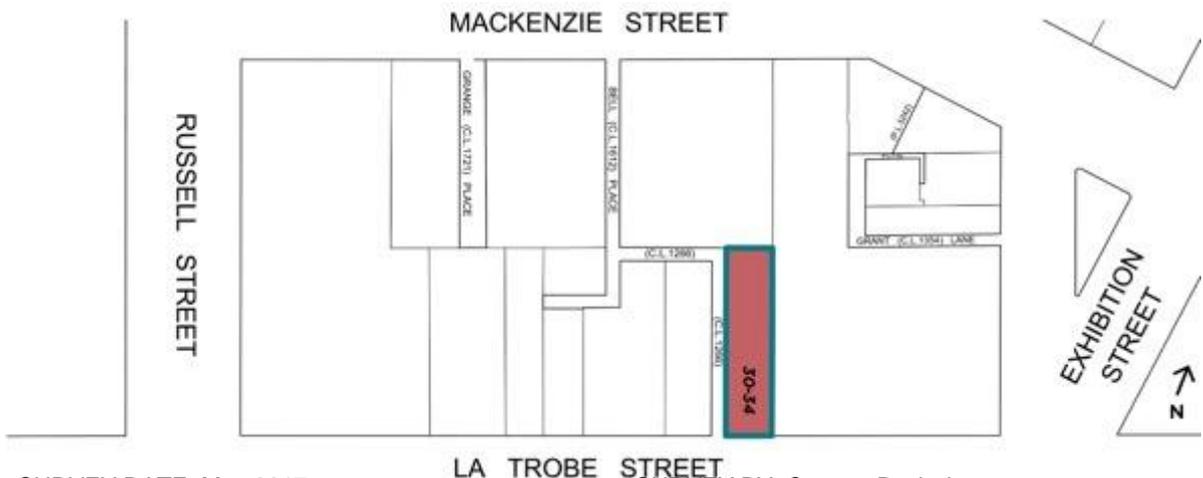


**SITE NAME** Turnverein Hall, later Grand United Order of Oddfellows Hall

**STREET ADDRESS** 30-34 La Trobe Street Melbourne

**PROPERTY ID** 105497



SURVEY DATE: May 2017

SURVEY BY: Context Pty Ltd

**HERITAGE INVENTORY** H7822-2168

**EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY** No

**PLACE TYPE** Individual Heritage Place

**PROPOSED CATEGORY** Significant

**FORMER GRADE** C

**DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:** Not known

**BUILDER:** Joseph Dean (1871)  
Edward Bennett (1874)

**DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:** Victorian Period (1851-1901)

**DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:** 1871, 1874 (façade completed)

**THEMES**

<b>ABORIGINAL THEMES</b>	<b>SUB-THEMES</b>
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
<b>HISTORIC THEMES</b>	<b>DOMINANT SUB-THEMES</b>
10 Shaping cultural life	10.3 Belonging to an ethnic or cultural group
	<b>OTHER SUB-THEMES</b>
3 Shaping the urban landscape	3.2 Expressing an architectural style

**LAND USE**

<b>HISTORIC LAND USE</b>	
<b>Archaeological block no:</b> 82	<b>Inventory no:</b> Inventory not provided
<b>Character of Occupation:</b> Government, Recreation/Public Space	
Land sale details not provided	
1888 Mahlstedt	
1905/6 Mahlstedt	
<b>THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE</b>	
1890s	Clubs and unions
1920s	Clubs and unions
1960s	Clubs and unions

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map

**SUMMARY**

Constructed in 1871 (with the façade completed in 1874), this four-storey bluestone and rendered masonry building was built for the Melbourne Deutscher Turnverein Society, a social club established by German migrants to support and promote German culture. It was later used by the Grand United Order of the Oddfellows as a meeting and gathering place. The building is notable for its largely intact, classical façade, where a number of decorative elements are arranged to convey a sense of grandeur.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### Shaping cultural life

*Belonging to an ethnic or cultural group: German immigrants*

From the beginning of settlement, colonial society in Melbourne comprised many diverse cultural groups. Germans first arrived in the city in the 1830s.

