

National Trust of Australia (Victoria)  
ABN 61 004 356 192

16 September 2004

FN: B7144

Manager  
Planning Section  
Stonnington City Council  
PO Box 21  
PRAHRAN VIC 3181

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Chapel Street

(Orig)

CITY OF STONNINGTON	
17 SEP 2004	
<input type="checkbox"/> PERMANENT	3
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 - 10 YEARS	
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FILE No.	56050
INTL TO	B. Dale
RECORD	Heritage Advice
STO. NO.	04/53311



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I write to advise you that the above precinct has been Classified by the National Trust. The Trust believes that Classified places are an essential part of Australia's heritage and must be preserved for future generations to enjoy.

The inclusion of a place in the National Trust's Register does not impose any legal obligations on property owners or occupiers. Therefore the Trust strongly recommends that if this place is not already protected by the Heritage Overlay controls of your Planning Scheme that you take steps to do so.

Please find enclosed a copy of the Trust's Classification Report for this precinct. The Statement of Significance summarises those aspects which, in the view of the National Trust, contribute to the importance of the places. Such a summary is a necessary part of protection through Heritage Overlay controls under the Planning Scheme.

I would be grateful if you could bring this Classification to the attention of your Council. We also respectfully request that you place this letter on the appropriate building file, with the intention that the Trust be informed should Council become aware of any proposed developments which could have an adverse impact on the Classified place.

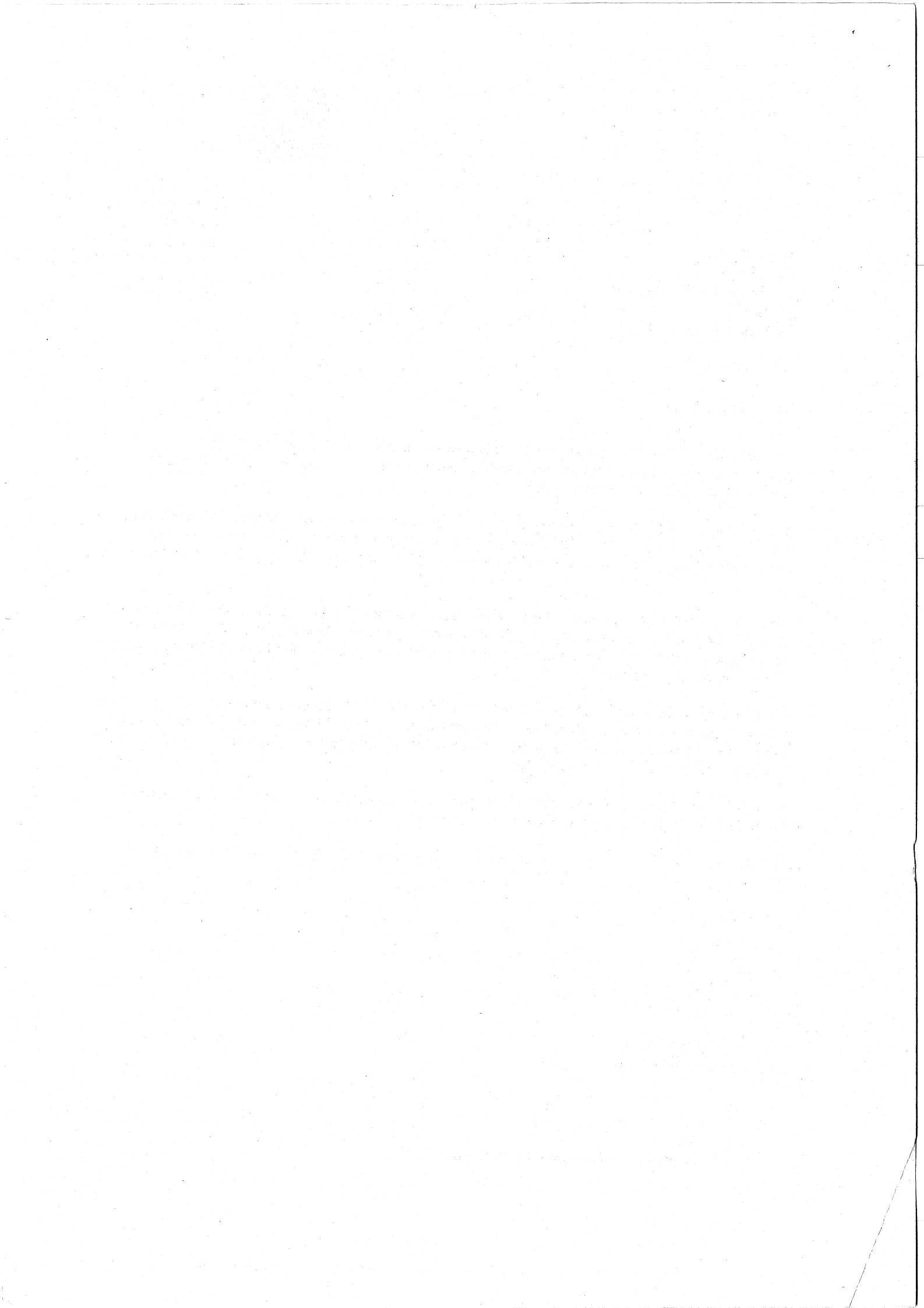
I would be pleased if you could acknowledge receipt of this letter, and inform me of the current heritage status of the precinct in The Planning Scheme.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Fae Ingledew of this office on 9656 9818.

