

HISTORY : The wool store was originally owned by J.Kennon & Sons, tanners, curriers and leather merchants. James Kennon came to Australia from England, and managed Clarke's tannery in Richmond before starting his own tannery in 1863 on the banks of the Yarra.¹ The business started with "about four or five hands"² and steadily expanded. James Kennon died in May 1888. His three sons, Squire, William and Thomas carried on the business with his daughter Elizabeth Kennon joining her brothers as a partner in the firm.³ By 1923 when this wool store was under construction, James Kennon's grandsons were involved in the firm, which celebrated its diamond jubilee with a picnic at Mentone for its 365 employees and their families and local councillors and politicians.⁴

J.Kennon & Sons were known particularly for their use of the chrome tanning process. They were also buyers and exporters of Australian skins and wool. The firm had tanning works, offices and stores in the vicinity of River Street and a leather warehouse in Bridge Road.⁵

The wool store seems to have been designed by Albion H. Walkley about 1922. A contract was signed in August 1922 with A.R.P. Crow and Sons, who commenced building in September.⁶ The wool store (described at first as a factory) was recorded on the site in the Richmond rate books by 1924.⁷

Albion Henry Walkley was articled to architect William Pitt in 1900 and later became a full partner in the firm William Pitt and Walkley. He continued the practice after Pitt's death in 1918.⁸

William Pitt is well known for his work on Melbourne buildings such as the Princess' Theatre and the Rialto. He designed the Bryant & May complex in Church Street, Richmond (1909) and worked for Foy & Gibson in Fitzroy and Collingwood designing warehouses, factories, shops and showrooms over many years from c.1887.⁹

Walkley worked on woollen mills and stores for Foy & Gibson in (?)1917.¹⁰ During his career he also carried out work at the Caulfield Racecourse and, with Charles Neville Hollinshed, remodelled the interior of Her Majesty's Theatre in 1934.¹¹

Walkley and/or Pitt designed offices for J.Kennon & Sons in 1915.¹² Walkley continued to work for the Kennons on the wool store, office additions, an extension to a beam shed and other buildings.¹³

Walkley drew up plans for a proposed third floor addition to the wool store,¹⁴ but the existing building comprises only the ground, first and second floors shown on the original plans.

The building has recently been incorporated within a major wholesale food store development for Campbells Wholesale Cash and Carry.

VISUAL DESCRIPTION : A three-storey red brick and render Edwardian warehouse with a parapet in a stripped Late Renaissance manner. There are five bays in the River Street front and three bays at the side in Murphy Street. These have giant order Tuscan pilasters in brick, chamfered with render capitals. The front has a very deep classical frieze, cornice and parapet. This entablature steps forward over the pilasters and returns at the angles for the depth of a pilaster. Each bay is divided by a brick pier with steel framed windows between render spandrel panels. The parapet has a central raised name-plate panel with embossed letters "J