

386-388 MALVERN ROAD
PRAHRAN

INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd with Di Foster, historian, to investigate the significance of the building at 386-388 Malvern Road, Prahran, and to determine the appropriateness of its inclusion within the schedule to the Heritage Overlay within the planning scheme. The report builds on work carried out by Context Pty Ltd in the *City of Prahran Conservation Review*, 1993.

The *City of Prahran Conservation Review* graded the building as A2+ (almost certainly of regional significance). It is not presently listed on the Victorian Heritage Register or the Register of the National Estate, nor is it classified by the National Trust.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This report finds that the shops at 386-388 Malvern Road are of regional significance and should be added to the schedule to the Heritage Overlay in the local section of the Stonnington Planning Scheme and nominated to the Australian Heritage Commission for inclusion in the register of the National Estate.

HISTORY

Crown allotment 43 was sold to W. & J. Payne, at the Crown Land Sales in 1849. The area extended from the line of present day Bangs Street to Lewisham Rd N/ Francis Street. The Payne brothers were speculators who purchased several blocks of land in Prahran and Malvern. Lot 43 was soon subdivided and re-sold.¹

Kearney's map of 1855 shows the beginnings of commercial development along Chapel Street and a few scattered shops along Malvern Road.

In 1885, grocer James Summers occupied a weatherboard shop of five rooms owned by Thomas Copeland.² The building was numbered 78 Malvern Road and Summers had occupied his grocers' store for at least ten years. In 1886 Copeland built a brick shop of five rooms, replacing the earlier timber building and dealer John Gillespie, occupied the new shop.³ Copeland built an identical shop the following year, which became the pair to Gillespie's store.⁴

The shops were numbered 78 and 78A Malvern Road. Bootmaker, Michael occupied 78A and warehouseman Dennis Coghlan occupied number 78.⁵ Architect Edward Roberts occupied 78 Malvern Road in 1888.⁶ The shops were re-numbered the following year and 78 became 386 and 78A became 388. The buildings were described as having three rooms each and poulterer, James Grace occupied number 386.⁷ Thomas Copeland's tenants included Samuel and James Perry, dairymen and in 1891 farmer John Copeland occupied number 388.⁸ Other tenants included a bookseller, dressmaker, costumier and milliner.⁹ Minnie Dunger and bootmaker James Smith were Copeland's tenants in 1895.¹⁰

Quarryman Charles Johnston, and bicycle maker Henry Early were the tenants in 1900 when the pair of shops, each had four rooms.¹¹ By 1910 both shops had been sold, Mrs Chinn was the new owner and the storekeepers had changed to Agnes King, confectioner and Mary Somerville.¹² In 1920 Mrs Chinn's estate owned the shops, which continued to be rented out.¹³ A laundry occupied number 386 and in

¹ Betty Malone, Prahran, section 7, unpublished manuscript, Prahran Archives.

² City of Prahran Rate book, Prahran Ward, 1885, no. 4223.

³ Ibid., 1886, no. 4731.

⁴ Ibid., 1887, no. 5696-7.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 1888, no. 868-9.

⁷ Ibid., 1889, no. 5086-7.

⁸ Ibid., 1891, no. 5118-9.

⁹ *Sands and McDougall directories, 1890s.*

¹⁰ City of Prahran Rate book, Prahran Ward, 1895, no. 5331-2.

¹¹ Ibid., 1900, no. 5334-5.

¹² Ibid., 1901, no. 5994-5.

¹³ Ibid., 1920, nos. 6820-1.

1935, a grocer occupied 388.¹⁴ In later years importer, Alfred Bunning, owned the shops and a cabinet maker rented number 388.¹⁵

The buildings at 386-8 Malvern Road were built by Thomas Copeland as a pair of shops in 1886-87. Copeland appears to have been an investor and although ownership of the buildings remained fairly constant for 100 years, the tenants changed frequently. These shopkeepers established their various trades and businesses to meet the needs of the rapidly developing community.

DESCRIPTION

The building at 386-388 Malvern Road, currently known as The Design Establishment, was constructed as a pair of Victorian shops located on a busy suburban artery near the heart of Prahran. The character of this section of Malvern Road has been overwritten continually since the construction of these buildings. Today, the building is situated between a 1970s Police Station Complex and one of the many recent multi-storey residential developments that abound in the area. Schools, shops, residences and towering Housing Commission blocks occupy sites nearby while trams pedestrians and heavy vehicular traffic occupy the streets. These shops at 386-388 Malvern Road constitute an important remnant of the built fabric of early Prahran in this confused melange of styles, materials and usage. The premises are currently run as a single store.