Yours sincerely

MR JIM GARD'NER  
Conservation Manager

Cc. Anstat  
VicRoads  
Stonnington City Council Heritage Advisor



## NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (VICTORIA)

### CLASSIFICATION REPORT

**NAME :** Chapel Street, between Dandenong Road and Toorak Road

**LOCATION:** Chapel Street, South Yarra, Prahran and Windsor

**OTHER / FORMER NAMES:** Nil

#### STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE:

##### What is significant?

Chapel Street is one of the most important shopping strips in Victoria. Most of its buildings date from one of three periods: its initial surge of development in the 1860s; the 1880s and 1890s after the development of the cable tram routes in Chapel Street and its cross streets; or from the emporium development stage of 1900-15. Although Chapel Street began as a local shopping centre, by the time of World War I it rivalled Melbourne's Central Business District in importance. It became the premier shopping street south of the Yarra, its only suburban rival being Smith Street, north of the Yarra. Its large emporia were without rival elsewhere in the suburbs and no other area of Melbourne so clearly demonstrates the pre World War I retail boom. The immense size of the emporia between High Street and Commercial Road is an intact and evocative reminder of this phase of Melbourne's development, and form an outstanding streetscape. Chapel Street has played an important role in the commercial and social life of the area over the years, serving a changing, diverse and cosmopolitan population, such as the artisans, the working classes and middle classes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, migrants, especially after the Second World War, and artists and students from the 1970s. In recent years Chapel Street has developed a reputation as a prestigious shopping strip, popular with discerning shoppers and tourists. It is renowned as a stylish, prestigious shopping precinct attracting many clients: locals, casuals and tourists alike.

Chapel Street is a remarkably intact commercial strip of mainly late nineteenth and early twentieth century shops. Individual buildings of note in the precinct include the Prahran Town Hall, some shops from the 1850s to 1860s (for example numbers 24-26, 92, and 302), the Prahran Arcade (number 282-84), and the former CBA Bank (number 340-44). Among its most impressive buildings are the early twentieth century shopping emporia, a building type more usually associated with the central city shopping district. These emporia are all located between Commercial Road and High Street, and include the Big Store (number 303), Osment Buildings (number 197-207), Love and Lewis (number 321-23), the Colosseum (number 233), and Read's Stores (number 325). South of High Street and north of Commercial Road the streetscape scale is similar to that of other Melbourne suburban

shopping strips. South of High Street particularly development pressures in the later twentieth century have been less, and several notable early twentieth century shopfronts have survived.

### **How is it significant?**

Chapel Street is significant for architectural, historical and social reasons. The section between Commercial Road and High Street is significant at a National level, the sections between Commercial Road and Toorak Road, and High Street and Dandenong Road, are significant at a State level.

### **Why is it significant?**

Chapel Street is architecturally significant for its intact streetscape of nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings, particularly its concentration of boom period shops and its large, early twentieth century shopping emporia usually more closely associated with the central city shopping area. These emporia are architecturally significant for the large range of styles used, and the unusual application of these to such large-scale facades.

Chapel Street is historically significant as one of the most impressive of the shopping strips that developed along Melbourne's cable tram routes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is a reflection of the importance of the public transport networks that developed in Melbourne in the second half of the nineteenth century in the growth of the suburban shopping strips. Its large early twentieth century shopping emporia clearly demonstrate the pre World War I retail boom. It is significant as a reflection of the changing shopping habits of Melbourne people between the mid nineteenth century and the present day.

Chapel Street is socially significant as a one of Melbourne's favourite shopping, recreational and entertainment areas for over a century. It was the most important suburban shopping centre in Melbourne in the early twentieth century, and has again become a fashionable shopping strip, for locals as well as for tourists, and is also a favourite restaurant, café and bar strip.

**EXTENT:** Chapel Street, between Toorak Road and Dandenong Road.

**FILE NO:** National Trust file No. 7144

**CATEGORY:** Area

### **HISTORY:**

#### **CONTEXTUAL HISTORY**

The land that now forms this district centre was originally part of an Aboriginal mission station, which was surveyed by Robert Hoddle in 1837. The mission extended from Punt

Road to Williams Road and from the line of High Street to the Yarra River. Stock routes crossed the mission in an east-west direction and it was not until the first Crown land sale in Prahran on 6 June 1840 that Chapel Street was created. It ran between allotments 6 and 7, and by the land sale of 15 May 1850 at least as far as Dandenong Road in the south. The Independent Chapel, from which Chapel Street took its name, was built in 1853 on the north-east corner of Chapel Street and Commercial Road. From its earliest days Chapel Street was laid out on a 66 foot width and it was this narrow carriageway that today determines much of the character of Chapel Street.

## HISTORY OF PLACE

Chapel Street developed progressively from the 1850s although it did not have the topographical and social advantages of South Yarra or Toorak to the north of Prahran, and much of it was flat and swampy. The emerging commercial development along Chapel Street, especially at the intersections of Commercial Road and High Street, was dependent on the surrounding market concerns, brickworks, tanneries and firewood yards, as well as the growing residential population along either side. All this early private development took place without the support of any public works improvements to roads and drainage, although in the mid 1850s public agitation eventually saw the creation of the Municipality of Prahran, which included all of High Street.

The building of a bridge over the Yarra from the north end of Chapel Street to Church Street Richmond in 1857 made Chapel Street a dominant commercial thoroughfare. The introduction of the railways in 1859 resulted in denser residential development, and stimulated commercial growth. The building of the Prahran Town Hall in 1861 on Chapel Street also did much to stimulate development in the area. Photographs of Prahran taken from the Town Hall tower in 1867 however show how sparse building still was at that time.

