

PRAHRAN TOWN HALL



PRAHRAN TOWN HALL
SOHE 2008



h00203 1 prahran town hall
greville street prahran exterior
she project 2004



h00203 prahran town hall
greville street prahran clock
tower she project 2004



h00203 prahran town hall
prahran exterior view



h00203 prahran town hall
interior council chamber
may05



h00203 prahran town hall
interior first town hall 2 may05



h00203 prahran town hall
interior looking north may05



h00203 prahran town hall
south elevation may05



h00203 prahran town hall
greville st facade 2 may05



h00203 prahran town hall
interior detail may05



Prahran Town Hall Ceiling
First Town Hall May 05



Prahran Town Hall Former
Conservatory Interior May 05



Prahran Town Hall Greville St
Facade May 05



Prahran Town Hall Interior
Council Chamber 2 May 05



Prahran Town Hall Interior
Council Chamber 3 May 05



Prahran Town Hall Interior
First Town Hall May 05



Prahran Town Hall Interior
First Town Hall May 05



Prahran Town Hall NE Corner
Council Chamber



Prahran Town Hall NE Corner
Council Chambers 2 May 05



Prahran Town Hall NW Rear
Corner of First Town Hall May
05



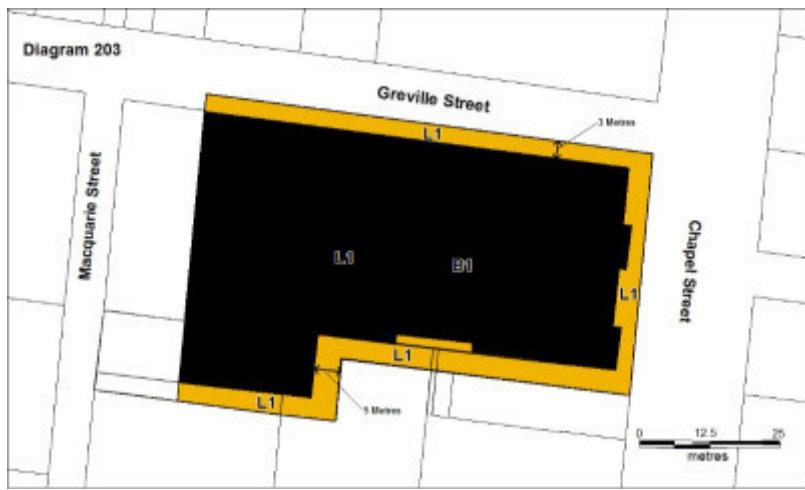
Prahran Town Hall South
Elevation 2 May 05



Prahran Town Hall South
Elevation 3 May 05



Prahran Town Hall South
Elevation 4 May 05



H0203 Prahran Town Hall Plan Feb 2008 mz

Location

CHAPEL STREET AND GREVILLE STREET PRAHRAN, STONNINGTON CITY

Municipality

STONNINGTON CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0203

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO15

VHR Registration

October 9, 1974

Amendment to Registration

July 10, 2008

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - December 10, 2025

What is significant?

The Prahran Town Hall complex was constructed in stages over a number of years on land at the corner of Chapel and Greville Streets. The first municipal council was elected in 1856, the year after Prahran was declared a municipality, and initial meetings were held in the Mechanics Institute. Land was acquired on this corner in 1856 from T. B. Payne for the purpose of constructing a court house and lock up, and these were erected the following year.

After much disagreement over the location, it was decided that a town hall be built on the site in Chapel Street adjacent to the court house. In 1860 designs by Crouch and Wilson were selected for a towered building containing the town hall, council chambers and library, and the foundation stone was subsequently laid on 31 October 1860. In 1862 tenders were called for alterations to the tower to incorporate a clock, and the rendering of the brick building, both of which were completed the following year.

In 1869 the court house building was taken down and possibly to some extent rebuilt at the rear of the town hall, with entry from Greville Street. This enabled the construction of additions by Crouch and Wilson to the north of the town hall building in 1878, which provided a post and telegraph office, with entry from Chapel Street, police quarters behind, and public library and residences for the post master and librarian above.

In 1885 land was purchased to the west along Greville Street, for a new court house. The second relocation of this, and the relocation of the police station, enabled the vacated spaces to be used as council chambers and municipal offices respectively. Concurrent to this, in 1888 competitive designs were called for a new town hall to be constructed to the rear of the 1869 court house with entry from Greville Street. A design by Charles D'Ebro won from nine submitted. His design included a hall to seat 1,200 people, with a stage at the south end, and entry and associated anterooms to the north. It also included extension of the existing tower; modification of the 1869 court house into a council chamber; affiliated works including a passage linking the earlier town hall with the new council chambers; a mayor's suite; caretaker's residence; conservatory and a School of Art above the entrance lobby to the new town hall.

