

## SUM KUM LEE



SUM KUM LEE SOHE 2008



sum kum lee little bourke  
street melbourne front view  
jul1999



sum kum lee little bourke  
street melbourne entrance  
jul1999



sum kum lee little bourke  
street melbourne balcony  
detail jul1999



1 sum kum lee little bourke  
street melbourne front view

### Location

112-114 LITTLE BOURKE STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

### Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

### Level of significance

Registered

### Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0442

### Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO689

### VHR Registration

January 5, 1979

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 20, 2000

What is significant?

The Sum Kum Lee Building is in the heart of Chinatown and was constructed 1887-88 for wealthy merchant and Chinese community leader, Lowe Kong Meng. It was designed by architect George De Lacy Evans and is a three storey brick building with basement. It served as a business warehouse and residence until 1889 when it was occupied by the publishers of the newspaper Table Talk. The newspaper vacated the building in 1903 and it has since had a variety of commercial uses. The heavily embellished boom style classicism facade, with a Mannerist western interpretation of the Chinese style, is modelled in stucco with facing Malmsbury stone at ground level.

How is it significant?

The Sum Kum Lee Building is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Sum Kum Lee building is historically significant for its long association with the Chinese community in the traditional Chinatown quarter of Little Bourke Street. It is significant for its associations with the first owner, Lowe Kong Meng, a wealthy and prominent member of the Chinese community in the 1880s. From 1889 to 1903 the building was the home of Maurice Brodsky and was the offices of his newspaper, Table Talk. This newspaper had considerable success during the depression of the 1890s exposing the corruption and financial scandals of the so-called land boomers.

The Sum Kum Lee building is architecturally significant as one of the most elaborately modelled facades in Little Bourke Street. The design is a very unusual Mannerist composition incorporating Chinese architectural motifs into an elaborate boom style classicism facade.

### 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](#).

Construction dates	1887,
Architect/Designer	Evans, George De Lacy,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	779
Property Number	

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## History

### Contextual History:

The newspaper 'Table Talk' was founded in 1885 by Maurice Brodzky (c1850-1919). Brodzky was from an East Prussian Jewish family who had lived in various European capitals. Brodzky fought during the Franco-Prussian War of 1866-70 before emigrating to Australia in 1871, where he was a teacher, journalist and author. He was related by marriage to Theodore Fink, a leading landboomer. Brodzky achieved financial success from the newspaper, which uncovered many of the scandals of the land-boomers. However, in 1902 he was sued for libel, and unable to pay his costs he was forced to close Table Talk down. It reopened later under new management and survived until 1939.

(Nigel Lewis, Historic and Architectural Survey of The Central City of Melbourne, Bourke Street, East, pp.38-39)

Associated People: Sum Kum Lee

Maurice Brodzky

## Extent of Registration

Historic Building No. 442. Sum-Kum Lee, 112-114 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne, (to the extent of the total external fabric of the building).

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No.3 5 January 1979 p.47]

*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/>*