*Organised immigration of German 'vinedressers' began in the late 1840s at the instigation of merchant William Westgarth (1815-89). The first group arrived in February 1849. By July 1851 some 800 Germans had arrived. They were mostly Lutherans from Prussia and Saxony...*

*Some were 'forty-eighters', who left their homelands after the failed revolutions of 1848-49; some came for scientific adventure, bringing with them high levels of training; most were attracted by the Victorian gold rushes. A lively German community developed, encompassing German-language speakers from across Central Europe. The Deutscher Verein von Victoria (German Association of Victoria), consisting mainly of professionals and businessmen, was formed in 1850, and the Melbourne Deutscher Turnverein in 1860. There were various liedertafels, a German medical benefits society, a German lodge (Teutonia), a German socialist society (Vorwärts), and the Concordia Club, which later became the Tivoli...A succession of German-language newspapers appeared, and a network of German schools, many tied to Melbourne's Lutheran congregations. In 1860 Karl Damm opened a German College in East Melbourne; in 1870 Herr Tegthoff opened a bilingual Lyceum in St Kilda. Census records show Melbourne's German-born population rising to a peak of 4329 by 1891 (Struve 2008).*

*On 1 May 1921 the Deutsche Turnverein Melbourne and the Club Tivoli amalgamated under the name Club Tivoli Deutscher Verein Melbourne. The club bought its present club rooms in Dandenong Road Windsor in 1989...The Club is dedicated to the preservation of German culture through song, dance and the development of German language skills (Tout-Smith 2004).*

*Belonging to an ethnic or cultural group: Grand United Order of Oddfellows:*

Museums Victoria details the history of the Grand United Order of Oddfellows:

*The Grand United Order of Oddfellows (GUOOF) was established in England in the late 18th century when groups of independent lodges merged to become branches of this larger organisation. Belonging to a brotherhood which had thousands of members around the world allowed members to feel more secure in their membership. In those early days, members typically met in Inns, where they gathered for social and business purposes.*

*The Grand United Order of Oddfellows was established in Australia in 1848, with the first Grand Master of the Order being Brother James Reid (1794-1869). In 1854, the Port Phillip District of Grand United separated from the NSW branch to establish Grand United in Victoria. During the First and Second World Wars, many Grand United members enlisted for Active Service, and as with many other friendly societies, funds were created to provide for the medical benefits of serving members and their families (Tout-Smith 2004).*

*In 1948, to commemorate the centenary of Grand United, the Grand United Centenary Centre - Homes for Aged Members (now Constitution Hill) - was opened. In 1985 GUOOF Victoria merged with Manchester Unity and members who wished to continue with the fraternal aspect of their membership were invited to join Manchester Unity. Like other Oddfellow societies including Manchester Unity and the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF), Grand United had various ceremonies, rituals, regalia and levels of membership (Tout-Smith 2004).*

### **Shaping the urban landscape**

#### *Expressing an architectural style*

The year 1851 marked the separation of the colony of Victoria from New South Wales, with the resultant construction of stately government buildings. It also marked the beginning of the Victorian gold rushes. While the massive rise in wealth from gold allowed the construction of some of Melbourne's finest public buildings, , such as the Public Library (now the State Library of Victoria, begun 1854), Parliament House (begun 1856), and the Treasury Building (1858-62), it temporarily halted construction activity. The construction industry had normalised by 1854. In this period bluestone (basalt) became a popular material for commercial buildings (particularly for warehouses in the west end of the central city) and dwellings, as local supply was unlimited and the quality far better than most bricks made locally. The classical style continued well into the 1870s until a more ornate Italianate style became popular during the boom period in the 1880s (Context 2012:13).

### **SITE HISTORY**

The bluestone building at 30-34 La Trobe Street was erected in 1871 (the same year the German Empire came into being) for the Melbourne Deutscher Turnverein Society by builder Joseph Dean (MCC registration no 4559, as cited in AAI record no 77004). The façade was completed in 1874 by another builder Edward Bennett, who was previously commissioned to extend the hall in 1872 (Club Tivoli Deutscher Verein Melbourne 1980; MCC registration no 4967 & 6060, as cited in AAI record no 77007 & 77014).