In 1914 the main town hall was substantially damaged by fire. This necessitated the rebuilding of the hall and architects Sydney Smith and Ogg were commissioned to undertake this work. It was built in the same location and most of the new walls were rebuilt from the old. A grander entrance was constructed with lower and upper foyers, and a lending library was incorporated above, also entered from Greville Street.

In 1926 the post and telegraph office and post master's residence were relocated and the vacated areas became available for council use. Other alterations included the removal of the balcony from the old town hall in 1953 and the removal of the timber structure from the top of the tower in 1955.

Internally the Council Chamber contains its collection of nineteenth century furniture and the building also contains a collection of honour boards from various friendly societies that operated in the area.

How is it significant?

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

Why is it significant?

The Prahran Town Hall is of architectural significance as a fine example of a group of buildings constructed over a period of time and involving three important Melbourne architects. Crouch and Wilson, Charles D'Ebro and Sydney Smith and Ogg all made substantial contributions to architectural design in Victoria and the buildings at Prahran are illustrative of their work. Both the Crouch and Wilson buildings of the 1860s and 1870s, and the more elaborate 1880s building by D'Ebro, are representative examples of their periods of construction.

The Prahran Town Hall is of architectural significance for its interior decorative schemes which remain in the first town hall, council chamber and the new town hall. The latter is an example of large scale decoration of a public building undertaken in the early twentieth century.

The Prahran Town Hall is of architectural significance as an important component of a fine group of substantial nineteenth century public buildings, which includes the court house and police station and the fire station. The 1888 addition illustrates the civic pride evident in Victoria during the boom period of the 1880s.

The Prahran Town Hall is of historical significance for its collection of friendly society honour boards which illustrate the presence, importance and influence of these organisations in local communities throughout Victoria. The Prahran Town Hall is of historical significance for its Council Chamber and its furniture which is illustrative of the functioning of councils in the nineteenth century.

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:

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. Note: All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan endorsed by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable.

Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works may submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

Regular Site Maintenance :

The following site maintenance works are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995,

a) regular site maintenance provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits;

- b)** the maintenance of an item to retain its conditions or operation without the removal of or damage to the existing fabric or the introduction of new materials;
- c)** cleaning including the removal of surface deposits, organic growths, or graffiti by the use of low pressure water and natural detergents and mild brushing and scrubbing;
- d)** repairs, conservation and maintenance to plaques, memorials, roads and paths, fences and gates and drainage and irrigation.
- e)** the replacement of existing services such as cabling, plumbing, wiring and fire services that uses existing routes, conduits or voids, and does not involve damage to or the removal of significant fabric.

Note: Surface patina which has developed on the fabric may be an important part of the item's significance and if so needs to be preserved during maintenance and cleaning.

Note: Any new materials used for repair must not exacerbate the decay of existing fabric due to chemical incompatibility, obscure existing fabric or limit access to existing fabric for future maintenance. Repair must maximise protection and retention of fabric and include the conservation of existing details or elements.

Non Registered Fabric:

All works including demolition and internal modification to structures not included in the extent of registration are permit exempt. Additions to structures not included on the extent will require either the approval of the Executive Director or permit approval. Should these works require a permit is at the discretion of the Executive Director.

The construction of any new structures within the boundaries of this registration will require a permit.

Exterior:

Minor repairs and maintenance which replaces like fabric with like.

Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.

Installation and repairing of damp proofing by either injection method or grout pocket method.

Installation or removal of external fixtures and fittings such as, hot water services and taps.

Interior:

Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.

Installation, removal or replacement of curtain tracks, rods and blinds.

Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted art or religious works or icons.

Removal or replacement of non-original door and window furniture including, hinges, locks, knobs and sash lifts.

Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves and that the central plant is concealed.

Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring.

Installation, removal or replacement of electric clocks, public address systems, detectors, alarms, emergency lights, exit signs, luminaires and the like on plaster surfaces.

Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.

Painting

Painting will not require permit approval if the painting:

- a) does not involve the disturbance or removal of earlier paint layers or other decorative schemes, where the extant painting or other decorative scheme has not been mentioned in the statement of significance or the extent of registration.
- b) involves over-coating with an appropriate surface as an isolating layer to provide a means of protection for significant earlier layers or to provide a stable basis for repainting;
- c) employs the same colour scheme and paint type as an earlier scheme if they are appropriate to the substrate and do not endanger the survival of earlier paint layers.

