

GEELONG CITY 'C' CITATIONS

Site Name: Shop and Residence

Project File No: 1109

Address: 24 Ryrie Street Geelong 3220

Approx. Date: 1874

Integrity: Moderate

Significance Level: C (Local)

Photograph No: 03.06

Survey Date: March 2002



History

This site at 24 Ryrie Street, Geelong, is located on Lot 1, subdivision plan 14774, which is part of Section 46 on the 1881 Geelong Town Plan, land previously appropriated by the Wesleyans for a denominational school.

This building was built for Geelong's undertaker, James Monro, in 1874, the year of his marriage. The 2 storey brick structure originally consisted of a shop and 2 rooms was constructed to replace an earlier weatherboard furniture shop. A death notice, published in the Geelong Advertiser on 5 June 1874, gave James Monro's address as 85 Ryrie Street. By 1875, the number of rooms in the premises had increased to three, and a workshop was added. In 1896, the Geelong Rate Book (Kardinia Ward) described the property as "a brick 2 storey shop, workshop, 4 rooms with kitchen, and shed". It appears that the building was altered and extended at this time. By 1900 it was described as consisting of 6 rooms, with stables, and Monro had entered into a joint partnership with his son, Alexander Monro.

Between 1900 and 1905, James appears to have died, and Alexander took over the property and business in his own right. He apparently often amused passers-by when he stood outside his shop asking if anyone would like to come inside to view a body!

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Alexander was owner/occupier of the premises until his death in 1953, when it appears to have been purchased by a Mr Franklin of Fenwick Street. Major plumbing and drainage work was carried out on the site in 1916 and 1930. Alexander Monro's widow, Bessie, continued living in the building until her death in 1966.

Description

The building at 24 Ryrie Street, Geelong, is set on a contextually averaged-sized allotment for the area. As a commercial building, it takes up the bulk of the site and abuts the front boundary, with the verandah projecting over the footpath. At the rear is a brick and galvanised corrugated iron garage having a gabled roof.

The two storey, rendered and painted brick, eclectic Victorian and Federation Free style building is characterised by design elements of the original 1874 construction as well as the later alterations of the late 1890s. The ground floor timber framed shopfront windows with panelled stall boards below, ingo with introduced timber framed doorway and transom window above (now blocked up), and the side timber framed doorway with four panelled timber door and transom window above, represent the original design configuration and elements from the 1874 construction. The location of the first floor windows also form part of the original design. Behind the front and side parapets is an original gable roof form. It is clad in Morewood and Rogers galvanised iron pantiles, which are now rare. Considering that Morewood and Rogers roof tiles were mainly popular in the 1850s, it appears that the roof cladding at 24 Ryrie Street may have been recycled, possibly from the earlier building on this site. The unpainted dichromatic brick chimney with a corbelled top which adorns the eastern side of the roofline (behind the parapet) is also representative of the 1874 construction.

The Federation Free style qualities are especially characterised by the dominant parapet, which is divided into three bays. The central bay has a large rendered brick parapet with curved, capped top that is flanked by two narrower bays having projecting painted brick piers with moulded cappings and circular motifs between. Another feature of this period included the unpainted red brick chimney with a multi-corbelled top on the western side of the building.

At the rear are early rear spaces under skillion roof forms which traverse the site and extended along the length of the side brick parapet walls. The timber framed windows and doors, and external timber stairs, have been introduced.

The front two storey verandah with balcony has also been recently introduced. It is supported by square timber columns and is adorned with simple timber fretwork valances and balustrades, with the balcony valance accentuated by the solid curved timbering having trefoil cut-outs.

Statement of Cultural Significance

The building at 24 Ryrie Street, Geelong, has significance as a reasonably intact example of both an 1874 Victorian building and a late 1890s Federation Free style building. It has further historical significance as the location of the undertaker, James Monro, from 1874. He occupied the building until his death in c.1905 when the building continued to be occupied by the Monro family until 1966.

The building at 24 Ryrie Street is architecturally significant at a LOCAL level. Although altered, it still demonstrates original or early design qualities of its 1874 construction and late 1890s alterations, forming an eclectic Victorian and Federation Free style. These qualities include the ground floor timber framed shopfront windows with panelled stall boards below, ingo with timber framed doorway and transom window above, and the

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side timber framed doorway with four panelled timber door and transom window above. Other intact or appropriate qualities of the 1874 era include the gable roof form, unpainted dichromatic brick chimney with a multi-corbelled top (eastern side), and the location of the first floor windows. The Morewood and Rogers galvanised iron pantiles may be recycled from the original 1850s building on this site. Intact or appropriate qualities of the late 1890s alterations include the dominant three-bayed front parapet which has a central rendered brick curved bay with a capped top and flanking narrower bays having projecting painted brick piers with moulded cappings and circular motifs between. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the painted and rendered brick wall construction, unpainted red brick chimney with a multi-corbelled top (western side), side brick parapets, configuration of the rear spaces and the front verandah that is supported by square timber columns and is adorned with simple timber fretwork valances and balustrades, with the balcony valance accentuated by the solid curved timbering having trefoil cut-outs.

The building at 24 Ryrie Street is historically significant at a LOCAL level. It is associated with James Monro's undertaking business from 1874, the year of his marriage. He occupied the building until his death in c.1905, when the business and property was taken over by his son, Alexander. The building continued to be occupied by the Monro family until 1966.

The building at 24 Ryrie Street is scientifically significant at a LOCAL level. The Morewood and Rogers roof pantiles represent a rare form of construction popular in Victoria in the 1850s.

Overall, the building at 24 Ryrie Street is of LOCAL significance.

References

Drainage Plans and Reports, Barwon Water profits system, 1916, 1917, 1930, 1935, 1949.
Sands & McDougall Geelong Directory 1972, Geelong Historical records Centre.
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