



Manchester Unity Hall & Offices 215-217 Moorabool Street

History

One of the colony's most popular friendly societies, the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows (MUIOOF), acquired this site in 1868 for conversion to a hall¹. Immediately prior to its conversion, the site held a timber shop, occupied by William Fox². After acquisition, Fox still occupied the site but now in a brick two-storey produce store with the lodge rooms, an attic, a rear store and cellar³. In 1872, J. Rowsell advertised the lower storey of the hall for lease, noting that for the last 13 years it had been used by Fox as a corn store.

Meanwhile a waxworks exhibition was staged in the hall in the same year. In 1873, the Good Templars left the Little Malop Street temperance hall to meet in this hall and in the same year, the Geelong branch of the Victorian Builders & Contractors Association held their first annual meeting there⁴.

Thomas Bartlett took the lease of the commercial part of the site in the 1870s which now included an adjoining timber shop⁵. By 1881 Thear & Bartlett were in the timber shop and John McNaughton (agent) in this building⁶. The part timber, part brick shop was still occupied by Thear & Bartlett in 1890⁷. This century, Esther James (milliner) and Farrow & Plumber were occupiers⁸. Evolved in Great Britain to provide among other things health insurance and education for the working classes, friendly societies found a sounder legal footing here after 1855 legislation which allowed for their controlled expansion in the colony. The Independent Order of Oddfellows was among the first of the British societies to set up in Australia, creating a Sydney lodge in 1836⁹. The Geelong United Friendly Societies building in Ryrie Street is another reminder of these invaluable social institutions.

Description

Suggesting some form of redevelopment late last century, the facade of this building resembles that of the Hibernian

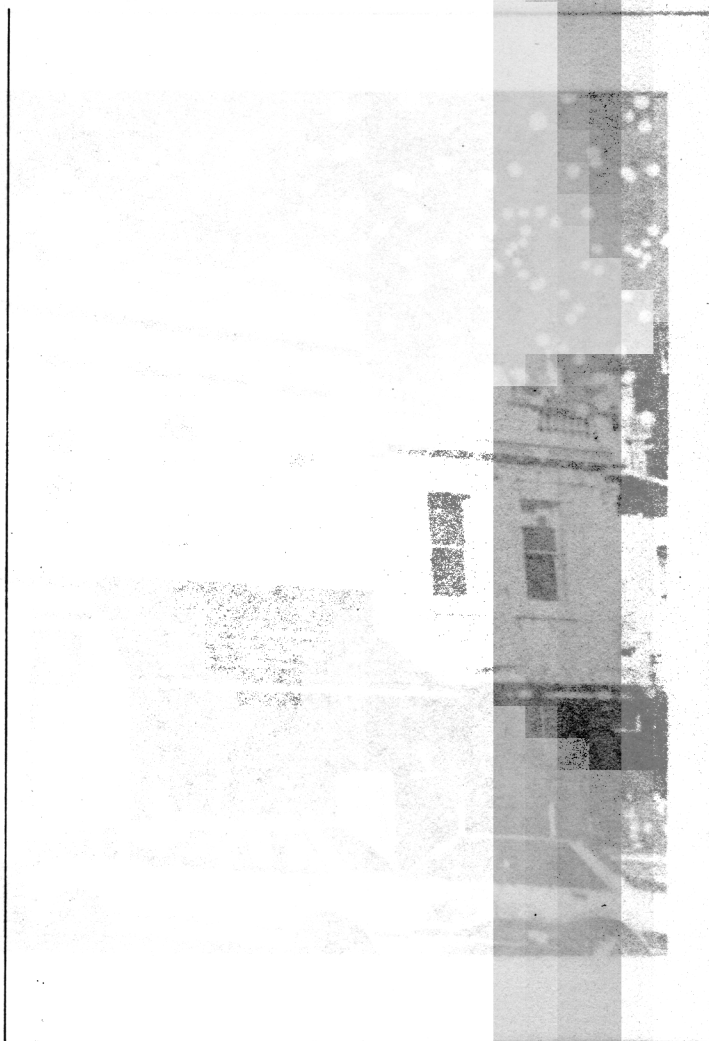
1 INV. Vol.3/9
2 RB1867-8, 28-9
3 RB1868-9, 31
4 GA 12.9.72; GA 12.5.73; GA 17.9.73
5 VB1875, 28
6 RB1881,27-8
7 RB1890,21-2
8 1910,23-4
9 *Australians A Historical Dictionary* p.164

External Integrity

Streetscape

Significance

Architecturally, a remarkably complete and adeptly designed facade which has valuable cemented detailing and rare ground floor elements. If the facade is from the 1868 reconstruction, it is made more valuable as early design sophistication.



violet

One of the colony's Manchester Unity (MUOF), securing a hall, immediately prior to its conversion into a timber shop, occurred by William Fox, who had occupied the store for some time. Fox still occupies the store produce store and cellar. The store of the hall for some time, it had been used by Fox as a warehouse. Meanwhile a warehouse exhibition was exhibited in the same year. In 1875, the Wood T. Co. of Little Malop Street, in the same year, the building passed to the Builders & Contractors, and the building there.

REV. Vol. 10
R1867-2-28-
R1867-9-21
GA 12-27-04
V1867-28
R1867-27-8
R1867-11-2
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