If the painting employs a different colour scheme and paint type from an earlier scheme a permit will not be required if

- a) the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed colour scheme, paint type, details of surface preparation and paint removal will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the item;
- b) the person proposing to undertake the painting has received a notice advising that the Executive Director is satisfied.

Any proposal to undertake such work should be submitted to the Executive Director, detailing the proposed colour scheme, paint type, details of surface preparation and paint removal involved in the repainting, for approval

Construction dates	1860, 1878, 1888, 1914,
Architect/Designer	D'Ebro, Charles, Crouch & Wilson, Sydney Smith & Ogg,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place, Registered object integral to a registered place,
Hermes Number	957
Property Number	

History

The Prahran Town Hall complex was constructed in stages over a number of years on land at the corner of Chapel and Greville Streets. The first municipal council was elected in 1856, the year after Prahran was declared a municipality, and initial meetings were held in the Mechanics Institute. Land was acquired on this corner in 1856 from T. B. Payne for the purpose of constructing a court house and lock up, and these were erected the following year.

After much disagreement over the location, it was decided that a town hall be built on the site in Chapel Street adjacent to the court house. In 1860 designs by Crouch and Wilson were selected for a towered building containing the town hall, council chambers and library, and the foundation stone was subsequently laid on 31 October 1860. In 1862 tenders were called for alterations to the tower to incorporate a clock, and the rendering of the brick building, both of which were completed the following year.

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In 1885 land was purchased to the west along Greville Street, for a new court house. The second relocation of this, and the relocation of the police station, enabled the vacated spaces to be used as council chambers and municipal offices respectively. Concurrent to this, in 1888 competitive designs were called for a new town hall to be constructed to the rear of the 1869 court house with entry from Greville Street. A design by Charles D'Ebro won from nine submitted. His design included a hall to seat 1,200 people, with a stage at the south end, and entry and associated anterooms to the north. It also included extension of the existing tower; modification of the 1869

court house into a council chamber; affiliated works including a passage linking the earlier town hall with the new council chambers; a mayor's suite; caretaker's residence; conservatory and a School of Art above the entrance lobby to the new town hall.

In 1914 the main town hall was substantially damaged by fire, which began in a drapery store in Chapel Street. This necessitated the rebuilding of the hall and architects Sydney Smith and Ogg were commissioned to undertake this work. It was built in the same location and most of the new walls were rebuilt from the old. A grander entrance was constructed with lower and upper foyers, and a lending library was incorporated above, also entered from Greville Street.

In 1926 the post and telegraph office and post master's residence were relocated and the vacated areas became available for council use. Other alterations included the removal of the balcony from the old town hall in 1953 and the removal of the timber structure from the top of the tower in 1955.

The draft statement of significance and the above history were produced as part of an Online Data Upgrade Project 2005. Sources were as follows:

L. Fust and L. Weinstock. *Prahran Town Hall*. History Research Essay. Department of Architecture and Building. University of Melbourne 1968, (includes copies of drawings)

Plaque Citation

This fine Italianate Town Hall, built in stages 1860-1914 by the architects Crouch & Wilson, Charles D'Ebro and Sydney Smith & Ogg, is notable for its interiors and forms part of an outstanding civic precinct.

This is a fine example of a group of buildings constructed over decades and involving three important Melbourne architects. Crouch and Wilson, Charles D'Ebro and Sydney Smith and Ogg all made substantial contributions to architectural design in Victoria and these buildings are illustrative of their work. They are also significant for the interior decorative schemes in the town halls and council chamber.

Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 1995**, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended in that the Heritage Register Number 203 in the category is described as Heritage Place and Heritage Objects.

Prahran Town Hall
Chapel Street and Greville Street
Prahran
Stonnington City

EXTENT:

1. All of the land marked as L1 on Diagram 203 held by the Executive Director being all of the described in Book 40 Memorial 362 and Easement E-2 in Certificate of Title Volume 10808 Folio 075 and part of the land described in Book 377 Memorial 299 and Certificate of Title Volume 3912 Folio 254 and including the rights of way and road reserves as shown.
2. All of the place known as Prahran Town Hall and shown as B1 on Diagram 203 held by the Executive Director.
3. All of the following objects:

A blackwood speaker's chair - Council Chamber
Two blackwood armchairs - Council Chamber
A blackwood dais - Council Chamber
A blackwood writing table with three frieze drawers - Council Chamber

A blackwood writing table with two frieze drawers - Council Chamber
A set of five blackwood stools - Council Chamber
A blackwood centre table - Council Chamber
Four blackwood benches - Council Chamber
A set of ten blackwood side chairs - Council Chamber
8 Friendly Society Honour Boards.

Dated 7 July 2008

RAY TONKIN
Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G 28 10 July 2008 1656]

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/>