In the 1850s and 1860s buildings were plain and small in scale, however, by the 1880s all this had changed. The south end of Chapel Street retains a little of its early character though not many of the very old shops remain. A very old weatherboard shop (at nos 24 - 26) has survived even the upheaval of 1886-8 when the railway bridge was built and the cable tram track laid along the length of Chapel Street.

Betty Malone in *Chapel Street Prahran* (Part One, p17) writes:

In the latter part of the 19th century, many changes came to shopping in Chapel Street. The general store disappeared, to be replaced by more specialised shops - the ironmonger's, the grocer's, licensed or unlicensed, the wine and spirits store, the ham and beef shop and the confectionary shop. The draper's shop remained but had rivals - small haberdashery shop, milliners, dressmakers, tailors, mercery, women's and children's wear, boot and shoes stores - many set up by novices, some of them single women or widows.

Furniture shops proliferated to meet the demand of a growing district's population. Local goods made in Melbourne factories were taking their place beside imported manufactures, and Prahran gained a number of watchmakers, clockmakers and jewellers from Germany and Switzerland.

In the 1870s and 1880s the earlier single storey development were replaced with more impressive buildings. A few trading families had become very successful and constructed

larger more ornate premises in the centre of the strip. Among the earliest of these were no 69 (1878), and J Moffitt's Corner House (no 60), which housed a well-known drapery business. The Prahran Arcade, formerly the Centreway Arcade, (282-84 Chapel Street), built in 1889-90, was one of the most ambitious ventures of its time. This building comprised the Arcade Club Hotel, a restaurant and cafe, billiard rooms, Turkish baths and twenty-nine shops along the interior with cellars and bake-houses beneath.

Francis Conway was a particularly successful local businessman. He made a fortune selling boots and shoes, and eventually built four large buildings in Chapel Street, all still in use. These are at 159-161 (1880), Conways Buildings at 125-131 (1881), 411-425 (1890), and Conways buildings just south of the Town Hall (1914). Conway also owned the Colosseum Building.

Changes in transport led to much of the development of Chapel Street. In 1888 cable trams began running along Chapel Street from Toorak Road to Dandenong Road, bringing shoppers and workers to the area. The cable tram engine house was on the north side of Toorak Road.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the development of Chapel Street was completed. No vacant allotments existed and the area by then was a thriving commercial centre. However, in the next fifteen years this commercial centre was to see an even larger degree of development. Several owners amalgamated adjacent sites in the blocks between High Street and Commercial Road and built large emporia. One of the first of these was the Big Store, opened in 1902. The Osment Buildings were erected in 1910-11, Holt's Building in 1912, Love and Lewis in 1913, and Moore's, Conways' and The Colosseum were all built in 1914. Some of these stores, such as Love & Lewis, had shops on the ground floor and workrooms above.

In 1910 one commentator observed Chapel Street as the 'shoppers paradise':

So popular has the street become as a shopping centre that extensive alterations and buildings are being carried out by many firms. The Big Store is being made bigger by the erection of a building at the rear which will cover a floor space of 6,000 sq. yards and employ another 200 hands. This will bring its total floor space to 20,000 sq. yards with 750 employees. The Reed Stores are about to rebuild the whole of their premises extending to Commercial Road and adding to the 375 hands already employed. Messrs Love and Lewis (400 hands) are also about to begin rebuilding operations: the Colosseum (330? hands) has a floor space of 4,500 sq. yards and the greater number of important business houses find it imperative to make alterations to accommodate increasing trade. The London Stores have just opened tailoring businesses, and Miller's first and second floors of a fine three storey brick shop they are building. The future of the "shoppers paradise" is made all the more secure by the ease and time with which shoppers can come and go on the electric cars.

For most of the years in the interwar period Chapel Street's local market of working class and middle income families remained remarkably stable. Betty Malone states that:

When changes did come after World War II, it was not because the local market had diminished – indeed post-war immigration brought an influx of new customers – but because shopping methods had changed.' The businesses most affected were the large emporia that had relied heavily on shoppers from outside the district to increase their sales. So by the end of the 1920s one period of growth was coming to an end. In increasing numbers customers were attracted to

their own local shopping centres or to the city stores, especially Myer's, which were considered more exciting. Chapel Street had drawn hundreds of clients from the expanding suburban sprawl to the south and east, especially the nearer suburbs of Malvern, East Malvern, Caulfield and Elsternwick.

Malone further writes:

The first two decades of the 20th century saw the electrification of both trams and trains and the gradual development of direct routes to the city. At first, Chapel Street benefited from the changes. Trams ran direct from Richmond, and an electric tram from Central Park, East Malvern, travelling along Wattletree Road and Glenferrie Road and High Street, brought passengers to Chapel Street. The line along Dandenong Road ended at Chapel Street and brought passengers from the Caulfield district to shop there. Fares were cheap and trams ran frequently from early morning until late at night. However, the trams also benefited other shopping centres. Glenferrie Road developed quickly, as did Glenhuntly Road, Elsternwick and, to a lesser extent, Balacava Road, Balacava, shops at the junction of Hawthorn and Balacava Roads. When the cable trams were phased out of St Kilda Road and trams ran direct to the city, a journey costing only sixpence for adults from the terminus at Glen Iris or East Malvern, Chapel Street lost customers.

The city stores were expanding. Myer's was growing rapidly and old-established firms like Ball and Welch, Buckley & Nunn, George's, Hicks Atkinson and Craig Williamson gave the shopper a wider choice of goods, and window displays became more and more elaborate. Many women were now working in the city and others enjoyed the tram or train ride and an afternoon in and around the shops. The city theatres were an attraction, as were the luxurious cinemas. Friday night saw hordes of shoppers and many combined a shopping spree with a visit to the theatre. Chapel Street could not compete with such a collection of allurements.