The subject building is a single storey building whose symmetrical facade is built on the front boundary of the property. The original tuckpointed face brick has been painted burnt orange and an early cast iron verandah removed, but the facade appears, otherwise, to be in substantially original condition. Timber doors and large display windows are set into large arched openings, flanked by brick piers which rise through the full height of the building. A small parapet with understated decorative trim partially conceals a hipped roof in modern steel.

¹⁴ *Sands and McDougall directories, 1920-40.*

¹⁵ *Ibid., 1953-62, 9908-9.*

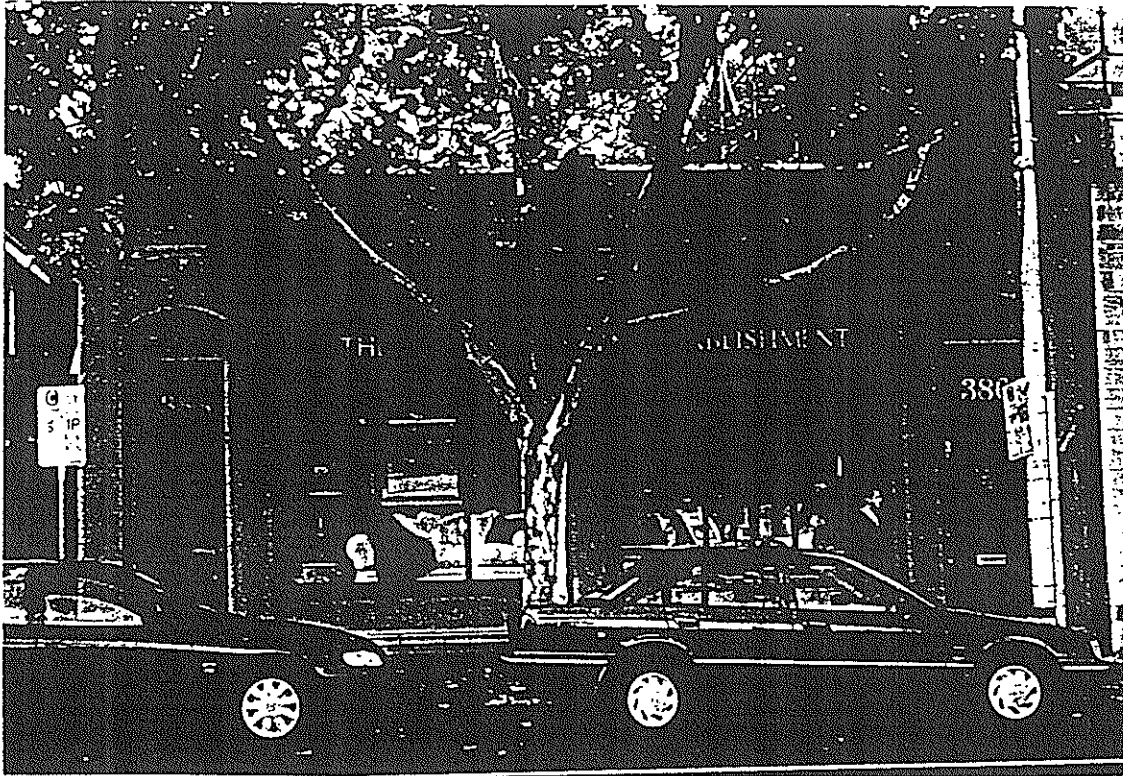


Illustration 1 386-388 Malvern Road, 1997.

The shopfront is especially noteworthy for its arched timber window mullions and door joinery, and this comprises the major feature of interest to the building. While it is not certain that these date from the original construction they are at the very least remnants of an early, and very sympathetic refurbishment.

ANALYSIS

The building at 386-388 Malvern Road is noteworthy as an increasingly rare example of a once-common type. Premises such as these have typically been degraded in recent times by the remodelling of the shopfronts to create large areas of glazing for increased natural light and display capacity. These shops survive in excellent, early condition and appear to retain one of the few early timber arched shop fronts surviving in the Melbourne metropolitan area.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The building at 386-388 Malvern Road is of regional significance as a fine, largely intact and representative example of a pair of shops with arched timber shopfronts. Such shopfront joinery is increasingly rare within the broad metropolitan area, and this rarity contributes substantially to the significance of the place.

REFERENCES

Context Pty Ltd, *City of Prahran Conservation Review*, Vol 4.

Malone, Betty, Prahran, section 7, unpublished manuscript, Prahran Archives.

City of Prahran Rate book, Prahran Ward, 1885-1953.

Sands and McDougall directories.