
Fincham Organ Factory



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Location

2 Stawell Street, RICHMOND VIC 3121 - Property No 171230

Municipality

YARRA CITY

Level of significance

Incl in HO area indiv sig

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO284

Heritage Listing

Yarra City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 1, 2008

The following wording is from the Allom and Lovell Building Citation, 1998 for the property. Please note that this is a "Building Citation", not a "Statement of Significance". For further information refer to the Building Citation held by the City of Yarra.

History:

George Fincham, the son of organ builder, Jonathon George Fincham, was born in England in 1828. He was apprenticed to Henry Beddington and worked as the foreman for James Bishop & Son before emigrating to Victoria in 1852. He started as a organ-tuner and repairer in Queen Street before leaving for the Ballarat goldfields. After returning in 1854, he built his first home and bluestone organ factory in Bridge Road in 1855. He started manufacturing organs by 1862 and by 1881 he had opened a branch in Adelaide, with agents in Perth (1897), Brisbane (1902) and a branch in Sydney (1904).

In 1878 the family moved to Hawthorn but retained the factory in Bridge Road. Fincham purchased land in Stawell Street in 1884 and 'by then he had a 218 foot (73 metre) frontage onto Bridge Road with a depth of 188 feet (63 metres), extending from Type Street to Stawell Street, where new and larger sections of the factory were erected'.

The present building was probably erected in c.1896 when a brick factory was first listed on this site, rated at NAV ?50; the previous year having been noted as vacant land.

Fincham is believed to have manufactured over 200 organs including those at the Exhibition Building; Freemason's Hall; St Kilda Town Hall and a number of prominent churches including Baptist Church, Collins Street; Independent Church, Collins Street; Scots Church, Collins Street; Wesley Church; St Francis' Church, Elizabeth Street; St Peter's Church, Albert Street, East Melbourne; and St Patrick's Cathedral, Albert Street, East Melbourne.

Fincham died in 1910 and the firm was continued as Fincham & Son by his descendants. The firm now predominantly repairs, rather than manufactures, organs.

Description:

The George Fincham & Sons Organ Factory is a double-storey brown face brick building with a gabled roof and symmetrical facade. The facade has a central shallow segmented-arched vehicle entrance flanked by single timber-framed double-hung sash windows. There are three similar windows at first floor level. The south elevation has six larger shallow arched head windows. All windows have brick sills; the east gable end has brick coping. The building is extremely plain; there is a large painted sign bearing the words GEORGE FINCHAM & SONS PTY LTD ORGAN BUILDERS / EST 1862 / 428 3851. There is a small office entrance, apparently a later addition, to the far right of the central entrance.

Significance:

The George Fincham & Sons Organ Factory is of state historical significance. The company was a major Australian organ manufacturer in the 19th century, having manufactured organs for many of Melbourne's most historically and architecturally significant buildings, predominantly churches. The building at 2 Stawell Street is the sole remaining building of the company's larger Richmond complex, developed in stages from 1855. The continuity of a very particular use of the site contributes to the significance of the building. Architecturally, the building is of interest.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Yarra - Richmond Conservation Study, John & Thurley O'Connor, Ros Coleman & Heather Wright, 1985; Yarra - City of Yarra Heritage Review, Allom Lovell & Associates, 1998; Yarra - City of Yarra Review of Heritage Overlay Areas, Graeme Butler & Associates, 2007;
Construction dates	1896,
Hermes Number	103085
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

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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/>