

Identification and location

Name of place: **Green's Buildings**

Other Name Imperial Art Palace

Address 337 Barkly Street
Footscray

Place Identifier 567

Heritage Significance: City

Creation date(s): 1913-14, 192 **Map (Melway)** 42B4

Boundary description The building and title land with emphasis on fabric from its main construction period, c1914-30.

Local Government Area: City of Maribyrnong

Ownership Type: Private

Description

Site Type Shop/store

Physical Description

This corner landmark building is two storey, brick clad and has a distinctive domed balcony or band stand at the splayed corner entry - in use when the building served as a dance hall. This corner cupola element has a tall turned timber finial, turned posts and a balustrade rail devoid of balusters, plus a clock set in a scrolled timber fascia. Its sheet-clad base extends around both elevations as the fascia for the cantilevering street canopy extending over the shopfronts (all of the Barkly St elevation and half of the Geelong Road elevation). The fascia below the band stand also has the words 'Green's Buildings' faintly discernable under paint layers.

The main hipped roof (set out in two bays) is clad with corrugated iron and the upper level fenestration (double-hung sash windows) is regularly spaced between piers, taking up a small percentage of the wall area facing Geelong Road and in the old section of the Barkly St elevation. However, the later section of this elevation has large window openings that fill the wall bay between pilasters. A string mould demarcates the parapet area from the main upper wall and hold the building name 'Green's Buildings' facing Barkly St.

The floor to ceiling glass shopfronts along both elevations have replaced those of the Edwardian-era versions but elements, such as the marble mosaic threshold that spells out the name 'Imperial Art Palace' and the Edwardian-era pressed Art Metal ceilings within,

show the main development periods. The parapet has been modified or modernised in the 1920s from its ornate Edwardian-era form but otherwise this earlier section is clearly discernable from the other wings. The Geelong Road elevation continues as a simple utilitarian brick façade that returns up a side lane into loading areas.

Condition

Externally good (partially disturbed, well preserved)

Integrity

Externally substantially intact/some intrusions, given the distinct development phases, with new shopfronts and roller shutters added and the bricks painted over.

Context

Set across Geelong Road from the main commercial strip but relates to the Edwardian-era Plough Hotel on the opposite corner and, with the nearby State School, provides a landmark in Geelong Road because of its isolation and distinctive domed corner.

Threats:

Unrelated development.

History

This unusual corner building was erected in 1914 and then refurbished for Alfred Green to the design of architects, Blackett Forster & Craig, in 1924, giving it its present character. An early view of the building (as Green's Wood Yard) shows it in a two-storey, striped masonry late Victorian-era mode, being the basis of the existing similar but stripped down form. Four facade bays faced onto Barkly St, each divided by a pilaster with an urn atop. The corner was splayed as it is now but with no domed balcony and instead a raised arched entablature set between urns. The Geelong Road façade has three similar parapeted bays but then gives way to an eaves line similar to today's exposed roof. A single storey wing extended along Barkly St as what may have been a masonry perimeter wall to the timber yard { IOW}.

The first MMBW drainage plan of 1913 shows this masonry corner building as the apex of long masonry walls extending down both street frontages, but with a long timber framed structure adjoining the south perimeter as the 'Timber Works' and the rest of the oblong yard open as a timber yard, set within the masonry north wall. A Green of 69 Creswick St, Footscray, was the owner { MMBW}. Municipal rate records list EA & DW Green, timber merchants, as the occupiers of a timber yard owned by their father, Alfred Green, until 1915-16 and then shops with an annual valuation of £240 compared to that of the timber yard at £90 { RB}. John Lack writes of the opening of Green's furniture emporium in 1914 as the Imperial Art Palace. Green was congratulated by local councillors for his spirit in capitalising in Footscray as well as living there { Lack: 240}.

In the early 1920s, it was called Green's Palais, and served as one of the venues (along

with the theatres and Seddon Palais) for local entertainment on a Saturday night { Lack: 253}.

