
Florentino Restaurant & Napier Waller & Assistants Murals



B4332 Florentino

Location

78 - 82 Bourke Street,, MELBOURNE VIC 3000 - Property No B4332

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

State

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0493

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 12, 2005

Preamble; Samuel Wynn (co-founder of Wynn's Wines) re-established the popular French Cafe Denat from Ehibition Street, to a little closer to the source of his trade (Parliament House and Gordon House), upstairs at 78-80 Bourke Street. In 1925, part of the upstairs interior now known to many as the Cafe Florentino 'old' dining room was created to the design of architect JVT Ward. Wynn subsequently leased the cafe to Rinaldo Massoni. In turn, Massoni obtained space over 82 Bourke Street and linked the existing dining room to another dining room

created in the former storage floor used by the shop below and this time designed by Walter and Richard Butler. Added to this renovation were the 'murals', which were sixteen Florentine scenes painted on canvasses set into the wall panels and executed under the direction of noted muralist Napier Waller. It continued in a similar vein, but with more renown, as the Cafe Florentino and as a meeting place for intellectuals, bohemians and politicians. Statement of Significance: Set in the theatre district of Bourke Street east, it is the last intact example of the numerous wine cafes and bohemian haunts which dotted this end of the city, particularly from early this century such as the Hill of Content bookshop, The Society, Molina's, Mario's and the Latin cafes.

As a period cafe interior, it retains a high integrity and is distinguished by the Waller-inspired murals. It also reflects the tastes and early history of Samuel Wynn, one of Australia's more renowned wine makers. It illustrates the nature of early wine selling in Melbourne, particularly the downstairs part of 78 Bourke Street with its panelling and rear wine bottling rooms.

Externally, although from two construction periods (1860 and 1922-26) and altered, the former shop and residences share some of the Cafe Denat and Cafe Florentino's historical aura and are also part of an old conservative classical revival streetscape. Further alterations took place in 1898.

Interior Classified: 27/04/1978

Building Classified: 13/07/1989

Murals Statement of Significance:

The nine mural panels in the Florentino Restaurant are artistically and historically significant at a local level. The works were painted by four separate artists working on individual panels. Technically, the works are good - particularly when it is considered that the artists were students at the time. The panels were designed as part of a complete view of the room, and cover all available wall space in the room. The structure of the walls, the furniture, light fittings, and even the food, were meant to work together to produce the complete experience.

Classified: 10/06/1992

Hermes Number 64403

Property Number

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/>