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# PRESTON MASONIC CENTRE



preston masonic hermes  
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## Location

382-4 BELL STREET, PRESTON, DAREBIN CITY

## Municipality

DAREBIN CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO200

## Heritage Listing

Darebin City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

### *What is significant?*

The Preston Masonic Centre, comprising the c.1919 Temple designed by Harry A. Norris and the 1956 addition, known as the United Preston Masonic Hall, is significant.

Non-original alterations and additions to the significant buildings are not significant..

### *How is it significant?*

The Preston Masonic Centre is of local historic significance to Darebin City.

### *Why is it significant?*

Historically, the Preston Masonic Temple erected in 1919 was one of Melbourne's early suburban temples and this building and the 1956 addition demonstrate the strength of the Masonic movement in Melbourne during the twentieth century. It is the centre of Masonic movement in Preston with up to fourteen different lodges using it as their meeting place and the use of the building for Masonic purposes is reflected in design aspects such as the high set windows and the symbols above the entrance doors to the 1956 building. The 1919 Temple is also of interest as an early example of the work of noted architect, Harry A. Norris. (AHC criteria A.4, D.2, & H.1)

The Preston Masonic Centre also has social significance as the spiritual home of the Masonic community in Preston for almost 90 years. (AHC criterion G.1)

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|---------------------------|--|
| Heritage Study/Consultant | Darebin - Darebin Heritage Study, Context P/L, 2011; |
| Construction dates        | 1919, 1956,  |
| Architect/Designer        | Norris, Harry A,                                     |
| Hermes Number             | 43865  |
| Property Number           |  |

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## **Physical Description 1**

The Preston Masonic Centre comprises a complex of early and mid-twentieth century Masonic club buildings on the northeast corner of Bell and Arthur streets, Preston. Built at this corner is the 1956 Hall, which is a two-storey cream brick Modernist building set back slightly from its Bell Street frontage. Its south elevation (Bell Street) is symmetrically composed with a central entrance on its ground floor, with a pair of timber-panelled doors recessed behind a pair of wrought iron gates. Above this entrance is a relief of the Square & Compasses symbol of Freemasonry. A stone, adjacent to the entrance reads:

### *United Preston Masonic Hall*

*Erected by:*

*Lodges No. 148. 259. 322. 375. 538. 585. 594. 620. 671 & 679.*

*This stone was laid by M. W. Bro. Dr. G B Bearham*

*Pro Grand Master*

*On the 30th September 1956.*

This entrance is flanked on each side by three plain timber frame windows, and above the building's entrance, on the upper level, is a small balcony with a plain metal balustrade. A pair of timber framed glazed doors lead from the upper level to this balcony. These doors are flanked on either side by two steel frame windows. The building's roof is concealed behind a plain brick parapet. Unsympathetic signage has been fitted on parts of this elevation, including an illuminated sign of the Square & Compasses symbol, which has been damaged.

The west (Arthur Street) elevation of the hall is utilitarian in character with plain timber windows on the ground floor and steel frame windows on the upper level. The building's parapet steps up towards the northern end of this elevation. The north elevation of the cream brick building is also utilitarian in character and extends along the boundary of the car park of the adjacent Sanctuary Apartments. A single-storey skillion addition has been built to the east of the hall's rear. This, and other buildings to its east that form the complex, conceal the east elevation of the two-storey cream brick building.

A single-storey cream brick building links the Modernist building with the 1919 hall, which was designed by Harry A. Norris. This hall is set back a short distance from its Bell Street boundary. It is built of brick, which has been rendered on its south elevation. This elevation is divided into three bays, divided by plain pilasters. Each bay has a pair of windows with diamond shaped glazing bars. The hall has a transverse gable roof clad in terracotta tiles. Its end walls extend above the roof to form gable ends that conceal the roof on the hall's east and west elevations. The gable end on the east elevation is faced in red brick and has three cement bands and a louvred roof vent. This elevation has a window with a concrete lintel. The west elevation of the hall is obscured and/or has been obliterated by the cream brick link to the Modernist corner building.

At the rear of the red brick hall is another hall (possibly an addition?), also faced in red brick, which also has a transverse gable roof clad in terracotta tiles with Health Department vents along the ridge. A skillion roof building has been built along most of the rear (north elevation) of this hall, however a buttress is visible towards the centre of this elevation. The roof of this hall, at the gable (east) end extends past the wall to form shallow eaves. The west end of this hall abuts the east elevation of the cream brick corner building. The skillion addition to this hall is utilitarian in character, as is an adjacent external staircase, which leads from the complex's rear yard to the upper level of the cream brick corner Modernist building. A high chain link fence, with a gate, encloses this rear yard that has been surfaced in concrete.

*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/>*