



Jacobs House, 17 Swanston Street

History

This site was 'fenced land' in 1910, unfolding as an eight-room weatherboard house and bathroom after construction in 1911-12.¹ Its first owner-occupier was the draper, Morris Jacobs Junior.² A Morris Jacobs resided with long-term councillor and mayor, Solomon Jacobs, in McKillop Street, prior to assuming this address.

Morris Jacobs Snr. operated a drapery business from Geelong's early commercial development period, near to other clothing businesses such as Daniel Ferguson's York House in Malop Street. Jacob's first shop was opened in Yarra Street during the gold boom era of 1852.³ He then moved to new Malop Street premises, in 1871, where he claimed to undersell 'any other draper in Victoria.' He

was the 'Champion of Cheapness'.⁴ He was later absorbed by Myers.⁵

Jacobs also operated a six-acre vineyard in the Highton, Belmont, Germantown area, south of the Barwon, among many other⁶ Vitners - before the route of Geelong Vineyards by Phylloxera in the late 1870s.⁷

Jacobs moved to Eastern Beach for his retirement c1905 and it is probable that Morris Jnr. followed suit.⁸ Morris Jnr. was known for his aviaries.⁹

Lavinia Rea leased the house from confectioner, E. Santospirito, in the early 1930s.¹⁰ Hans Brockman was a later occupier.¹¹

Description

A large hipped and gable-roofed timber house, 17 Swanston Street offers an unusual bowed and shingled gable to the street view. Under it, a wide verandah extends around the corner of the building under the main

1 RB1912, 173; RB1910, 177; RB1915, 179

2 *ibid.*

3 INV. V.5, p.133

4 *loc. cit.* V.6, p.36

5 *loc. cit.* V.13, p.144

6 *loc. cit.*, V.6, p.71

7 *loc. cit.*, V.6, p.56f

8 *see* GA 4/1/19

9 *see* GA 29/10/32

10 RB1930, 177

11 D1935

City of Geelong Urban Conservation Study
Significant Sites

pyramid-hip roof. Details include the fretted verandah brackets.

External Integrity

Generally original, except replacement of the fence.

Streetscape

Forms a significant pair with 15 Swanston Street and contributes to precinct 3.06, an Edwardian and Victorian era residential area.

Significance

Architecturally, a distinctive Federation Bungalow style house with unusual detailing and historically linked with one of Geelong's oldest drapery firms, run by the Jacobs family.