
Bourke Street East - Historic Area



B7231 Bourke St East

Location

Bourke Street between Exhibition & Spring Streets,, MELBOURNE VIC 3000 - Property No B7231

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

State

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - February 27, 2008

The Bourke Street east precinct comprises those buildings and the resultant space on both sides of Bourke Street between Exhibition and Spring Street that frame the view of Parliament House as seen at eye level from the Exhibition/Bourke Street intersection.

The precinct includes the streetscapes on both sides of Bourke Street between Exhibition and Spring Streets and the space above and around the street that affects the quality of the view corridor to Parliament House. This area and the quality of the precinct itself are two aspects that presently play important roles in appreciating this area.

This appreciation is centred around Parliament House which is one of the finest examples of Victorian Architecture in the world. The important position of Parliament House as terminating Bourke Street, must be appreciated in relationship to the buildings that frame the view of this masterpiece.

At present the top end of Bourke Street with its buildings of relatively low height and small scale enhance the giant aspects of Parliament House. The unity of the streetscape and their relative size to the main features of the area may not be exhibited as strongly as for instance in Paris, where the Avenue de l'Opera with its uniform row

of plain facades is grandly terminated by the giant and elaborated facade of the Opera House. However, the effect is undoubtedly comparable. It is therefore important that this effect remains at the top of Bourke Street and is not destroyed by the intrusion of out of scale modern buildings. new buildings should be permitted to be erected only on the basis that any higher portion be set back sufficiently from the street boundary so as not to destroy this positive aspect of the streetscape. A suitable low rise structure enhancing this streetscape should be located on the street boundary with no forecourts.

Within the streetscapes there are also individual buildings of both historical and architectural interest. Many of these buildings, while having altered facades at ground level are relatively intact in their upper facades, and provide a uniform elevation to the street. Buildings like the ANZ Bank (88-90), the Salvation Army Citadel (65-73), the shop (35-37), each have their own individual points of interest and with other buildings of similar age and sympathetic appearance give a distinctly nineteenth century atmosphere to the street. Furthermore, the social vitality of the area with its many fine and historical restaurants, the Florentino, the Society and Pellegrini's as well as its cafes, and other features such as the Hill of Content Bookshop, Job Warehouse, the Windsor Hotel, give the area an individuality and special importance that is unique in the Central Business District. This is further added to by buildings on the perimeter of the precinct such as the Princess Theatre & Gordon House. Finally, the absence of high-rise buildings gives an intimacy to the area that has been lost on most other city blocks. Here the streetscape is not overshadowed by any huge developments that would cast shadows across the footpaths and close views and vistas of Parliament House.

These aspects of the Bourke Street East precinct are to be commended and it is urged that the area be enhanced in future years by careful assessment of the individual buildings in the area, preparation of urban design guidelines to effectively allow the view corridor to Parliament House to be maintained and not overshadowed by tall multi-story towers, and an outward action by the State and local government to undertake street improvements and encourage the use of existing buildings in the area to further develop its social vitality.
Classified: 01/03/1981

Hermes Number 70159

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/>