The Melbourne Deutscher Turnverein Society, also known as the Melbourne German Gymnasts' Association, was formed in April 1860 under the presidency of F Gel Brecht and the gymnastic instruction of Ernst Metzger (Struve 2008). Inspired by the Turner movement that became popular during Napoleon's occupation of Germany in the early nineteenth century, 'turnverein', which translates to 'athletic clubs' in English, were established in countries with large numbers of German migrants throughout the nineteenth century. The clubs promoted exercise while having social functions and supporting a German patriotic spirit. After losing its former premises to fire in 1866, the Melbourne Deutscher Turnverein Society formed a trustee group in 1870 and purchased land measuring 40 feet by 165 feet in La Trobe Street east for £460 (*Argus* 20 August 1932:6). In the following year, a new club building was erected for £971-9-6 (Club Tivoli Deutscher Verein Melbourne 2010:20).

The Society primarily used the club building on La Trobe Street as a gymnasium, but also as a place to encourage their fellow countrymen to express their newly discovered nationalism and have social interactions (Struve 2008). Events run by the Society became widely popular, including an annual picnic and masked ball. At its peak, about 8000 people attended the annual New Year's Day Picnic in 1883, and more than 2000 people gathered for the Annual Turnverein Masked Ball held at the Royal

Exhibition Building in 1884 (*Age* 2 January 1883:3; *Fitzroy City Press* 16 August 1884:3). Turnverein Hall provided space for a range of club activities and social events, including choir meetings, until the Society moved to larger premises in Victoria Parade in April 1906.

On 1 May 1921, the Melbourne Deutsche Turnverein Society and the Club Tivoli amalgamated under the name Club Tivoli Deutscher Verein Melbourne, and this organisation continues today in other premises (Tout-Smith 2004). This amalgamation occurred due to the anti-German sentiment during World War One when the Society was forced to sell their Victoria Parade premises to the government. After the war, the Turnverein Society approached Club Tivoli, who was successful in keeping its club house in Victoria Street, Abbotsford, to join with them (Club Tivoli Deutscher Verein Melbourne 2010:20).

In 1906, the La Trobe Street hall was sold to the Grand United Order of Oddfellows (GUOOF), who used the building for meetings and annual conferences until the 1960s. In 1985, the GUOOF merged with Manchester Unity, another Oddfellows society (Stevenson 2009). Australian Unity as an entity was formed by the merger of the Australian Natives' Association Friendly Society (ANA) and the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows (Manchester Unity) in Victoria in 1993 (Australian Unity Limited 2018). It appears that GUOOF were no longer occupying the hall by 1967, since an advertisement for an auditorium space, kitchen, caretakers residence and offices at 30-34 La Trobe Street was posted in May that year (*Age* 27 May 1967:7). The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology had an administrative office at the subject site in 1971 (*Age* 29 January 1971:11).

The building was refurbished and converted to residential units in 1998 to a design by David Demsky (CoMMaps 2017).

## SITE DESCRIPTION

This grand four-storey building is located on the northern side of La Trobe Street, between Exhibition Street and Russell Street. Constructed of bluestone, it has an elaborate, rendered façade with classical styling commonly used for public buildings in the mid-late nineteenth century.

The simple form has an elaborate façade composed of a variety of classical elements combined to present a traditional appearance. The ground floor is treated as a solid base with minimal decoration and understated openings. A band of rustication runs up each side of the building. A central entry foyer is accessed by steps up from street level. Elaborate timber multi pane leadlight windows have been inserted in the ground floor (c1920s) and are now covered with plate glass for protection.

The middle levels are characterised by more elaborate classical styling. Details include engaged pilasters with capitals which intersect with an entablature at the top of the third level, rounded arched window openings with key stones, decorative mouldings running between window openings at the springing point of the arches, recessed rendered panels under the windows, and rendered panels inscribed with a floral motif between each window opening. Deep moulded cornices run between the levels. The second level varies slightly from the third level. Perhaps designed as a '*Piano Nobile*', it appears to be of grander proportions with a wide central arched opening.

The upper level is designed as an attic storey, with banded rustication running across the façade. Small squared window have angled voussoirs marked in the stucco. A deep cornice runs across the top of the parapet over the windows at this level.

