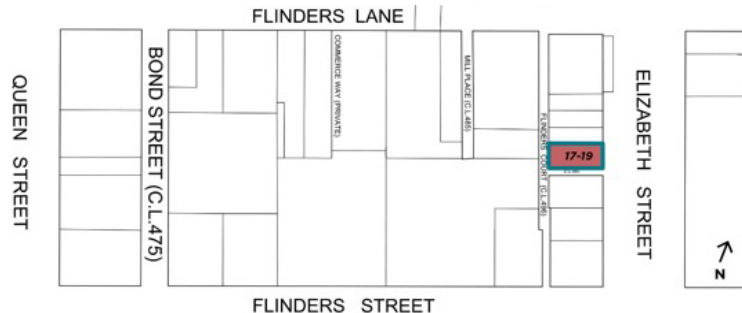


STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: Former Excelsior Chambers (17-19 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne), April 2022

Heritage Place: Former Excelsior Chambers



PS ref no: HO1246



What is significant?

17-19 Elizabeth Street, built in 1885 and extended and refaced in 1925.

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

- The building's early form, materials and detailing (dating from 1925 refurbishment)
- Detailing of the upper façade including rusticated base with rounded arched window openings, decorative metal grilles, piers and recessed spandrels, balconettes, parapet and deep decorative cornice (1925)
- The words 'Excelsior House' inscribed between levels two and three
- Pattern and size of original fenestration
- Original window joinery, including central tripartite windows with four small panes to upper sashes
- The cantilevered canopy (1925).

More recent alterations, including those to the ground level shop front, are not significant.

How it is significant?

17-19 Elizabeth Street is of local historic, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

17-19 Elizabeth Street is of historic significance for its association with Melbourne's retail and manufacturing development during the boom years of the 1880s and the 1920s. Built for Thomas Patrick Fallon, speculator and Consul for Chile in Victoria and Consul-General for Columbia in Australasia in the early 1890s, 17-19 Elizabeth Street was one of three adjacent buildings designed by architect William Salway: the subject building (1885); 21-23 Elizabeth Street (1890); and 25 Elizabeth Street (1889). 17-19 Elizabeth Street is also significant for its association with the Shamrock Club, established in 1850 to provide an opportunity for Irish migrants to meet, which occupied the building from 1902 to c1919. (Criterion A)

In its altered form of seven storeys 17-19 Elizabeth Street is a fine example of an interwar commercial palazzo, an architectural style that developed in response to the growing height of buildings in the early twentieth century, together with the desire to still utilise classical decoration to achieve a well-mannered and scholarly building. Like other buildings of this period, this classical tradition is expressed in 17-19 Elizabeth Street by the horizontal composition of the façade arranged as a base, shaft and cornice and its vertical articulation by piers between which are inset traditionally proportioned windows. (Criterion D)

17-19 Elizabeth Street is aesthetically significant as part of the group of three adjacent buildings designed by William Salway. Its somewhat unusual combination of Victorian and interwar elements features an Italianate façade with arched window openings at first floor level. Above this the building features a highly intact classical revival façade including full height vertical piers, a deep projecting cornice, balconettes and original window pattern and designs. 17-19 Elizabeth Street derives its aesthetic significance from a rich palette of classical detail together with high integrity relating to its 1925 form. (Criterion E)

Primary source

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