

---

# HORTICULTURAL HALL



HORTICULTURAL HALL  
SOHE 2008



HORTICULTURAL HALL  
SOHE 2008



1 horticultural hall victoria  
street melbourne front view  
1991



horticultural hall victoria street  
melbourne rear view 1991



horticultural hall victoria street  
melbourne side sign 1991



horticultural hall victoria street  
melbourne side view 1991

---

## Location

31-33 VICTORIA STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

## Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0520

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO495

## VHR Registration

March 3, 1982

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

---

### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - February 1, 2000

What is significant?

The Horticultural Hall was established on the current site when the Victorian Horticultural Improvement Society erected an iron shed in 1859. The original shed was replaced in 1873 by the present two storey brick hall with a gabled roof designed by architect William Ellerker, and erected at a cost of £2000. The land was temporarily reserved from sale by the government in 1866 and then permanently reserved in 1889. In 1878 a symmetrical two storey brick building with a bluestone plinth was added between the existing hall and Victoria Street. The facade follows a typical Victorian composition of classical elements, whereby the main entrance is expressed by pediments and is flanked by identical window bays. In 1888 this building was extended by one bay, at a cost of £1800, to create an asymmetrical facade. The cement mouldings include Doric piers, an entablature and acanthus leaf pilaster capitals. The interior is plain but mostly intact. The restrained decoration of the main hall includes Doric pilasters around the walls and the roof is lined with diagonal boards.

How is it significant?

The Horticultural Hall is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Horticultural Hall is historically significant as one of a once large number of assembly halls which played an important social role in Melbourne as the venue for various clubs and societies. The Horticultural Hall is unusual as one of the most intact of a handful of such halls that survive today. The site has been continuously occupied by the Society since 1859.

The Horticultural Hall is architecturally significant as an expression of the evolution of the classical style in Victoria. The decorative treatment of the facade represents a mid-point between the hierarchical treatment of the Renaissance Revival style and the later, more embellished and less restrained designs of the so-called boom period.

### 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	1873,
Architect/Designer	Ellerker, William H,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	Horti Hall,
Hermes Number	824
Property Number	

---

## History

### Contextual History:

The Victorian Horticultural Improvement Society was founded in November 1848 by John Pascoe Fawkner. The first exhibition of the Society was held in the Botanic Gardens in March 1850. Members during the 1850s included Judges Barry and A'Beckett and Henry Ginn, the Colonial Architect for the Colony of Victoria. Working gardeners who were members of the Society's committee during the 1860s included William Taylor (gardener to John Brown at Como) and William Sangster (gardener at Government House). Others included George Brunning, author of 'Australian Gardener' and Thomas Purves, manager of Adamson's Nursery at South Yarra in the 1860s. The society later changed its name and was granted a Royal prefix, becoming the Royal Horticultural Society.

### History of Place:

The site of the Horticultural Hall was gazetted for the society's use in April 1866. The Horticultural Hall was used for Society meetings and exhibitions, and was let for other purposes as well, including dancing. The hall was paid for by the 1880s and further additions were approved in 1888. An overdraft with the Commercial bank could not be repaid following the economic depression of 1893. In the late 1890s the hall was leased to University Girls High School for ten years, with one room retained for the Society's purposes. The Education Department did not quit the hall until 1927. In the 1930s tenants included W S Watt, (the Commonwealth Meteorologist) and the Clerks' Union. (Trades hall is located on the opposite side of Victoria Street). Other unions took up tenancies in the 1940s. Emily McPherson College, on the other side of Russell Street, also made use of the hall for ballroom dancing instruction.

(C Kellaway, National Trust report, September 1979)

Associated People: William Taylor (gardener at Como House)

William Sangster (gardener at Government House)

## Extent of Registration

Historic Building No. 520 Horticultural Hall, 31-33 Victoria Street, Melbourne.

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No.23 3 March 1982 p.629]

*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/>*