



**Macrow's Furniture Arcade,
85-87 Ryrie Street**

History

Geelong architects, Tombs & Durran, called tenders for **rebuilding**, in brick, premises for Hendy Leary & Co., estate-agents, at the Ryrie Gheringhap Streets' corner¹. The *News of the Week* published a photograph in December 1911 showing the building complete with the names Norris(?) & Macrow as a caption². A later directory entry lists Macrow's furniture arcade in 85 and a Miss C M Smith, draper, in 87³. It is thought have possessed Geelong's earliest cantilever street verandah when built. Rate listings give Frances James Leary as the owner into the 1920s, with tenants such as Kearney Bothers boot warehouse replacing Macrow's arcade⁴. Samuel Blake, an East Malvern chemist, owned it in the 1930s and, under the style of the Pivot Meat Emporium, Oswald Williams owned and occupied the premises for a lengthy period⁵. The Pivot Fruit Emporium was the next major business there in the 1960s⁶.

Description

Belying any reconstruction theory, the building is a highly representative if individual expression of the Edwardian era. Following the Edwardian Freestyle, the design is parapeted, brick and two-storeys with the major focus at the corner, in the form of a crown-like bayed parapet and surmounting dome. On either elevation the bowed oriel windows provide plasticity to the already highly modeled form. The parapet cut-outs, and onion-like cappings to the corner parapet piers are distinctive elements as is the high Mansard-like roof line which houses vents and provides a backdrop for the sculpted parapet forms below it. Some cresting survives on the ridge.

Underneath, the cantilever verandah shows its wrought-iron/steel framing and the piers which divide the altered shopfronts survive.

As an Edwardian Freestyle commercial design, this building has few equals in Geelong City, the 16 Ryrie Street renovation being similarly innovative. Other comparisons include the altered 43-5 Ryrie street (q.v.).

1 Aitken index; RB1909 vacant; RB1920, 247-8

2 Aitken index

3 D1915

4 RB1920, 247-8

5 rate cards 1940-60

6 D1961

External Integrity

The bricks have been painted, and the shopfronts and verandah cladding altered. Some ridge cresting is missing.

Streetscape Contribution

Relates well to the adjacent Ryrie Street commercial streetscape, as the major corner element identifiable with the contemporary 88 Ryrie Street (q.v.) and the individually notable but earlier buildings on the other corners.

Significance

Architecturally, it is Geelong's City's best Edwardian Freestyle commercial design, it possesses the city's first cantilever verandah also it is a major element in the important Ryrie Street commercial streetscape.

Historically, it is associated with the prolific Geelong architects Tombs & Durran and the first owner, estate agent Frances Leary.