

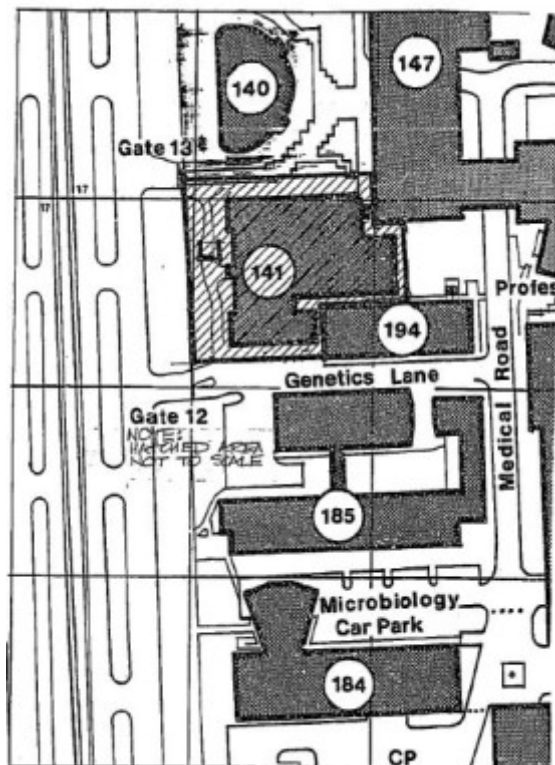
# CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC AND MELBA HALL



CONSERVATORIUM OF  
MUSIC AND MELBA HALL  
SOHE 2008



1 conservatorium of music  
& melba hall university  
of melbourne parkville front  
view mar1979



H0925 plan

## Location

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, 156-292 GRATTAN STREET PARKVILLE, MELBOURNE CITY

## Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0925

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO332

## VHR Registration

June 24, 1992

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 16, 2000

What is significant?

The Conservatorium of Music was established in 1895 and run by Professor Marshall Hall in rented rooms in a building opposite Carlton Gardens. Later the Conservatorium was moved to the grounds of the University of Melbourne and located in a purpose-built building. The first stage was erected in 1909 and opened in April 1910. The two storey rendered brick building was designed by architects Bates, Peebles and Smart and the contractors were Swanson Brothers. Dame Nellie Melba laid the foundation stone. Melba Hall was completed in 1913 to designs by the Public Works Department, and two later wings, the north Tallis Wing in 1927 and the Marshall-Hall Wing in 1935 were added by university architects Gawler and Drummond. The additions were in a matching style to complete the original design symmetry. The additions were made possible by the continuing support of benefactors such as Sir George Tallis, and Mrs Herbert Brookes, the daughter of Sir Alfred Deakin.

The white stucco walling is shaded by the wide eaves of the slate roof and contrasts with the terracotta, patterned gables. The building has wide projecting eaves in the manner of English domestic architecture of the period. The shaped eaves brackets, ground floor window hoods, tile faced gables and Art Nouveau decoration of clover, cress and gumnuts ornament the facades. The windows are one multi-pane sash over a single pane lower one. The projecting porch and parapet in the centre of the main west facade is in the Free Style manner and contains the foundation and memorial stones. The interior is sparsely detailed and the Melba Hall has a barrel vaulted ceiling. Melba Hall was renovated in the 1980s.

How is it significant?

The Conservatorium of Music and Melba Hall is of historical, social and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Conservatorium of Music and Melba Hall is historically significant as the first facility of its kind to be established by a university in the British Empire. The Conservatorium of Music building, begun in 1910, reflected the public support and acclaim achieved at that time in Victoria, having overcome considerable early prejudice

towards a university-based school of music. Its success in receiving government funding was a measure of the school's ability in being self funded since its inception.

The Conservatorium of Music and Melba Hall are historically significant for their association with Dame Nellie Melba who, despite a relatively short period of involvement in the school, was actively involved in the school's activities during its critical period of physical development, and was instrumental in raising funds to build the hall that bears her name.

The Conservatorium of Music is socially significant as a focus of musical education in Victoria, a role which it continues to this day. Regular concerts were conducted by the Conservatorium's students, which together with the school's ability to attract musicians of international standing, played an important part in stimulating Melbourne's cultural life. The Conservatorium's teaching facilities were also extended to working people through the Workers' Education Association and state schools around Melbourne.

The Conservatorium of Music and Melba Hall is architecturally significant as a fine and unusual example of Edwardian design in Victoria. The Conservatorium of Music is an important early twentieth century building in Victoria, illustrating a fusion of Art Nouveau detailing with an otherwise traditional classically derived building form. The building is also an interesting example of the influence in Australia of English architecture of the 1890s and 1900s. Although details of the facade are an Art Nouveau reflection, the building is an original design expression which may be seen as part of the recurrent search for an indigenous architecture style.

## 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	1909,
Architect/Designer	Bates Peebles & Smart,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	917

Property Number

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## History

History of Place:

The University's Act of Parliament (1853) provided for a degree in music but it was not until 1895 that a Conservatorium was established with the help of substantial private funds from Francis Ormond. It was located in rented rooms in Queen's buildings opposite the Carlton Gardens and run by Professor Marshall Hall. In 1901 Marshall Hall was not re-appointed and accommodation was changed to the National Museum. The Conservatorium was finally established in its own purpose-built buildings on the University site in 1910. Dame Nellie Melba laid the foundation stone on 26 November 1909. Melba Hall was built with funds partly raised by Melba's own fund-raising efforts. Marshall Hall returned as chair of the Conservatorium in 1915.

Associated People: Dame Nellie Melba  
Gawler & Drummond (architects)

## Extent of Registration

AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 925.

CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC AND MELBA HALL, THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

(To the extent of:

1. the building known as the Conservatorium of Music and Melba Hall, University of Melbourne, Parkville, shown marked B-1 on Plan 602929K(A), endorsed by the Chairperson, Historic Buildings Council and held by the Director, Historic Buildings Council.

2. the land extending

**west** - to Royal Parade

**south** - to a line level with the south side of Genetics

**east** - to the Genetics Building

**east/south** - Melba Hall to the Genetics Building

**east/east sides** - Melba Hall to a line 5 metres from the building

**north** - to a line 10 metres from the building

this being part of the land described in Certificate of Title Volume 8876 Folio 379 and marked L-1 on Plan 602929K(B), endorsed by the Chairperson, Historic Buildings Council and held by the Director, Historic Buildings Council.)

[Victoria Government Gazette No. G24 24 June 1992 p.1580]

*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/>*