The shops in Chapel Street were very diverse, and included drapers, mercers, tailors, milliners, haberdashery sellers, confectioners, furriers, jewellers, second hand goods businesses, undertakers, furniture stores and photographers. Chain stores developed in the twentieth century. One such store was Moran and Cato's. The firm had a shop at no 138 Chapel Street in 1910 and another at no 401, at the corner of Barry Street, in 1930. When G J Coles moved out of 259-261 Chapel Street (the old Mechanics' building) in 1940, no 259 became a boutique-style shop, which was sold in 1946 to Bloom and Co. The name was changed to Portmans and the business flourished as the first of the Portmans chain of fashion shops, which included the original shop and another in Princes Central. Dan Murphy's wine and spirit business came to Chapel Street in 1930 and traded from no 280, where Mr Mills had previously operated as a licensed grocer.

Malone writes:

The pattern of Chapel Street's development to the end of World War I was one of steady progress and expansion. The small bush track developed to become the premier shopping street south of the Yarra, its only suburban rival being Smith Street, north of the Yarra, whose history had many similarities... By 1945 the elegant Victorian shops and the huge Edwardian emporiums remained but all were growing older and shabbier. Chapel Street was ageing. The fifties and the sixties were a period of decline for the street... As Chapel Street suffered its decline, factors within the district, and indeed within the state and nation, were appearing to halt that decline and to create the opportunities for new development.

Four main factors can be isolated. One was immigration to the district – the newcomers from overseas, like those of the earlier age, were determined to carve out a good life for themselves and their families and were willing to work hard to do so. The second was the car, which increased the chances of Chapel's Street participating in any revival in business activity after the mini-depression of the 1960s. The third was the move back to the inner suburbs by householders and businesses. The last was the participation in promoting Chapel Street and its district by the Council, the Chambers of Commerce and by influential businessmen.

Chapel Street was a predominately Anglo-Saxon and Celtic district till at least 1950, when it began to become more cosmopolitan. Newcomers came from all over the world. Initially there was a trickle of Europeans, mainly from Germany, Italy and Greece before World War II, then there was a flood of migrants from Europe and from the Middle East. After them came Asians. The immigrants lived in the small streets in and around the central Prahran district or were accommodated in the large Housing Commission flats. They worked in Prahran factories, opened small shops and restaurants, attended schools and soon became part of the Chapel Street scene. They provided a good local market for the shops and goods. Their diverse lifestyles gave much colour to the area. They established their own clubs and churches.

In the 1960s Chapel Street was a conventional suburban shopping centre where people bought fruit, vegetables, bread and meat. From about the 1970s Chapel Street attracted far more people after dark. Changes in eating habits have led to the provision of large and small cafes and restaurants and to the opening of takeaway food shops. Many people have patronized such night spots as Chaser's. Popular hotels include the New Orleans Tavern and the Prince of Wales Hotel in South Yarra. Tourists have been fascinated by Chapel Street, especially the South Yarra end.

Many artists were living above the shops and warehouses in Chapel Street, Prahran in the early 1970s. It was a booming inner-city arts precinct, on the south-east corner of the Yarra, not the lifestyle precinct it is now. For example, the artist Howard Arkly and his wife Elizabeth Gower, also an artist, were tenants in the Dan Murphy building at the Prahran Arcade, 282 Chapel Street from 1973 (until at least 1978). A vivid description of the building is included in Edwina Preston, *Not Just a Suburban Boy* (reprinted in the *Age* of 7 February 2002):

The building was grey and run-down, with two floors of arched balconies – wrought iron-work on the uppermost – and scrolled side arches. Two gargantuan stone eagles turned slightly inwards towards each other, with their beaks raised, and the severed head of a bearded demi-god re-occurred at architectural intervals. It was the decrepit grand dame of Chapel Street. Inside it was old and grotty: peeling paint, faded wallpaper, bare floorboards and scungy lino. The first floor was leased out to a clothing manufacturer; it was a hive of activity, with clothesracks constantly being wheeled back and forth, the unremitting whirr of sewing machines, a constant stream of babble as the machinists talked in Polish and Italian and stilted English. The second floor, however, although occasionally rented out to artists as studio space, had been empty for four years. At the top of a huge flight of Victorian stairs, peering through the keyhole, it was a surrealist dreamscape. Big arched windows, weird Baroque stage furniture painted gold, a lifesize *papier mache* horse and cart (old theatre props in storage) and most importantly, ample space. Space and light. They [The Arklys] could hardly have dreamed of anything more perfect. Within 24 hours Howard and Elizabeth were approved as new tenants for 282 Chapel Street, the whole top floor – three huge rooms, plus kitchen and bathroom, complete with pigeon shit and leaking roof, for \$20 per week. ...they worked in



studio spaces which were unparalleled. Filled with junk and bric-a-brac and clutter, but cathedralesque in proportion. Light pouring in through massive arched windows. Chapel Street bristling with people and activity below. Everything seemed to say success was possible...It may not have been weatherproof, but 282 Chapel Street made up for such drawbacks in pure atmospheric effect: the old blue wallpaper with its climbing-vine print, the Victorian mantelpiece laden with miscellaneous artefacts...the kitchen window looking out on to acres of uninterrupted iron roofing.

Howard Arkly (born in Melbourne in 1951) is listed in Alan McCulloch's *Encyclopedia of Australian Art*. From 1971 Arkly sent geometric abstract work to many competitive exhibitions and held his first show at the Tolarno Galleries in 1975. Later his direction shifted towards French Optical and Kinetic art. He won a number of awards.

