



### United Friendly Societies Dispensary and shops 46

45 Ryrie Street

History 45

Laird & Barlow, probably in association with R J Haddon, designed this Friendly Societies Dispensary and called tenders in 1904 for its construction.<sup>1</sup>

J N Tingate won the contract with a tender of £1087 and the building opened early the following year, consisting of the centre dispensary with upstairs residence and board-room and the flanking single-storey shops.<sup>2</sup> Early occupiers were Mrs. I F Zierk, a fruiterer, and the Lux Leadlight works at 43, George McGilvray and at first a Mr. De Gruchy and later, Albert Gosbell at the dispensary (45-7), Henry Marsh, commissioned agent, and W Twentyman, a piano tuner, at 49.<sup>3</sup> J A Thear was the president of the United

Friendly Societies at the opening and the secretary was H

Marsh.<sup>4</sup>

One of a small number of Edwardian UFS dispensaries in the State, this building symbolizes the rationalisation of health and other benefits offered to low-income earners by these societies prior to the advent of purely commercial health funds. It has also been noted by authorities on applied ornament as an early example of Art Nouveau detailing.<sup>5</sup> Geelong's UFS history started early 1898 when the Corio branch of the Australian Natives Association called a meeting in the class-room at the mechanics institute. By the following December, the united societies were in operation but not without opposition. After the first year they had 1655 members, £299 as funds and £120 of it profit. Nearly seven years later, these figures were 2739 and £1612 respectively with the number of member prescriptions dealt with annually rising from 11,000 to 21,000.<sup>6</sup> Rivalry among the friendly societies had ceased and all federated societies were members by 1905.

#### Description

Disguised by the painting of the brickwork, differing paint colours on each building, new verandahs and added signs, this two-level hall and dispensary and single-storey flank-

1 R Aitken card cites Laird & Buchan contract book 30.7.04, 23.6.05 final cost £1118/15/6, 19.7.04 R J Haddon paid 3 guineas for services; probably a renovation, the original building costing £1230

2 GA 3.2.1905; Laird & Buchan contract book 30.7.04

3 D1920-35

4 GA 7.2.05

5 Errey 'Victorian Architectural Ornamentation' p250 surmised as 1898 however

6 GA 7.2.1905

