

Chapel Street North Precinct, South Yarra Statement of Significance

Heritage Place: Chapel Street North Precinct, South Yarra

PS ref no: HO642



Grading

■ Non-contributory

■ Contributory

□ Precinct Boundary

HO642 - Chapel Street North Precinct SOUTH YARRA

What is significant?

The Chapel Street North Commercial Precinct, comprising 566-600 & 575-593 Chapel Street and 248-266 Toorak Road, is significant. The commercial buildings in the precinct were built between 1890 and 1925 and consist of single and double storey Victorian, Edwardian and Interwar shops built in a range of architectural styles. Shops built between 1890-1925 are contributory, as is the 1993 Building at 252 Toorak Road. The original shopfronts at 577, 581 and 583 Chapel street are contributory as is the awning soffit at 581-585 Chapel Street.

The Contemporary shops at 576-584 and 579 Chapel Street are Non-contributory. The building comprising Lots 2 to 7 at 566 Chapel Street is non-contributory. 16 Forster Street, the Contemporary office building toward the rear (south) of 268-270 Toorak Road is non-contributory.

How is it significant?

The Chapel Street North Commercial Precinct is of local historic and representative significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

The Chapel Street and Toorak Road Commercial Precinct is of historical significance for its ability to demonstrate a major development phase of commercial/retail centres in South Yarra. It demonstrates the influence that improved transport connections to the area brought about by the expansion of the rail line from South Yarra to Oakleigh in 1879, the introduction of special workingmen’s fares in 1882, and the opening of tramway lines along Toorak Road and Chapel Street in 1888. Coupled with a rapid expansion of local industries in the area there was a growing demand for commercial and retail businesses to cater for residents in newly formed housing estates that filled with terrace houses associated with this major period of suburban growth. Halted by the depression of the 1890s the area saw a second wave of development after the establishment of the Tramways Trust in 1910 which brought new patronage to the commercial precinct along Chapel Street and Toorak Road. (Criterion A)

The precinct is significant for its illustration of popular commercial architectural styles of the Victorian, Edwardian, and interwar periods, with a relatively high intactness of buildings, particularly at first floor level. The Victorian shops are representative of the Italianate style of architecture that reflects the Victorian taste for ornamentation derived from classical architecture. This is evident in the buildings use of decorative elements that include engaged pilasters (to demarcate the individual shops), cornices, pediments, decorative scrolls, a moulded stringer course, window moulds and finials. The Edwardian shops are characteristic of the Federation Free style with an eclectic combination of elements and details drawn or adapted from Classical, Romanesque or Art Nouveau styles. This is demonstrated in the use of Diocletian windows, pilaster piers rising above the parapet line and embossed sinuous motifs. The 1920s shops are representative of the Interwar Free Classical style with an eclectic mix of simplified classical motifs including engaged pilaster, bracketed eaves and parapets with vestigial pediments. Arts and Crafts influences are also evident in the use of face brickwork, with unpainted render details.

The precinct is enhanced by the many groups of shops designed as an ensemble, most of them two-storey in height. Most of the buildings in the precinct have been designed as rows of identical shops massed as a single building giving them greater visual prominence and landmark value. This landmark quality is strengthened by the use of corner sites giving a three dimensionality to the facades (at 566, 568, 575 & 600 Chapel Street & 252 Toorak Road). (Criterion D)

Grades

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|---------|---------------|--------------|
| 594-602 | Chapel Street | Contributory |
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STONNINGTON PLANNING SCHEME

| | | |
|---------|----------------|------------------|
| 592 | Chapel Street | Contributory |
| 590 | Chapel Street | Contributory |
| 588 | Chapel Street | Contributory |
| 586 | Chapel Street | Contributory |
| 584 | Chapel Street | Non-Contributory |
| 582 | Chapel Street | Non-Contributory |
| 580 | Chapel Street | Non-Contributory |
| 578 | Chapel Street | Non-Contributory |
| 576 | Chapel Street | Non-Contributory |
| 574A | Chapel Street | Contributory |
| 574 | Chapel Street | Contributory |
| 572 | Chapel Street | Contributory |
| 570 | Chapel Street | Contributory |
| 568 | Chapel Street | Contributory |
| 566 | Chapel Street | Contributory |
| 564 | Chapel Street | |
| 575 | Chapel Street | Contributory |
| 577 | Chapel Street | Contributory |
| 579 | Chapel Street | Non-Contributory |
| 581 | Chapel Street | Contributory |
| 583 | Chapel Street | Contributory |
| 585 | Chapel Street | Contributory |
| 587 | Chapel Street | Contributory |
| 589 | Chapel Street | Contributory |
| 591 | Chapel Street | Contributory |
| 593 | Chapel Street | Contributory |
| 248 | Toorak Road | |
| 250 | Toorak Road | |
| 252 | Toorak Road | |
| 256 | Toorak Road | |
| 258 | Toorak Road | |
| 260 | Toorak Road | |
| 262 | Toorak Road | |
| 264-266 | Toorak Road | |
| 268-270 | Toorak Road | |
| 16 | Forster Street | Non-Contributory |

Primary source

Chapel Street North Precinct, South Yarra Heritage Citation Report, Context Pty Ltd, June 2020