From the early 1980s Chapel Street became a stylish shopping precinct, attracting tourists, night spots, glamorous shopping, dining and entertainment. It is considered one of the most prestigious shopping centres in Melbourne. It has been described as comprising the bohemian student quarter of Windsor, the family friendly Prahran and 'swanky South Yarra'. For example, Caffè e Cucina continues to be a favourite place for international and Australian celebrities. According to manager Sam Giannaris, Steffi Graff, Andre Agassi, Magnus Norman, Andrew Ilie, Sandrine Tesud, Wayne Ferreira and Chanda Rubin are among the big names to have dined there during the Australian Open in 2001. Tennis player Mark Philippoussis said recently: 'I'm pretty simple. Chapel St is always nice. I don't go out much but I like going to movies at the Jam Factory.' Other celebrities drawn to Chapel Street include pop singers Kylie Minogue and Natalie Imbruglia.

The journalist Corrie Perkin (*Age*, 2 January 2001) writes of the importance of Melbourne's shopping strips, including Chapel Street:

...as we face the 21st century, Melbourne can rest comfortably in the knowledge that it will always have the one thing Sydney so desperately wishes it had. Like a petulant toddler demanding another's toy, it has tried (and tried!) to rob us of what is inherent, but what can never be taken away. Quite simply, we have style, and the rest of the country - give or take a couple of Perth matrons and the odd Double Bay boutique owner - does not.

Our women (and an increasing number of men) look good. They dress within their budgets, and invest wisely. They love to shop, and are constantly inspired by the changing window displays of Chapel Street and Burke Road.

The other thing Melbourne's fashion industry has going for it is a sympathetic urban design. Because most of our inner suburbs follow the Robert Hoddle north-south/east-west grid, shopping centres have developed as strips along which it is easy and enjoyable to promenade.

And what do you need in a shopping strip to keep the buyers amused? Little boutiques. Designer stores. The salons of milliners and jewellers. Shoe shops. Brunswick Street, Chapel Street (including the Windsor end), Toorak Road, High Street, Little Collins Street, Fitzroy Street - all these places buzz with creative energy.

These streets must be preserved for rag traders. With clever planning, rents should remain accessible.

It is proposed that classified W Class trams will run along Chapel Street because of its historic nature and tourism appeal.

## **DESCRIPTION:**

The character of Chapel Street changes considerably between Toorak Road and Dandenong Road.

A few buildings in Chapel Street survive from the 1850s and 1860s. No 24-26 is a rare survivor of the single-storey buildings timber buildings once common along the street. Other single storey shops surviving from the nineteenth century, are nos 224-6, 304 and 444-8 Chapel Street. The two-storey shop at 302 Chapel Street (on the north-east corner of Walker Street) is an example of the more solid, but still unpretentious buildings that replaced these early buildings. It is a two-storey building in a simple Classical style, probably of brick, with an unpainted render finish. It had a shop on the ground floor, the owner's residence above, and a yard at the rear, and is an illustration of how the more substantial shops of that early period would have appeared. At 92 Chapel Street is the former shop of J P Pfeil, one of the best-known of the early bakers. 'J P Pfeil, Established 1858' is written on the upper façade.

Another rare early building, and the only church surviving in the central section of Chapel Street, is the 1850s former Baptist Church (now Bridie O'Reilly's) at 462 Chapel Street, a single storey rendered Classical building, pedimented and with two arched coloured windows on the front facade.

Another most important survivor from this early period is the system of streets and lanes leading away from Chapel Street to the new residential subdivisions on both sides.

The buildings of the 1880s were larger and usually more ornate. Speculators often amalgamated several adjacent blocks and built terraces of shops for rent, such as the six shops at 328-38 Chapel Street, the three shops at 340-44 Chapel Street, the six shops of Holywell's Terrace (1886) at 196-206 Chapel Street, and the four shops of Ruddock's Buildings (c1889) at 210-16 Chapel Street. Although these terraces might consist of separate shops at the ground level, the design of their upper façades was often treated as single symmetrical composition, often with a pediment over the central section of the parapet, as seen on the eight shops making up Conways Buildings (1890), beginning at 415 Chapel Street.

The Prahran Arcade (282-84 Chapel Street), erected in 1889-90, is a particularly ornate Boom period building. The Prahran architect George W McMullen designed the building for Mrs Elizabeth Delaney and the builder was James McMullen. At the same time as the building was constructed, a row of houses in Arcade Street (to the east behind the main arcade) was also developed by the same proprietor. Both the first and second floors comprise arcaded balconies and the central mass of the symmetrical facade features a large arch and pediment over. The ornate facade has opulent stucco decoration. The interior is equally impressive. Wrought iron trusses with decorative spandrels support a glazed roof and shops line the sides of the arcade. When opened in July 1890, the Arcade buildings were considered one of the most important buildings in the city, and it is a notable example of arcade architecture.

Although the majority of the late nineteenth century buildings in Chapel Street are in a classical style, there are a few notable buildings in other styles, such as the three shops making up the Olde Court (1895), in the Queen Anne style at no 265-7 Chapel Street. This was built in 1896 for the drapers and mercers, Brown, Corke and Company. The two-storey corner building is Gothic in character with a high-pitched gable roof, clustered piers and horseshoe arched headed window openings.

The large emporia are concentrated on the west side of Chapel Street between High Street and Commercial Road and establish the unique character of this part of the street. One of the first was the Big Store, 303 Chapel Street, which opened in 1902, and was immediately successful under the management of John Maclellan, the nephew of Gibson, of Smith Street's Foy and Gibson stores. The Chapel and Wattle Street facades of the Big Store are elaborately conceived and massive in scale. Pilasters and vertical strips of windows alleviate the horizontality of the composition, which results from the lines of rustication, string courses and parapet line of the building. Arched window heads and pediments emphasize the monumental nature of the edifice.

Many of the emporia, such as Moore's and The Big Store, used an Edwardian Free Style, sometimes with American Romanesque influence, such as on the Love and Lewis building. The firm of drapers, Love and Lewis, first occupied premises in Prahran in 1897, and in 1913 replaced their original three-storey premises with a larger five-storey building. Distinctive lettering appears in the spandrels, which alternate with strips of windows and provide the horizontal emphasis to the building. Offsetting this are vertical piers, emphasised by red and cream striped brickwork and crowned with exaggerated pairs of consoles. The top floor of the building features arched window openings with terracotta patterned panels to the spandrels.

Adelaide businessman Charles Moore built his five-storey store, the most dominant of the large emporia along Chapel Street, at the corner of Commercial Road in 1914. The design by the architects Sydney Smith and Ogg was never fully completed. The building has two circular corner bays capped by domes that stand on elaborate drums. The main facade (only partially completed along Chapel Street) has massive Corinthian columns supported by pedestals, and banded piers at the corners, which support a heavy cornice and a balustraded parapet. Large areas of glass light the interiors. There are huge oval windows on the first floor, and an arched opening over the main Commercial Road entrance. The twin domes are especially prominent elements. The intact verandah is particularly ornate and notable.

The Osment Buildings at 197-207 Chapel Street were erected in 1910-11 by the descendants of Henry Osment, who once owned the *Prahran Telegraph*, and was a local councillor from 1887 to 1898 and Mayor of Prahran in 1888-89. It has a three-storey, symmetrical facade of red brick and cement render. Flanking bays contain oriel bay windows with sinuously curved parapets and prominent arches over. The arched openings are accentuated by exaggerated voussoirs. Small Ionic columns of green faience divide the facade and a central, decorated pediment contains the name 'Osment Buildings' in relief lettering.

The Colosseum building was designed by HW and FB Tompkins for Mrs Treadway and built by Clements Langford after fire destroyed the previous building in January 1914. It has an imposing facade dominated by a row of giant-order Ionic columns, and with oversized classical motifs such as Ionic pilasters and columns, garlands, bosses and balustrading. It is

one of the earliest of the Beaux-Arts- inspired giant-order neo-classical buildings which became popular in Melbourne in the 1920s (only the 1913 Spencer Street Mail Exchange is earlier).

The emporium area ends at High Street, with the former Maples store, another large building, which has been rather unfortunately altered.

Another prominent building in this part of Chapel Street is the Town Hall complex, which was built between 1860 and 1915. It includes the original Town Hall and offices of 1861, the enhanced clock tower of 1863 and the Post Office, Police Station and Library of 1878, by architects Crouch and Wilson. These are in a restrained Italianate style, in contrast to the 1888 boom period additions by Charles D'Ebro. The clock tower is a prominent local landmark. Major renovations took place in the early 1980s.

While the larger stores usually adopted an impressive Edwardian Free Style, the smaller buildings of the time were often influenced by *art nouveau*, for example at numbers 184, 242-4, 259-61, 280, 353 and 403-13.

North of Commercial Road development remained on a lower scale, mostly two storeys with a few buildings of three storeys. Several buildings are notable, including 353 Chapel Street, with fanciful stucco decoration and window form; Conways Buildings, an 1890 terrace of eight shops, still with their original verandahs; the group of shops north of Barry Street, built in 1910, with high decorative gables; the group of seven shops built in 1888 south of Fitzgerald Street of face brick with stucco dressings, with arched windows and decorative cast iron balconettes; 464 Chapel, built in 1891, a two storey building with an interesting central entrance and arched fanlights on the first floor; and in marked contrast to all of these, a 1980s post-modern building at 371-3 Chapel Street. Also of note is the Jam Factory, now converted to an entertainment and shopping venue.

Chapel Street south of High Street has few individually distinguished buildings but has a coherent streetscape character. Its buildings are also on a smaller scale than those in the Commercial Road to High Street area. Most buildings are of one or two-storeys, and as this area was slower to be re-developed than the part further north, it has retained more of its early shopfronts. The design and construction of shopfronts was a specialised trade at the time, and the maker's name was usually noted on a small plate placed below the shop window. Early shopfronts in this part of Chapel Street include those at nos 60, 72, 133, and 244, all by Thomas Duff & Bros, the major Melbourne manufacturer. Nos 16-18 and 30-32 are by Silverwood & Beck, no 70 is by Emerson, and at no 66 is an unusual surviving corner display cabinet by Brooks Robinson & Co. No 30-34 also have plates with the shopfront makers name, but in this case the name is difficult to decipher (possibly Morrow).

The most impressive of the early shopfronts is that of Rosenberg's shoe store at no 65, which has a walk through window. Few of these now survive in Melbourne. Rosenberg's is one of the Chapel Street shops with a long history. It was set up before WWI and is now a Melbourne institution as a specialist in women's shoes in larger sizes.

Another Chapel Street store with a long history is Patersons' Cakes, which was established in 1916.

## REFERENCES:

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RBA Architects, 'Central Activity District Heritage Shopfronts', Prepared for the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), December 2000.

## CONTEXT

The Chapel Street commercial strip continues north from Toorak Road, although buildings here are all of the later twentieth century. Away from Chapel Street, some side streets, particularly Greville Street, are also popular shopping streets, but most are residential areas. Some light industry survives, but most industrial buildings are gradually being replaced or converted for residential use.