By 1922-3, the Green's premises was called The Junction Joinery & Timber Mills, being two brick offices and a shop. The next MMBW plan of 1924 gives the new style of the building and the architects name. It shows extensive refurbishment work to the plumbing, placed on a ground and the first level. Rate records show The Junction Joinery & Timber Mills crossed out and in its place five shops, one occupied by Edmund Drake, furniture dealer { RB}. By 1930 Minnie Slocombe had taken over furniture dealing, with WR Slocombe listed there in the mid 1930s { RB, D1930}.

During the inter-war period, Green appears to have operated his Palais there, a dance hall: giving some meaning to the domed balcony and its use for a dance band, as was also done in Anderson St, Yarraville.

During the mid 1940s, the building was called the Bon Star Cycle Company. More work was done for Green in 1947-51 { MMBW}. Edward Arthur Green died at Footscray aged 73 in 1961; David William Green died at Brighton in 1957 aged 71. They were the sons of Alfred and Jane (nee Stewart) { Macbeth}.

Alfred Green

The Alfred Green Fountain is located in Footscray Park, Ballarat Road, Footscray. Footscray Park was permanently reserved in 1911 as a site for a Public Park and its creation was largely due to the efforts of the citizens of Footscray who successfully lobbied the State Government and the Victorian Racing Club for the reservation of the park. It is the largest and most intact Edwardian period garden in Victoria. The fountain includes two ornamental platypuses { HV website}.

Thematic context

Australian Principal Theme: Developing local, regional and national economies

PAHT Subtheme: Marketing & retailing

Local Theme(s): Providing shops and retail facilities

Cultural Significance

Green's Buildings are locally historically, architecturally and socially significant, within the City context:

- as a distinctive architectural landmark on a prominent site, made so by the domed corner bandstand (Criterion B2);
- for its association with the Green family who were well known in the Footscray area during the early 20th century and remembered today in the Green Fountain (Criterion H1);
- as a dance hall, it has been a venue for social events in the locality (Criterion A4, G1).

Comparative Examples:

Few buildings in the City have had this variety of uses and remained relatively intact to each phase. Contemporary hotels, such as the Plough Hotel opposite (see also Barkly Hotel, 229 Barkly St), and picture theatres such as the St Georges Theatre in Yarraville, provide some parallels. None has this distinctive architectural form.

Recommendations

Heritage Victoria Register:

Register of the National Estate:

National Trust Register:

Other Heritage Listings:

Planning Scheme Protection:

External Paint Controls Apply?:

Internal Alteration Controls Apply?:

Tree Controls Apply?:

Included on the Victorian Heritage Register under the Act:

Are there Outbuildings or Fences not Exempt?:

Prohibited Uses may be Permitted?:

Recommendations:

Australian Heritage Commission Criteria

A4 Importance for their association with events, developments or cultural phases which have had a significant role in the human occupation and evolution of the nation, state, region or community.

As a dance hall, it has been a venue for social events in the locality

B2 Importance in demonstrating a distinctive way of life, custom, process, land-use, function or design no longer practiced, in danger of being lost, or of exceptional interest.

distinctive architectural landmark on a prominent site, made so by the domed corner bandstand

G1 Importance as places highly valued by a community for reasons of religious, spiritual, cultural, educational or social associations.

As a dance hall, it has been a venue for social events in the locality

H1 Importance for their close associations with individuals whose activities have been significant within the history of the nation, state or region.

association with the Green family who were well known in the Footscray area during the early 20th century and remembered today in the Green Fountain

☒ historical significance ☒ architectural significance ☒ social significance ☐ scientific significance

Historic Places - Selected non-industrial significant places in former City of Footscray - not in the Planning Scheme

Documentation

References

Lack 12/9/87: 3 cites Dick upgrade to A;
MMBW Property Service Plan from City West Water, 67712: plans 1913 O=A Green; 1924., 1947, 1948, 1951;
Footscray Historical Society 'Images of the West' (IOW) shows Green's wood yard dated c1880 - date error, after 1914.
Lack: 253, 290, 338, 364, 240

Data recording

Assessed By:

Assessed Date: