Statement of Significance: Prahran Market, 163-185 Commercial Road, 32 Elizabeth Street, and part Market Street, South Yarra (June 2026)

Heritage Place:	Prahran Market 163-187 Commercial Road, 32 Elizabeth Street, and part Market Street, South Yarra	**PS ref no:**	HO24



Figures 1-4: *Examples of buildings and elements within Prahran Market, including the c.1891 building street frontage to Commercial Road* (top left)*, Meat Market street frontage to Market Street* (top right), *open courtyard behind the Commercial Road frontage* (bottom left)*, and the Market Hall frontage to Market Street* (GJM Heritage, May 2024).

What is significant?

The Prahran Market at 163-185 Commercial Road, 32 Elizabeth Street, and part Market Street, South Yarra, constructed in 1891, with the meat market constructed in 1928 and upgrading of the market spaces in 1976-81.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include:

1891 Building

- Rendered brick commercial building constructed in a Free Classical Style

- Slate-clad hipped and mansard roofs, largely concealed behind a highly decorative parapet
- Rectangular plan
- Symmetrical principal elevation with dominant three-storey central bay flanked by groups of three two-storey shops
- Large central arched entry with oriel bay window above, panels of arabesque and festoon decoration
- Ornate central pediment and smaller elaborate end pediments, decorated with oculi, festoons and arabesque ornament,
- Name plate 'Prahran Market' to central pediment with gold lettering
- Multiple cornices providing horizontal emphasis to the elevation
- Rusticated pilasters dividing the elevation into vertical bays
- Pilasters continue as square columns at ground level to form an arcade of recessed shops with large display windows and recessed entrances
- Tall timber sash windows, deeply set into openings with rendered frames and pediments at first floor level
- Wide end bays with tripartite window arrangements and curved pediments interrupted by centrally placed moulded festoons
- Four rendered chimneys
- Commemorative foundation stone

Delicatessen Arcade

- Saw-tooth roof form with curved corrugated steel soffits and expressed parallel cord steel trusses

Market Hall

- Universal column structure supporting an open grid of parallel cord steel trusses
- Saw-tooth roof form and steel trusses
- Open market hall character
- Curtain glazed and concrete block elevations to Elizabeth Street and Commercial Road

Meat Market

- Brick (overpainted) commercial building constructed in an Interwar Stripped Classical style
- Rectangular plan, orientated north-south
- Principal symmetrical elevation with broad lower-storey and central upper-storey
- Cement render detailing including bracketed cornices, plain parapets and a central unadorned pediment
- Broad brick piers, with simple recessed brickwork patterning, dividing elevation into three bays
- Steel-framed paned windows including a row of four individual square windows at the upper level
- Prominent central bay with classically-inspired rendered cement frame to central entrance.

How is it significant?

The Prahran Market is of local historical, aesthetic and social significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

The Prahran Market has strong associations with the early settlement of South Yarra and – when initially established in Greville Street in 1864 – was amongst the earliest public markets established in suburban

Melbourne. The Prahran Market provided local market gardeners and the surrounding community with an important commercial facility, a function which has continued for in excess of 150 years. Built in 1891, the substantial Commercial Road building remains highly intact to clearly demonstrate the continuous operation and development of the market in the City of Stonnington from the late nineteenth century, into the twenty-first century (Criterion A).

The two-storey shops and Commercial Road entrance to the Prahan Market, South Yarra is an assured and finely-executed example of a Free Classical Revival style commercial building, constructed to a design by prominent architect Charles D'Ebro. The refined detailing of the highly symmetrical elevation, including dominant three-storey central bay with large arched entry, oriel bay window, name plate, ornate pediment and panels of arabesque and festoon decoration, side bays with slate-clad mansard roofs set behind elaborate pediments, rusticated pilasters and rendered frames and pediments to deeply set window openings, presents a highly resolved expression of this architectural style, and creates an imposing form within the commercial streetscape (Criterion E).

Designed in the Interwar period, the meat market entrance elevation to Elizabeth Street also displays classically-inspired detailing, albeit in a highly simplified manner, including a symmetrical elevation with prominent central bay, dividing piers, bracketed cornices and pedimented parapet. This elevation presents a highly resolved expression of the Interwar Stripped Classical style, and creates an imposing form on the Elizabeth Street frontage of the market complex (Criterion E).

The Prahran Market, South Yarra has a strong association with the local community for its long and continuing use as a fresh food market, shopping and meeting place. Established in Greville Street in 1864, and on its present site in 1891, the popular and successful market continues to serve both the local and broader community (Criterion G).

Primary source

South Yarra Heritage Review (GJM Heritage, March 2024)