## INTACTNESS:

The section of Chapel Street between High Street and Dandenong Road forms a remarkably intact streetscape of commercial buildings from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Above the ground floor level the majority of the facades have retained their original decorative features. In some cases Victorian facades have been 'modernised' during the last few decades by stripping them of their nineteenth century decorative elements, such as at numbers 255, 257, 345 and 363.

Most of the ground floor shops-fronts have been modernised, but some nineteenth century shops were modernised in the early twentieth century, and have preserved the lead-lighted shop-fronts from this period. The best surviving shopfronts are in the section of Chapel Street south of High Street.

Most of the original verandahs have been replaced with cantilevered awnings. However the eight shops of the Conways Buildings, 415 Chapel Street (1890), have retained their original metal verandahs and cast iron columns. A few original awnings survive, notably on Pran Central, and possibly also on Tye's store, 318-326 Chapel Street.

## COMPARISON:

Melbourne has a number of suburban shopping strips with individual and distinctive characters, which originated in the nineteenth century and have continued to develop and change up to the present. The most extensive of these strips owe their development to the cable trams that once ran along the streets. These provided cheap and convenient access to the businesses along their length, and resulted in long strips of shops and other commercial premises. These early suburban shopping strips in Melbourne have remained remarkably

intact, largely due to the popularity of the new shopping malls since WWII, and the associated commercial stagnation in the suburban strips during this time. This prevented their destruction during a period when so much of heritage value in Melbourne was lost to development.

Though these strips had a common origin, their subsequent development has diverged due to varying local factors. In most of Melbourne's suburban shopping strips the shops were relatively modest, predominantly of one or two, or occasionally three, storey height, such as along High Street at Northcote (classified by the National Trust), Brunswick Street at Fitzroy (also classified), Sydney Road at Brunswick and Bridge Road at Richmond. These areas are closer in character to the part of Chapel Street south of High Street and north of Commercial Road. However the southern part of Chapel Street is distinguished by its surviving early twentieth century shopfronts. Probably only Brunswick Street approaches Chapel Street in this respect.

Of all the suburban strips, Smith Street is the one most like Chapel Street. Smith Street was the most important shopping strip north of the Yarra in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and contains a number of important Victorian and Edwardian commercial buildings. Like Chapel Street it also had some large shopping emporia, a few of which have survived, for example the former Ackman's store (the present Safeway) (c1880), the Foy & Gibson Ladies' Store (1911), and Paterson's (1911).

This sort of major suburban shopping centre does not seem to have developed in any other city in Australia. Brisbane's Fortitude Valley, just outside the Brisbane CBD, has some similarities with this part of Chapel Street. It developed as a major shopping destination probably in about 1900-1915, at the same time as the emporia of Chapel Street were built. There were at least two major departments stores and many other smaller shops. It was centred on one or two blocks, and had the character more of a shopping area than a shopping strip. Only one major emporium was built (or at least has survived): McWhirter's, which occupied a large four-storey Edwardian Freestyle building on a major corner site, and stretched for some distance along both adjoining streets. It ceased to be a department store in the 1980s, and is now a shopping centre. In comparison, Chapel Street was a much larger shopping destination, and was a distinctly suburban development, being quite a few kilometres from the CBD.

Sydney did not develop a major shopping area just outside the CBD, although large emporia developed during the period between 1880 and 1915 in a number of separate locations at the southern end of Sydney's long, thin CBD. With the extension of the railway terminus from Redfern to the new Central Station in c 1905, and the establishment of Railway Square as a major hub for the steam trams and from c1905 the electric tram network, major emporia were built just north of the station. These included Anthony Hordern's (demolished in the 1980s for World Square) and Mark Foy's, converted to a court complex in the 1980s. Both of these occupied a whole city block, a few blocks south of the current CBD. Even further away from the centre of the city, taking advantage of the tram networks along Parramatta Road, Grace Brothers built the well known pair of towered shops on either side of the corner of Bay Street, Broadway. After WWI, and especially following the opening of the underground lines to Wynyard, Museum and St. James, the centre of retailing shifted further north. Farmer's, now the homes of Myer / Grace Brothers, the two David Jones Stores, Walton's and others date

from this period, and still dominate the retail heart of central Sydney. However, these were all associated with the CBD, rather than being true suburban centres, as was Chapel Street.

Chapel Street between Dandenong Road and Toorak Road is an extensive and substantially intact example of a nineteenth and early twentieth century suburban shopping strip, one of a number of such strips that developed at the time in the inner suburbs of Melbourne. The section of Chapel Street between Commercial Road and High Street however is unique, distinguished by its relatively large number of very large early twentieth century shopping emporia, with wide street frontages and facades of up to five storeys, which are not found anywhere else. Its intact streetscape of notable and impressive early twentieth century facades, makes this section of Chapel Street unique not only in Melbourne, but probably in Australia.

