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## FORMER FORESTERS HALL



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HALL SOHE 2008



1 former foresters hall la  
trobe street melbourne front  
view sep1980



former foresters hall la trobe  
street melbourne entrance  
detail sep1980



former foresters hall la trobe  
street melbourne rear view  
dec1997



former foresters hall la trobe  
street melbourne side  
elevation dec1997

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### Location

168-170 LATROBE STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

### Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

### Level of significance

Registered

### Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1495

### Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO481

### VHR Registration

August 20, 1982

## Amendment to Registration

May 23, 1998

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - December 3, 1999

What is significant?

The Former Foresters' Hall, a two storey brick and stucco meeting hall, was built in 1888. The architects were Ravenscroft and Freeman, who also acted as trustees for the Ancient Order of Foresters, the lodge for whom this building was erected. The building has three bays, the central one surmounted by a large pedimented tablet with a crest. The heavily embellished parapet entablature features the motto of the Ancient Foresters, 'unitas benevolentia concordia'. The openings are arched, with scrolls as keystones. The upper floor windows have balusters running across the bottom. The building was used by the Foresters until 1964, when it was acquired by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology for the use of its Student Union.

How is it significant?

The Former Foresters' Hall is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Former Foresters' Hall is of historical significance as a reminder of the once important role played by friendly societies in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Such societies performed a variety of roles, providing their members with medical and accident insurance at a time when government-provided social welfare was rudimentary at best; lending money to buy houses; and, in some cases, supporting abstinence and advocating moral improvement and mutual assistance. The commissioning of Ravenscroft and Freeman, both members of the Order, to design the building, was a typical way in which such organisations helped their members. The Ancient Order of Foresters was established c.1850 in Victoria and this building functioned as headquarters from 1888-1969.

The Former Foresters' Hall is of architectural significance as a notable example of boom style classicism in Melbourne and one of the few surviving works of the architects Ravenscroft and Freeman. The facade is typical of the many public and private institutions that were established during the 1880s boom years and indicative of the prominent role played by friendly societies in Melbourne's earlier history.

## 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	1888,
Architect/Designer	Ravenscroft & Freeman,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	RMIT STUDENT UNION,
Hermes Number	769
Property Number	

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## History

Contextual History:History of Place:

Friendly Societies and lodges had their origins in Great Britain. They provided their members with medical and accident insurance, as well as mutual assistance, housing finance and other benefits. The Ancient Order of Foresters was established in Victoria in 1850 and in its early years held quarterly meetings at several hotels, including the Freemason's Hotel, the Builder's Arms and the Bull and Mouth. It later had a more permanent address at Trades Hall before acquiring this site and erecting its own hall.

## Extent of Registration

Amendment of Register of Government Buildings

Melbourne City

La Trobe Street, City.

(i) 168-170: Former Foresters' Hall;

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No. G39 12 October 1988 p.3091]

Transferred to the Victorian Heritage Register 23 May 1998 (2 years after the proclamation of the Heritage Act 1995 pursuant to the transitional provisions of the Act)

*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/>*