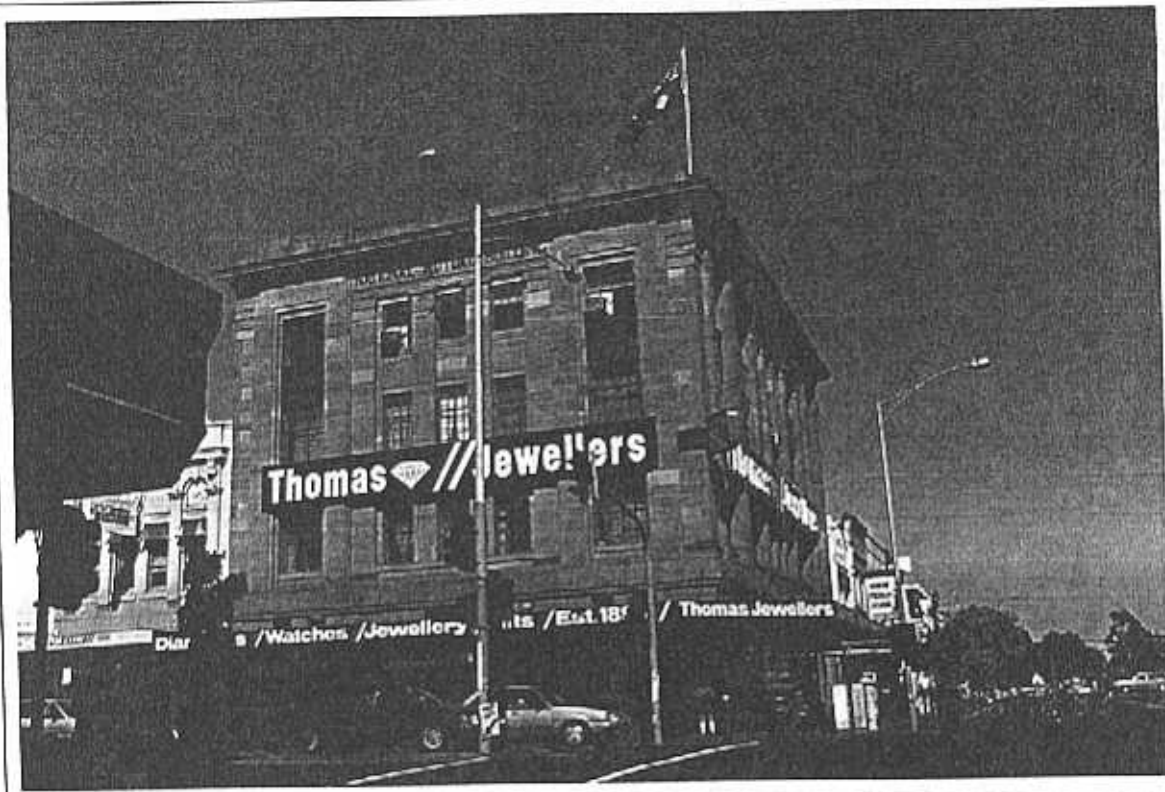


This sheet should be read in conjunction with Graeme Butler & Associates, *Geelong City Urban Conservation Study*, Vol. 1-5, 1991.



54 Malop Street

History

Prior to 1924 the corner of Moorabool Street and Malop Street was known as Frank's corner and the building which occupied the site dated back to the 1860s and was a local landmark. In 1924 this older structure was demolished and work began on the National Mutual Life project. The *Geelong Advertiser*, 11 October 1924 and 17 April 1926, provided detailed descriptions of the new edifice. The Melbourne architectural firm of Gibbs, Finlay and Morsley designed the building and Arthur Phillips was the builder. Construction was slowed due to a problem with water leaking into the foundations. Pyrmont stone brought down from Sydney was used to face the exterior walls of the building. Imported Sicilian marble was used to line the internal staircase which led from the ground to the first floor. French polished Queensland maple was used on the interior surfaces. The metal window frames were manufactured in England and the ground floor was made from long lasting Jarrah wood. The building consisted of four floors, a spacious basement and a flat roof. A feature which attracted comment at the time was the brick caretaker's apartment with its distinctive red tiled roof which crowned the structure. The main entrance to the building was from Malop street and visitors passed through an imposing entrance, featuring a large doorway with carved architraves. The National Mutual company occupied a suite of offices close to the Malop Street entrance while Suttons Music store rented the corner site. The upstairs rooms were divided into offices and let to a variety of different firms. According to information supplied by Mr. Les Drury, a director of Thomas Jewellers, Ballarat Office, 3 May 1995, the basement of the building functioned as a coffee lounge in World War Two providing leisure facilities for troops stationed in the Geelong area. Mr Drury stated that Thomas Jewellers purchased this property from the National Mutual Company in 1978. In 1981 Thomas Jewellers spent \$500,000 refurbishing the ground floor of the building and expanding the shop front display area. Thomas Jewellers still operate from this site.

54 Malop Street

Description

54 Malop Street is an attached four storey parapet building which is clad in Pyrmont stone, and has a high degree of integrity despite alterations to the ground floor shop fronts. The symmetrical facade is an example of the Neo-Grecian style, is divided into three main bays on both sides of the building by pilasters that run the height of the structure, and has small paned metal framed windows recessed in the bays. On the north facade, at ground level, a door and a window architrave have been retained. The south and west walls are both brick. On top of the roof is a small brick house with a distinctive red tiled roof. The west boundary wall of 54 Malop Street extends up and is also the external wall of the house. The location of the residence is unusual. Recessed spandrel panels of both stone and metal express the floor division on the facades. The building is capped by a heavy entablature with stone brackets and a typical 1920s stepped skyline with mast. The building stands tall compared to the adjacent structures and is sited on a prominent corner. The original signage remains but inappropriate new signage detracts from the building. The ground floor shop fronts have been substantially altered and a new verandah has been added.

Significance

54 Malop Street has architectural and historic significance at a regional level. The upper facade retains a high degree of integrity and is an excellent example of the Neo-Grecian style with simplified classical idioms and typical 1920s details. The building is sited on a prominent corner. The building is of historic significance for a number of reasons. Gibbs, Finlay and Morsley designed the building, and Arthur Phillips was the builder. A selection of expensive materials was used inside the building and the exterior clad in Pyrmont stone from Sydney. This demonstrates the importance of the building's status as high quality materials were imported. The building had strong associations with the National Mutual Company, the Suttons Music store, and Thomas Jewellers who continue to occupy the site.