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# THE AUSTRALIAN CLUB



THE AUSTRALIAN CLUB  
SOHE 2008



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the australia club william  
street melb external front  
view



1 the australia club william  
street melb entrance



the australia club william  
street melb balconies

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## Location

98 - 110 WILLIAM STREET AND 475-485 LITTLE COLLINS STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

## Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0105

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO756

## VHR Registration

October 9, 1974

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - March 3, 2000

What is significant?

The Australian Club, 110 William Street, was founded in 1878. The present clubrooms were erected in three stages and comprise four storeys with a basement and attic. Construction is of rendered brick on a bluestone base. Lloyd Tayler, himself a member of the club, was the architect for the first two stages erected in 1879 and 1884, comprising the William Street frontage. In 1885 Tayler fell out with the club and was asked to leave. In 1886 the facade was extended to double its original size to designs by architect J Charlesworth. The new work cost 10,000 pounds, and placed a great financial burden on the club, especially when membership numbers dwindled during the economic depression of the 1890s. The symmetrical facade is thinly rendered and draws heavily on the architecture of the Renaissance for its styling, including a rusticated base and pedimented window hoods. The balustraded parapet hides the steeply pitched slate clad roof and cupola with lace iron decorating the ridges. Internally there is lavish decoration, an intricate mosaic floor, ornamented timber panelling and a grand five metre wide marble stair with wrought iron lamp standards. The vast ground floor dining room, approximately 30 metres long by 15 metres wide, has stained oak Baroque fireplaces, Corinthian columns on marble bases, and an ornamental beam and plaster ceiling. The richness of decoration is continued into the private dining rooms, smoking room and billiard room. Membership of the Australian Club contrasted to membership of the Melbourne Club, the bankers and squatters who had formed the first elite in Melbourne society. The Australian Club gathered the new elites for its members: merchants, bankers, lawyers and squatters who made money from the rise of 'marvellous Melbourne'.

How is it significant?

The Australian Club is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Australian Club is historically significant as one of Melbourne's most distinguished and exclusive institutions. The Australian Club has continuously occupied these premises for over a century, and in the nineteenth century was known as the domain of the wealthy squatters. Membership attracted men who had made money from the rise of Melbourne in the 1850s and 1860s and members came from a cross-section of the new business elites.

The Australian Club is architecturally significant as a notable example of the work of two architects, Lloyd Tayler and J Charlesworth. Most of the significant internal spaces and decoration were the work of Charlesworth. They are the grandest and most intact Victorian clubrooms in Australia, and far more opulent than the Melbourne Club designed by Leonard Terry more than twenty years previously. When completed, the Australian Club was the most imposing building in William Street and had a striking silhouette. Notable elements include the portico and loggia, which date from 1893, and the exotic roof and cupola. The magnificent interior is a superb example of Victorian taste and craftsmanship, centred around the grand marble staircase.

### 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	1878,
Architect/Designer	Taylor, Lloyd,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	828
Property Number	

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## History

In 1893, well-known woman artist and botanical illustrator Ellis Rowan (1848-1922) was commissioned to paint a series of large murals in one of the dining rooms. This was an unusual commission for a woman artist in the 1890s. This room is now known as the Ellis Rowan Room.

Keywords: Woman artist, women artists.

## Extent of Registration

*City of Melbourne. No. 105. The Australian Club, 110 William Street, Melbourne.  
[Victoria Government Gazette No 100 Wednesday, October 9 1974 p.3647]*

*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/>*