



H0875 Image001

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0875

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO339

VHR Registration

July 30, 1991

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - March 2, 2000

What is significant?

The Grainger Museum was built 1935 and extended in 1938 to the designs of architect John S Gawler of Gawler and Drummond. Hansen and Yuncken were the builders of both sections. The building's patron and source of funds was Percy Grainger, an internationally acclaimed musician and composer. The strongly nationalistic Grainger described the Museum as a bequest to Melbourne, the place of his birth. It was conceived by Grainger as both a place of musical research and learning as well as a monument to his own life and work. The original 1935 building is a single storey brick pavilion with central entrance doorway, glass block clerestory windows and a hipped roof covered with terra cotta tiles. The bricks were specially textured 'Evans' colour blend bricks. Early plans conceived of future wings branching off from the central pavilion in the manner of a panopticon. The 1938 extensions included the additional single storey wings but enclosed them with a semi-circular gallery, which left a segmental courtyard space within. The wings and gallery have a flat concrete roof and concrete floors. Two segmental areas formed by the wings and gallery are strong rooms with fireproof steel doors. The overall styling is a variation of the neoclassical approach, and Grainger had a large input into the final form. The building houses musical artefacts and a huge collection of documents associated with Grainger's life.

How is it significant?

The Grainger Museum is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Grainger Museum is historically significant for its associations with its founder Percy Grainger. Australian-born Grainger was an internationally acclaimed musician and composer, and an early contributor to the development of electronic music and experimental free music.

The Grainger Museum is rare as an example of a purpose built autobiographical museum dedicated to the life and works of one person.

The Grainger Museum is historically significant for its large collection of artefacts and documents which provide a contextual understanding to Grainger's life and work. The artefacts encompass many of his passions, including ethnography, 'Free-Music' composition and electronic music.

The Grainger Museum is architecturally significant as an intact 1930s building exemplifying an eclectic approach drawing on a range of contemporary stylistic and theoretical approaches. The severity of the architectural styling harks both to the nineteenth century neoclassicism of Sir John Soane's Dulwich Art Gallery in London as well as contemporary Australian neoclassicism. The earthy textured nature of the face brickwork is contrasted to the smooth off-form concrete roofs and floors. The Grainger Museum also has a highly unusual plan form and is an early example of an Australian building with glass bricks.

The Grainger Museum is architecturally significant as a work of John Gawler, architect to the University of Melbourne. He was instrumental in the formation of the School of Architecture and was its first Dean, a position he held for twenty years.

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:

Urgent Conservation Works (8.2.1) detailed in Conservation Management Plan (revised 28 April 2000)

Essential Conservation Works (8.2.2) detailed in

Management Plan (revised April 28 2000)

Conditions:

1. Exempt classes of works or activities are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the registered place / object. However, if other previously hidden original or inaccessible details of the object or place are uncovered, any works that may affect such items shall immediately cease. The Executive Director shall be notified of the details immediately to enable Heritage Victoria representatives to inspect and record the items, and for discussion to take place on the possible retention of the items, or the issue of a modified approval.

2. Nothing in this Declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exempt alterations provided work has not commenced on the alteration.

3. Heritage Victoria to be notified of all proposed works before they commence.

Construction dates	1935,
Architect/Designer	Gawler & Drummond,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	909
Property Number	

History

Contextual History:

Percy Aldridge Grainger was born in Brighton, Melbourne in 1882 he was christened George Percy Grainger and later changed his name. He began piano lessons with his mother when he was aged 6. He was instructed in acting and painting by Thomas A Sisley and had drawing instruction with Frederick McCubbin from 1891. Grainger's father was one of the designers of the new Princes Bridge. Grainger's formal music training began in 1892 with piano lessons from Lois Pabst in Melbourne, By 1893 he had written his first composition. His first public recital was in the Masonic Hall, Melbourne in 1894. Grainger continued his studies in Germany at the Conservatorium in Frankfurt-am-Main. By the end of his student days he was a virtuoso pianist and composer. He moved with his mother to London in 1901 where they remained for 13 years. From London Grainger undertook numerous performance tours to Europe, Russia, South Africa and Australasia. In 1911 his music was published by Schott and Co. and he was earning critical and popular success. In 1914 Grainger went to the United States, joining the US Army band in 1917 until honourably discharged in 1919. The same year his most famous work for piano, Country Gardens, was published. Whilst in the army Grainger became a US citizen. The death of his mother in 1922 had a profound effect on Grainger and around that time he began formulating the idea for a museum. His mother suicided following rumours that she had an incestuous relationship with her son. During the 1930s Grainger became consumed with his idea for a museum and when in Australia in 1934-5 he made the appropriate arrangements with the architects Gawler and Drummond and with the University of Melbourne. In the 1940s and 1950s Grainger's tour itinerary slowed down and he conducted experimental work on 'free music' and electronic music machines. In 1955-6 he again visited Melbourne to work on cataloguing the museum collection. He died in the United States in 1961.

Associated People: Percy Grainger

Extent of Registration

AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 875.

Grainger Museum, University of Melbourne, Parkville, (City of Melbourne).

To the extent of:

(1) the building known as the Grainger Museum, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, and marked B-1 on Plan 6012740(A), endorsed by the Chairperson, Historic Buildings Council, and held by the Director, Historic Buildings Council; and

(2) part of the land marked L-1 on Plan 6012740(A), being part of the land described in the Register Book Certificate of Title Volume 8876 Folio 379.

[Victoria Government Gazette No. G33 28 August 1991 pp.2424-2425]

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/>