**INTEGRITY**

The building façade has a high level of intactness. Recent changes include the cantilevered verandah over the central entry, and alterations to the windows at ground level. The leadlight windows are highly likely to be a later addition.

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

Early gymnastic groups in Melbourne often leased spaces in large buildings rather than having their own premise for gathering. Originally built in 1871, the Turnverein Hall was among the earliest established club buildings purpose-built with gymnasium. Later occupied by GUOOF since 1906, 30-34 La Trobe became part of small group of buildings within Hoddle Grid that have been associated with friendly societies. Within the study area, many Victorian period club or society halls were constructed during the 1880s and reflected the influence of more exuberant Italianate style architecture, typical of public buildings constructed during the boom period in central Melbourne.

The images and descriptions are provided by CoM Maps unless stated otherwise, with images dating from c2000 or later.

*YMCA, 168 Russell Street, 1878 & YWCA, 60 Russell Street, 1913 (both demolished)*

The YMCA (Figure 1) and the YWCA (Figure 2), which are among the oldest social groups in Melbourne that promoted gymnastic activities. Both examples contained a gymnasium and other member-only facilities.



Figure 1. YMCA Building, 168 Russell Street, erected in 1878 and since demolished. (Source: SLV)



Figure 2. YWCA Building, 60 Russell Street, erected in 1913 and since demolished. (Source: HERMES)

*Former premises of Deutscher Verein von Victoria (German Association of Victoria), 7-19 Alfred Place (Recommended as significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review)*

The former premises of the Deutscher Verein von Victoria (German Association of Victoria) at 7-19 Alfred Place, built in 1885-6 to designs by German-born Australian architect, J A B Koch, and remodelled in the twentieth century for the Naval and Military Club.



Figure 3. 7-9 Alfred Place, former Deutscher Verein von Victoria premises constructed 1885-6 (Source: Context, 2017)

*Horticultural Hall, 31-33 Victoria Street, 1874 (HO495)*

A two-storey brick assembly hall built for the Royal Horticultural Society. Designed by William Ellerker in the Free Classical style and built in 1874.



Figure 4. 30-33 Victoria Street constructed 1874.

*Former Independent Order of Oddfellows (IOOF) Hall, 390-394 Russell Street, 1887 (HO849)*

Formerly known as IOOF House. A two-storey rendered brick building built in 1887. Refurbished, subdivided and converted to 24 apartments and one shop in 2001 with the addition of the top storey.



Figure 5. Former Independent Order of Oddfellows (IOOF) Hall, 390-394 Russell Street constructed 1887.

*Former Forester's Hall, 168-170 La Trobe Street, 1888 (HO481)*

Built in 1888 as the lodge and meeting rooms of the Ancient Order of Foresters, the hall was designed by the architects, Ravenscroft and Freeman. The interior has been substantially modified by RMIT but the exterior survives as a significant example of boom-style architecture in Melbourne and as an indicator of the influence of men's lodges in 19th century Victorian society.



Figure 6. Former Forester's Hall, 168-170 La Trobe Street constructed 1888.

*Former Hibernian Hall, 344 Swanston Street, 1887 (HO482)*

A three-storey hall, designed in a classical revival style, and erected in 1887 by the Hibernian-Australasian Catholic Benefit Society and designed by the architects Tappin, Gilbert and Dennehy. It was acquired by RMIT in 1948. Its impressive scale and form is indicative of the role of Friendly Benefit Societies in Melbourne in the nineteenth century.



Figure 7. Former Hibernian Hall, 344 Swanston Street constructed 1887.

The former Turnverein Hall at 30-34 La Trobe was one of a few buildings designed for physical and gymnastic activities, of which two others built for the YMCA do not survive. It is one of two former places occupied by German clubs in the central city, the other being 7-9 Alfred Place. It is also of importance for its later association with GUOOF, one of many such organisations set up in the nineteenth century to promote fellowship and welfare. Although now converted to apartments, the subject building compares well with the Former IOOF Hall at 390-394 Russell Street (HO849).

**ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA**

✓	<p><b>CRITERION A</b> Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
	<p><b>CRITERION B</b> Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p><b>CRITERION C</b> Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p><b>CRITERION D</b> Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
✓	<p><b>CRITERION E</b> Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
	<p><b>CRITERION F</b> Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p><b>CRITERION G</b> Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
✓	<p><b>CRITERION H</b> Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

**MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME**

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

**OTHER**

N/A

## REFERENCES

*Age*, as cited.

*Argus*, as cited.

Australian Unity Limited 2018, *A proud history dating back to 1840*,  
<https://www.australianunity.com.au/about-us/our-history>, accessed 15 June 2018.

City of Melbourne Maps (CoMMaps) 2017, <http://maps.melbourne.vic.gov.au/>, accessed 7 June 2017.

Club Tivoli Deutscher Verein Melbourne 1980, *120 Jahre: Club Tivoli 1860: Deutscher Verein Melbourne*, Club Tivoli, Richmond.

Club Tivoli Deutscher Verein Melbourne 2010, *Club Tivoli: Deutscher Verein Melbourne 1860 – 2010: celebrating 150th anniversary, 1st May 2010*, Club Tivoli, Windsor.

*Fitzroy City Press*, as cited.

Stevenson, M 2009, 'Grand United Order of Oddfellows' in *Museums Victoria Collections*,  
<https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/2784>, accessed 15 June 2017.

Struve, Walter 2008, 'Melbourne Deutscher Turnverein', in *eMelbourne*, School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, University of Melbourne, <http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00936b.htm>, accessed online 15 June 2017.

Tout-Smith, D 2004, 'German Club, Melbourne, Victoria' in *Museums Victoria Collections*,  
<https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/1998>, accessed 15 June 2017.

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**PREVIOUS STUDIES**

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**Central Activities District  
Conservation Study 1985**

C

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**Central City Heritage  
Study 1993**

C

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**Review of Heritage  
overlay listings in the  
CBD 2002**

Ungraded

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**Central City Heritage  
Review 2011**

Ungraded

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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**Heritage Place:** Turnverein Hall, later Grand United Order of Oddfellows Hall

**PS ref no:** Interim HO1275



**What is significant?**

The Turnverein Hall, later the Grand United Order of Oddfellows Hall, at 30-34 La Trobe Street, built in 1871 with façade completed in 1874.

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

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing (from 1871 and 1874);
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design (from 1871 and 1874);
- The size and patterns of original fenestration and arched openings (La Trobe Street);
- The size and patterns of extant original fenestration and exposed rock face bluestone walls (Bell Place);
- The decorative elements including engaged pilasters, capitals, entablature, cornices, cement mouldings, key stones and voussoirs;
- The contrasting rusticated and stucco surface treatments, recessed rendered panels; and
- The early (c1920s) timber multi pane leadlight windows at ground level.

Later alterations to the window and doors at ground level, and addition of the cantilevered verandah, are not significant.

**How it is significant?**

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The Turnverein Hall, later the Grand United Order of Oddfellows Hall is of local historic, representative, aesthetic and associative significance to the City of Melbourne.

### **Why it is significant?**

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30-34 La Trobe Street is historically significant for its association with German migrants, who arrived in Melbourne from the 1840s and created their own cultural institutions to encourage social interaction, promote German culture and provide activities for newcomers. (Criterion A)

30-34 La Trobe Street is significant as a classically-styled building, which formed part of the landscape of grand public architecture that was constructed in Melbourne in the post-gold rush era. (Criterion D)

30-34 La Trobe Street is aesthetically significant for its largely intact, classically-styled, rendered façade. It is a carefully designed and well-resolved example featuring a symmetrical massing with a simple ground level façade, more ornate upper levels with decorative motifs, ornate columns, rounded arched window openings and detailed cornices. (Criterion E)

30-34 La Trobe Street is significant for its association with the German social and gymnastics club, the Melbourne Deutscher Turnverein Society who constructed the building as their clubrooms in 1871. Following the Society's move from La Trobe Street in 1906, the place is significant for its association with the Grand United Order of Oddfellows who used 30-34 La Trobe Street as their meeting place until the 1960s. (Criterion H)

### **Primary source**

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Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)

