

## GEELONG CITY 'C' CITATIONS

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**Site Name:** Shop

**Project File No:** 1111

**Address:** 34 Ryrie Street Geelong 3220

**Approx. Date:** 1866-67

**Integrity:** Moderate

**Significance Level:** C (Local)

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**Photograph No:** 03.08

**Survey Date:** March 2002

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### History

This site at 34 Ryrie Street, Geelong, on the south-west corner of Ryrie Street and Fenwick Street, is located on Lot 2 of Subdivisional Plan 34728, being part of Crown Allotment 1, Section 46, of the Geelong Town Plan of 1881. The original owners of the land were Towle and Turpin.

These premises were constructed between 1866 and August 1867 for Smith and Aitchison. The architect and builder are unknown. Smith and Aitchison were the owners until 1902, establishing a plumbing, painting, glazing, paperhanging and decorating business, as well as providing a general repairs service. The brick 2 storeyed building, stucco pointed to simulate ashlar blockwork, consisted of a shop (that occupied the whole ground floor), with 7 rooms and a kitchen, the residence portion being above the shop. The roof was of slate tiles. There was also a galvanised iron workshop and weatherboard stables built at the rear. From 1903 to 1908, Smith and Aitchison let the premises, the first tenant being a furniture dealer and the second a milliner. William Purnell & Sons, builders, purchased the site in 1908 and occupied it until 1919, when the property (then comprising offices, a shed that had been erected in c.1911, and timber yard) was passed on to one of Purnell's sons, Frederick Charles Purnell, a contractor/architect.

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Frederick also owned 3 individual small shops to the west of the corner shop and he made a number of additions and alterations to the sites in 1923 in an attempt to integrate all his Ryrie Street holdings into one combined building. It was later to be called Purnell's Building. At the same time he added extra leasing space at the back of the ground floor of the corner shop, creating two separate business premises fronting Fenwick Street. The extra ground floor (numbered 28 Fenwick Street) was utilised by Frederick himself as an architect's office until 1931, afterwards by tailors, and then by J.E. Hewson, carrier, until 1961. The upstairs residence, entered from Ryrie Street, was numbered 32 Ryrie Street. The original display windows on Fenwick and Ryrie Streets were replaced with plate glass, the window on the north side becoming a bay window, and ceramic tiles were added, extending half-way up the ground floor elevation on both east and north sides of the building. By 1923, the premises also boasted a verandah and canopy. Aesthetic improvements were also made by the addition of decorative stained glass and timber panels to some windows on the east and south sides and on the first floor, copper or brass framing, frosted glazing, and new doors with Italianate plaster decoration.

The corner shop had been a chemist shop since 1925, the leasehold held by James O'Bern for 7 years, followed by Howard Bracewell Parker until 1958, when he bought the freehold to the property. After his death in December 1961, and the granting of probate in November 1963, ownership of the premises passed to Sydney Parker Smith of Elizabeth Street, Geelong.

### Description

The shop at 34 Ryrie Street, Geelong, is situated at the corner of Ryrie and Fenwick Streets. The two storey, rendered brick, Victorian commercial styled building is characterised by its chamfered corner that accentuates its corner location, and the hipped roof forms clad in slate with early galvanised iron flashings. An early rendered brick chimney adorns the roofline. Narrow overhangs are features of the eaves. The first floor is largely intact and comprises two bayed compositions on the Fenwick and Ryrie Street facades, defined by early openings having early timber framed double hung windows and early rendered brick sills. The decorative timberwork within the head of the openings appears to have been introduced. A similar window opening is situated in the chamfered corner. Defining the separation between the first and ground floors is an early rendered stringcourse, but the separation is now more pronounced by the introduced cantilevering verandah.

The ground floor has experienced a number of alterations, although the single doorways on the Ryrie and Fenwick Street facades (with timber framed transom windows) appear to be early, as does the segmentally arched double door opening at the corner, with the timber framed transom window above and the crowning label moulds punctuated by a keystone. The window opening on the Fenwick Street facade also appears to be early.

However, the glazed black wall tiles to the ground floor facades have been introduced, as has the dentillated moulding above the corner doorway, the surround about the single doorway fronting Ryrie Street, and the aluminium framed shopfront windows on both facades.

### Statement of Cultural Significance

The shop at 34 Ryrie Street, Geelong, has significance as a moderately intact example of a Victorian commercial style. Built in 1866-67 for Smith and Aitchison who operated a plumbing, painting, glazing, paperhanging and decorating business, the building is a legacy of commercial developments in Geelong during the second half of the 19th century.

The shop at 34 Ryrie Street is architecturally significant at a LOCAL level. Although

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altered, it still demonstrates original design qualities of a Victorian commercial style. These qualities include the chamfered corner that accentuates its corner location, hipped roof forms clad in slate with galvanised iron flashings, rendered brick chimney and the narrow eaves. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the two storey height, rendered brick wall construction, two bayed compositions of the first floor facades with single openings having timber framed double hung windows and rendered brick sills, similar first floor window opening in the chamfered corner, rendered stringcourse, single doorways on the Ryrie and Fenwick Street facades (with timber framed transom windows), segmentally arched double door opening at the corner with the timber framed transom window above and the crowning label moulds punctuated by the keystone, and the ground floor window opening on the Fenwick Street facade.

The shop at 34 Ryrie Street is historically significant at a LOCAL level. It is associated with commercial developments in Geelong during the second half of the 19th century. In particular, this shop has associations with Smith and Aitchison, original owners and operators of a plumbing, painting, glazing, paperhanging and decorating business. They instigated the construction of the building in 1866. It was later owned by William Purnell and Sons, builders and linked to the neighbouring Purnell building (built in 1911).

Overall, the shop at 34 Ryrie Street is of LOCAL significance.

### References

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