
CONFERENCE HALL (Open Brethren)



Cookson Street, 25
CONFERENCE HALL

Location

25 Cookson Street CAMBERWELL, BOROONDARA CITY

Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO714

Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 30, 2019

What is Significant?

The former Open Brethren conference hall, 25 Cookson Street, Camberwell, built in 1924 and now operating as Camberwell Antique Market is significant.

How is it significant?

25 Cookson Street is of local historic and aesthetic significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

The former Open Brethren conference hall at 25 Cookson Street Camberwell, built in 1924, is historically significant for its demonstration of the emergence of minority religious groups that diversified Camberwell's Protestant and Catholic majorities. As an Evangelical Christian group originating in Ireland in the 1820s they share historical roots with the Plymouth Brethren, forming a small fellowship group in Camberwell associated with John McAlpin, founder of the McAlpin flour company.

25 Cookson Street is historically significant for its demonstration of the function of the Brethren conferences that emphasised speaking and teaching rather than the following of Christian rituals. Although the once spacious interior is now modified by a lowered ceiling, the entrance and foyer remain to demonstrate some of the functions of the place. The relatively unadorned facade represents a deliberate design intent to provide non ecclesiastical spaces for Brethren gatherings. The conference hall is historically significant for its demonstration of new Christian denominations that located their buildings onto the street front and as part of commercial streets rather than isolated buildings church buildings, exemplified by the Salvation Army as well as the non-religious traditions of assembly halls and meeting rooms. (Criterion A)

25 Cookson Street, the former Open Brethren conference hall is aesthetically significant for its Interwar Stripped Classical design featuring a combination of face red brick and rendered panels and a central spandrel applied lettering. The facade is enriched through the use of triple arch-headed windows flanked each side by a single semi-circular arched window with the semi-circular theme carried through to the parapet. The place is aesthetically significant for its central entry with steps flanked by brickwork panels with decorative features. Of particular interest is the intact shopfront with blue tiled panels, metal framed shopfront windows and leaded glass highlights. The glazed entry doors and cantilevered verandah with pressed metal soffit are notable features. Now operating as the Camberwell Antique Centre, the place has been modified with a rear and roof top extension and a number of internal changes but still retains a high degree of integrity to the exterior. (Criterion E)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Boroondara - Municipal-Wide Heritage Gap Study: Vol. 2 Camberwell, Context, 2018;
Construction dates	1924,
Hermes Number	202225
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The former conference hall, now Camberwell Antique Centre is located on the corner of Cookson and Holly Streets opposite the Camberwell Station. The building is a substantial Interwar Stripped Classical design that has a two storey component with shopfronts at street level and offices above. Behind the street frontage the remainder of the building is a large single storey volume with a mezzanine gallery. An extension at the rear of the hall has been constructed at the first floor level with carparking beneath. A further extension has been inserted above the former roofline of the front. This is visible on Holly Street as an extended wall height but is largely concealed behind the twin gabled parapets that adorn the frontage.

At street level there is a central entry with steps flanked by brickwork panels with decorative features. One shopfront retains blue tiled panels, Interwar metal framed shopfront windows and leaded glass highlights. The glazed door also appears to be original. The other shopfront has been substantially altered and features rough brickwork.

There is a cantilevered verandah across the entire frontage that features a pressed metal soffit.

The facade features a combination of face red brick and rendered panels with a central spandrel with Conference Hall applied lettering. The central bay has triple arch-headed windows flanked each side by a single semi-circular arched window. The semi-circular theme is carried through to the parapet that frames the openings. Further rendered panels for lettering are located at the mid level. From Holly Street the building is a plain red brick wall with piers interspaced by timber framed sash windows. Two sets of modern stairs with iron railings lead to the main space and the rear extension adjacent to the Holly Street footpath.

The front entrance, glazed doors and foyer are moderately intact, however, the interior has a lowered ceiling with a partial gallery. Upstairs a new office fitout has exposed the steel roof trusses but there is little of the main auditorium that has not been altered.

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/>