

Statement of Significance: Montefiore House, 49 Rathdowne Street, Carlton (November, 2021)

Heritage Place:	Montefiore House	PS ref no:	HO104
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What is significant?

The substantial, two-storey dwelling in rendered brick at 49 Rathdowne Street, Carlton, constructed in 1884-5 and known as Montefiore House, is significant.

How is it significant?

The 1884-85 dwelling at 49 Rathdowne Street, Carlton, known as Montefiore House, is of local historical and aesthetic significance, and of representative value.

Why is it significant?

The dwelling at 49 Rathdowne Street, Carlton, is of historical significance (Criterion A). It was constructed in 1884 for Solomon Finkelstein, with its 1880s date consistent with the development of more substantial and ornate residences in Carlton, including in the area immediately surrounding the prestigious Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens, another highly significant Carlton (and Melbourne) development of the time. The name Montefiore House emphasises its status. The 1880s was the noted Boom period in Melbourne, and this together with proximity to the REB, was reflected in the handsome and elevated dwelling with views to the REB and Carlton Gardens to the east. The building is also associated with noted and prolific architect and builder, Norman Hitchcock, who was particularly busy in Melbourne's inner northern suburbs during the 1880s.

The dwelling is of aesthetic significance (Criterion E). It is a substantial two-storey dwelling in rendered brick, with features of note including the elevated entry above the long flight of steps, original masonry side walls to the garden setback, and original cast iron palisade fence and gate on a bluestone plinth. The name Montefiore House and 1884, as inscribed to the central signage panel, also survive.

The dwelling is also representative of Hitchcock's work and incorporates a number of his typical rendered details, for which he was noted (Criterion D). These include masques at ground and first floor levels to the wing walls; and the ornamented parapet with a balustraded form, semi-circular

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pediment flanked by scrolls, and vermiculated surfaces and urns. The building survives as a particularly intact example which continues to demonstrate its Italianate origins and to reflect the scale, form and detailing that characterised more substantial residential development in nineteenth century Carlton. While the dwelling is not necessarily a key work within Hitchcock's catalogue, it is a lively and theatrical variant of the Italianate architectural style as developed by the architect, and also one of a relatively small number of freestanding villas to his designs.

Primary source

Carlton Heritage Review (Lovell Chen, 2021)