egyptian Revival style in the design of masonic buildings resulted from this accepted connection between Ancient Egypt and freemasonry. Egyptian Revival style masonic buildings and structures became particularly popular in the United States in the twentieth century and examples include the Atrium of Scottish Rite's House of the Temple, Washington (1911), the George Washington National Memorial, Alexandria (1922) and the Salt Lake City Masonic Temple (1925).

The architect of the Sandringham Masonic Hall

The architect Gordon John Sutherland (1891-1958) attended Caulfield Grammar and studied architecture at Melbourne University. He became an Associate of the RVIA in 1917 and began his career in 1918 by winning a competition for the design of a Melbourne University building in conjunction with established architects Bates, Peebles and Smart. His architectural work consisted largely of houses, flats and maisonettes, designed in a variety of styles including the Moderne, Tudor Revival and Georgian Revival style. Many of these residential designs were illustrated in the *Real Property Annual* in the late 1910s, the *Australian Home Builder* in the early 1920s and the *Argus* in the 1930s. Sutherland's commercial work included the Kosky Brothers Offices and Warehouse in City Road, South Melbourne (1924) which was designed in a modernist asymmetric style with a projecting central section.

The Sandringham Masonic Hall was designed in 1931 at the height of Sutherland's career. He became a Fellow of the RVIA on 7 November 1935 and lived in New Street, Brighton from the mid-1920s until his death in 1958.

HISTORY OF PLACE

The existing railway line from Melbourne was extended to Sandringham in 1887, encouraging the growth of the bayside villages in the Shire of Moorabbin. This growth eventually resulted in the formation of the Borough of Sandringham in 1917 and the City of Sandringham in 1923.

A masonic lodge was founded in the bayside suburb of Brighton as early as 1861 however it was not until 1912 that the first Sandringham Lodge No 220 was established in the nearby suburb. The growth of the Sandringham area in the early twentieth century resulted in the establishment of four more lodges: Hampton Lodge No 308, Black Rock Lodge No 370, Hollywood Lodge No 444 and the Cerberus Lodge No 452. These lodges all met in the town hall in Abbott Street, Sandringham.

On 24 July 1924 the Sandringham District Masonic Hall Co Ltd was formed and a site in Abbott Street was acquired that year to enable construction of a purpose-built masonic hall. Plans were prepared to build a hall as a joint venture of the lodges. The foundation stone was laid on 27 May 1931 by Lord Somers, in his capacity as Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge in Victoria. The hall was dedicated in October 1931 and the foundation stone records the names of the architect, G J Sutherland and the builder H S G Stephenson.

The Sandringham Masonic Hall was extended to the rear in 1956 with the addition of a supper room, kitchen, toilet and locker room to the ground floor and enlarged lodge room, ante room and candidates' room on the first floor. Drawings for this work were prepared by A B Anderson of St Kilda Road.

At its peak, fourteen lodges met at the Sandringham Masonic Hall. In 1995 eleven lodges met and in 2014 only five lodges met there. These lodges are planning to relocate to the Gardenvale Masonic Centre.

KEY REFERENCES USED TO PREPARE ASSESSMENT

C Hope, 'Ancient Egypt in Melbourne and the State of Victoria' in J Humbert & C Price[ed]. *Imhotep Today: Egyptianizing Architecture*. London 2003

R G Carrott. *The Egyptian Revival: its Sources, Monuments and Meaning 1808-1858*. California 1978

Lecture by L L Smith. 'The Lost Mysteries of Freemasonry Explained', Melbourne 7 April 1862

Heritage Alliance, 'City of Bayside Inter War and Post War Heritage Study', 2008

Brighton Southern Cross, 13 July 1912, p 8 'Forming a Lodge at Sandringham'

'New Masonic Temple', *Argus*, 14 April 1931, p 9

M Lewis, *Australian Architectural Index* [references to architect Gordon J Sutherland]

Public Building File No 9443, VPRS 7882/P1, Drawings of 'Extension to Masonic Temple', 1956, Public Records Office of Victoria

Plaque Citation

Designed in a highly unusual Egyptian Revival style, this masonic hall was built for the freemasons in 1931 and became the meeting place for a number of masonic lodges. It retains highly intact Egyptian-themed interior decoration.

Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion

Sandringham Masonic Hall is of historical significance due to its associations with freemasonry which played an important cultural role in Victoria. The large and substantial building illustrates the popularity of freemasonry particularly after World War I. [

Criterion A]

Sandringham Masonic Hall is a rare and distinctive example of the Egyptian Revival architectural style in Victoria. There are very few buildings that adopt this style in Victoria and the Sandringham Masonic Hall is one of only three known examples of this style applied to a masonic hall. It is of particular note as the style is applied to both the exterior and interior of the building. The adoption of the Egyptian Revival style demonstrates the ideological link between freemasonry and ancient Egypt. It reflects both the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb in 1922 and the return of Australian soldiers from World War I with Egyptian objects displaying such motifs as the winged disc. [

Criterion B]

Sandringham Masonic Hall is of aesthetic significance for its extensive and largely intact symbolic Egyptian-themed interior decorative scheme, particularly in the main hall, lodge room and upper foyer. It is a rare and unusual style of decoration in Victoria. [

Criterion E]

Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 1995**, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the following place in the Heritage Register:

Number: H2355

Category: Heritage Place

Place: Sandringham Masonic Hall

Location: 23 Abbott Street

Sandringham

Bayside City

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2355 encompassing all of Lot 88 on Lodged Plan 4632.

Dated 16 June 2016

TIM SMITH

Executive Director

(*Victoria Government Gazette G 24 16 June 2016 p.1456*)

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/>