

Fitzpatrick Bros butter factory, later Metropolitan Dairy Farmers Pty Ltd, later Avon Butter Factory, 218 Nicholson Street, Fitzroy

Heritage overlay: HO334

City of Yarra Property Number: 109990

What is significant?

The Fitzpatrick Bros butter factory, later Metropolitan Dairy Farmers Pty Ltd, later Avon Butter Factory at 218 Nicholson Street, Fitzroy was created in 1932 for John Fitzpatrick and has other historical associations with the firm, Metropolitan Dairy Farmers Pty Ltd.

The Butter Factory complex was designed by I. G. Anderson a prominent Geelong architect and contained a factory, offices and retail outlet for the butter manufacturer, and was commissioned to have a 'unique' architectural character.

The administrative building fronting Nicholson Street is constructed of cream and multi coloured bricks with a stepped roof of Cordova tiles. This building shows significant Spanish American influences and detailing, but also has Medieval features, particularly evident in the corbelled corner tower and Gothic arched doorway to the retail shop. The quality and richness of the decorative use of brickwork on the façade is exceptional, integrating colours such as cream, russet, deep red and jade green. Details include wrought iron window grilles, circular windows, 'sunburst' brick edging and small star patterns. The building reflects the picturesque and Mediterranean style of architecture popularized by Hollywood films of the period. It was intended to attract attention and promote sales rather than conform to pure function. Reviews in the architectural and professional journals of the period were very complimentary on its design.

The principal elevation fronting Nicholson Street and the elevations on the north and east of the building remain largely true to the original design and are in good condition. Some minor modifications have been made to the south and southeast elevations.

The place has a good integrity to its creation date.

Fabric from the creation date at the Fitzpatrick Bros butter factory is locally significant within the City of Yarra, compared to other similar places from a similar era.

How is it significant?

The Fitzpatrick Bros butter factory, later Metropolitan Dairy Farmers Pty Ltd, later Avon Butter Factory, at 218 Nicholson Street, Fitzroy, is historically and architecturally significant to the locality of Fitzroy and the City of Yarra.

Why is it significant?

The Fitzpatrick Bros butter factory, later Metropolitan Dairy Farmers Pty Ltd, later Avon Butter Factory is significant as:

- An uncommon use of the picturesque Spanish American style, although the style was becoming popular during the late 1920s for domestic buildings, houses and residential flats, and for leisure buildings such as cinemas and theatres, it was unusual for a commercial/industrial building of this type;
- Having a significant difference from other stylistically similar buildings of the period is that the factory has been left unrendered and gains much of its quality from the skilful use and coloration of the brickwork. The decorative coursework, fine detailing and unusual compositional elements all combine to enhance the striking visual effect of the building;
- As the work of the architect, I.G. Anderson, a designer recognized in recent years both for quality of design and evolving architectural styles employed during the 1920s and 1930s. As in his Brunswick Markets of 1929, Anderson shows an ability to assimilate popular vernacular influences and combine them in a unique and picturesque manner. The decorative elements and asymmetrical composition foreshadow many of the details and devices of his later work; and
- As a bold gambit by the owner, John Fitzpatrick, who was prepared to invest so enthusiastically in such an unusual design, receiving good coverage and praise in the architectural press of the period (National Trust of Australia (Vic) classification report).

References:

Municipal rate books:

VPRS 4301/P/0001

City of Fitzroy/West Ward

Rate year/Rate no./Occupier/Owner/Description /NAV

1944/45; 320 ; Metropolitan Dairy Farmers Ltd; Metro Dairy Farmers Ltd, ; 218-222 Nicholson St, Brick Factory; 175

1940-41; 331; Metropolitan Dairy Farmers Pty Ltd; Metro Dairy Farmers Ltd, 20 Queen St, Melbourne,; 218-222 Nicholson St, Brick Factory; 175

1935-36; 343; Fitzpatrick John, Manufacturer; Fitzpatrick John, 171 The Avenue, Coburg; 218-222 Nicholson St, Brick Factory; 175

1932/33; 343; Fitzpatrick John, Butter Manufacturer; Fitzpatrick John, 171 The Avenue, Coburg; 218-222 Nicholson St, Brick Factory; 175

1931/32; 352; Land; French to Fitzpatrick John; Land 22 x ; 13

1930-31; 354; Land; French E Mrs, 41 Kerferd Rd, Albert Park; Land 22 x ; 13

Melbourne or Victorian directories:

East Side 1932

1940; Victoria St

218-22 Metrop Dairy Farms Ltd

218-22 Pura Butter Factory

1935; 218-222 Fitzpatrick Bros, butter factory

1934; 218-222 Fitzpatrick Bros, butter factory

1933; Victoria St

Factory being built

1932; No Listing

City of Yarra Review of Heritage Precincts 2007

Appendix 7

Other references:

MMBW Detail Plan shows earlier buildings; corner site.

National Trust of Australia (Vic) register:

AVON BUTTER FACTORY (FORM) File number: B7203 , Location: 218 Nicholson Street
FITZROY

Significance level: State, Last updated: 07/07/2003

Municipality: Yarra City

Statement of Significance:

What is significant?

The former Avon Butter Factory, a small commercial/industrial building, was designed by I. G. Anderson a prominent Geelong architect and completed in 1932. The building contained a factory, offices and retail outlet for the butter manufacturer, and was commissioned to have a 'unique' architectural character.

The administrative building fronting Nicholson Street is constructed of cream and multi coloured bricks with a stepped roof of Cordova tiles. This building shows significant Spanish American influences and detailing, but also has Medieval features, particularly evident in the corbelled corner tower and Gothic arched doorway to the retail shop. The quality and richness of the decorative use of brickwork on the façade is exceptional integrating colours such as cream, russet, deep red, and jade green. Details include wrought iron window grilles, circular windows, 'sunburst' brick edging and small star patterns. The building reflects the picturesque and Mediterranean style of architecture popularized by Hollywood films of the period. It was intended to attract attention and promote sales rather than conform to pure function. Reviews in the architectural and professional journals of the period were very complimentary on its design.

The principal elevation fronting Nicholson Street and the elevations on the north and east of the building remain largely true to the original design and are in good condition. Some minor modifications have been made to the south and southeast elevations.

How is it significant?

The Avon Butter Factory is significant for architectural reasons at a State level.

Why is it significant?

Architecturally the building is unique of its type. Although the picturesque Spanish American style was becoming popular during the 1920's for domestic buildings, houses and residential flats, and for leisure buildings such as cinemas and theatres, it was unusual for a commercial/industrial building of this type. A significant difference between the Avon Butter factory and other stylistically similar buildings of the period is that it is left unrendered and gains much of its quality from the skilful use and coloration of the brickwork. The decorative coursework, fine detailing and unusual compositional elements all combine to enhance the striking visual effect of the building.

The work of the architect, I.G. Anderson, has been recognized in recent years both for quality of design and evolving architectural styles employed during the 1920's and 1930's. As in his Brunswick Markets of 1929, Anderson shows an ability to assimilate popular vernacular influences and combine them in a unique and picturesque manner. The decorative elements and asymmetrical composition foreshadow many of the details and devices of his later work.

Historically and culturally it is significant that the client, John Fitzpatrick, was prepared to invest so enthusiastically in such an unusual design for his factory and that the results should have received such coverage and praise in the architectural press of the period. '