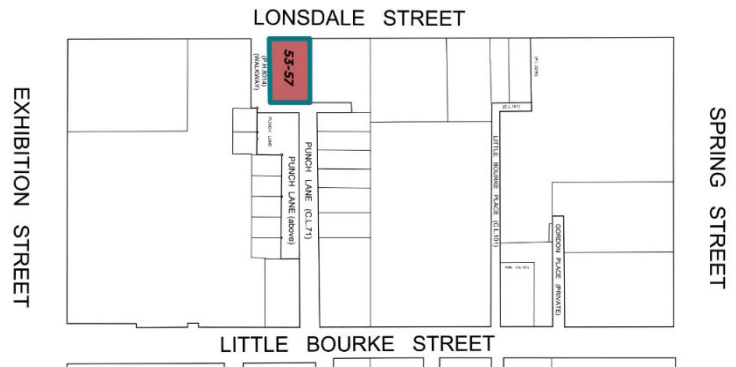


STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: 53-57 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, April 2022

Heritage Place: Shops and residences



PS ref no: HO1253



What is significant?

The row of shops at 53-57 Lonsdale Street, completed 1881.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing
- The buildings high level of integrity to its original design
- Simple parapet
- Engaged pilasters with scroll detail and decorative markings
- Deep moulded cornice with rosettes
- Segmented arched window openings with moulded architraves
- Minor cornice connecting spring point of window arches
- Original wall vents
- Double hung timber windows
- Minor moulded cornice at bottom of upper façade
- Brick chimneys.

Later alterations made to the street level façade, western elevation, the wrought iron window baskets and single storey extensions at the rear of the site are not significant.

How it is significant?

53-57 Lonsdale Street is of local historic, representative and associative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

53-57 Lonsdale Street is historically significant for its long-standing association with various Melbourne Italian restaurateur families who conducted eating houses in the building from 1901 to 2001. These families included the Molinas (1922-51), the Triacas (1964-84) and the Marchetti's (1984-2001). The Italian restaurants that operated from the building formed part of the Italian café society that developed in the first decades of the twentieth century prior to Italian migrants establishing restaurants and pizza cafes in the inner-city area in the 1950s and 1960s. (Criterion A)

Designed by Crouch and Wilson in 1880, 53-57 Lonsdale Street is a representative example of a small-scaled shop and residence from the mid-late Victorian period, built at a time when Melbourne was developing rapidly as a retail and commercial centre. Above the non-original shopfronts, the façade of 53-57 Lonsdale Street is characterised by classical Italianate Victorian-era detailing with paired segmented arched windows, pilasters, scrolls and cornice detail typical of the period. The rear facades above ground floor level and chimneys are largely intact and contribute to the building's integrity. (Criterion D)

53-57 Lonsdale Street is significant for its long association with Italian restaurants, restaurateurs and their clientele for nearly a century (1901-2001) as part Melbourne dining traditions, serving generations of Melbournians and reflecting the celebrated 'Italianisation' of food and wine culture during the twentieth century. It is significant for its direct and long-standing associations with several important Italian restaurateurs/families who have significantly influenced Melbourne's culinary culture, and who introduced new cuisines and dining styles to Melbourne. From 1922 to 1951 the Molina family operated Molina's Café d'Italia at the subject site, and for some time lived at the upstairs residence. David Triaca ran Café Latin at the subject site from 1964 to 1984, followed by Bill and Cheryl Marchetti trading as Marchetti's Latin from 1984-2001. (Criterion H)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020) (updated March 2022)