## **APPENDICES**

Photographs, maps

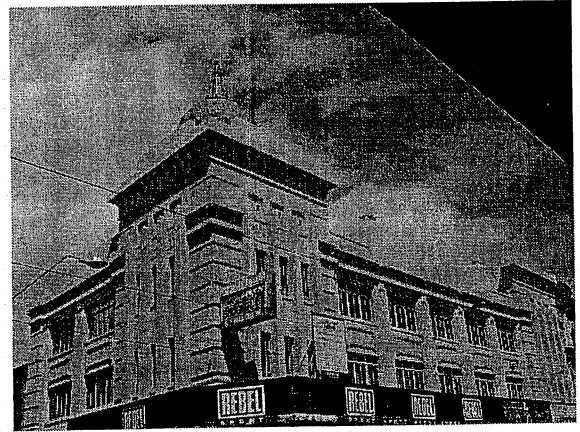


## CHAPEL STREET, PRAHRAN

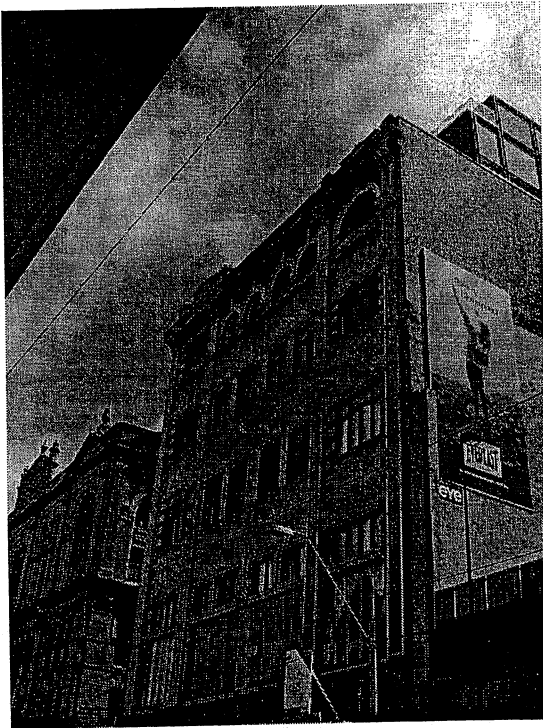
Early shop at 302 Chapel Street



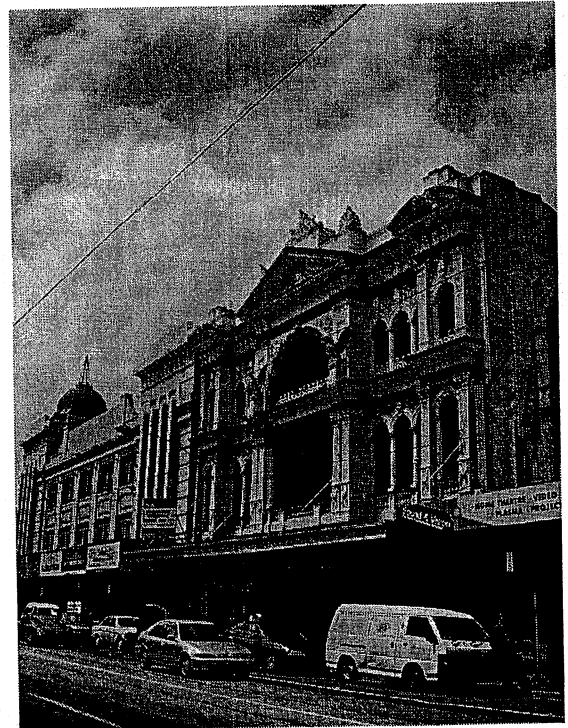
286-296 Chapel Street



Love & Lewis, 321-3 Chapel Street

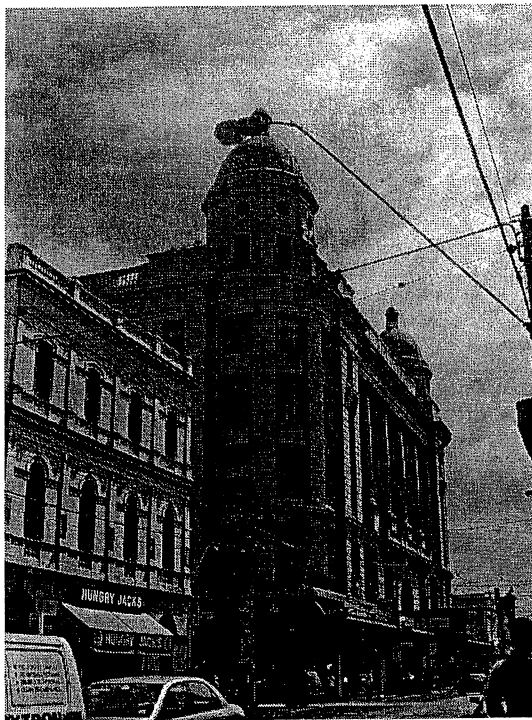


Prahran Arcade

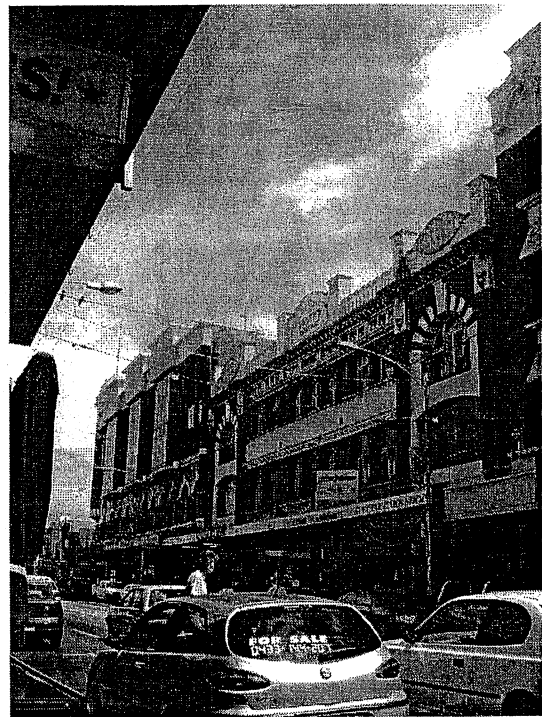




Moore's Store, corner of Commercial Rd



West side north of High Street



The Big Store



Conways Buildings

