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# Metropolitan Gas Company Depot or Office and Show rooms



collingwood johnston street  
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12-14

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## Location

12-14 Johnston Street, COLLINGWOOD VIC 3066 - Property No 121325

## Municipality

YARRA CITY

## Level of significance

Incl in HO area indiv sig

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO324

## Heritage Listing

Yarra City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 1, 2014

**Metropolitan Gas Company Depot, Office and Show rooms, 12-14 Johnston Street, Collingwood**

This site is subject to a Statement of Significance for the building, as well as a Statement of Significance for the Precinct in which it is located.

Please find below the Statement for the building, followed by the Statement for the Precinct.

#### Statement of Significance for the building

What is significant?

The Metropolitan Gas Company Depot, Office and Show rooms at 12-14 Johnston Street, Collingwood were created in 1939 (in front of Edwardian-era rear wing) for the Metropolitan Gas Co. and has close historical associations with this firm. The place has a good integrity to its creation date (shopfront frame painted).

Fabric from the creation date at the Metropolitan Gas Company Depot or Office and Show rooms is locally significant within the City of Yarra, compared to other similar places from a similar era.

How is it significant?

The Metropolitan Gas Company Depot or Office and Show rooms at 12-14 Johnston Street, Collingwood are historically and architecturally significant to the locality of Collingwood and the City of Yarra.

Why is it significant?

The Metropolitan Gas Company Depot or Office and Show rooms are significant as a simple Moderne style facade to an Edwardian-era shop and residence building but has a significant original or early shopfront of curved glass and a long historical association with the Metropolitan Gas Company.

#### Precinct statement of significance

Component streets include:

Bedford Street,

Harmsworth Street,

Johnston Street,

Palmer Street,

Perry Street,

Sydney Street,

Wellington Street.

#### Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The Johnston Street Heritage Overlay Area, east of Smith Street and west of Hoddle Street, includes land alienated from the Crown in 1839. S A Donaldson acquired the major portion of the area, consisting of lot 52 and part of lots 53 and 68, while George Otter acquired the northern portion consisting of part of lot 73. Subdivision commenced in 1848 (lot 73) and 1849 (lots 52 and 53) and, by 1853, almost the whole of the surrounding area was occupied by small timber workers' cottages.

Johnston Street was well established as a major east-west thoroughfare through Collingwood by the 1880s, when the Melbourne Tramway and Omnibus Cos. (known as the (Melbourne Tramway Cos. from 1900) began a cable tram service along Johnston Street. The service operated from 1887 until 1939, when the service was replaced by buses. This transport service would have promoted and supported the continuing prosperity of many commercial ventures along the strip, including those as diverse as John Wren's legendary tote at 148 Johnston St (since replaced in part by an Edwardian-era shop).

Ancillary to the main Johnston Street commercial area were some side streets such as Palmer, Harmsworth and Bedford. These streets contain a mixture of Victorian-era row housing and factories built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, complementing the main shopping strip.

MMBW plans from the mid 1890s show a number of hotels in the Heritage Overlay Area, including the Council Club, the Court House, the Engineers' Arms and the Ivanhoe. At this time most of the street was developed with a combination of residential and commercial buildings.<sup>(60)</sup> Adjacent to the former Court House Hotel stood the former Collingwood court house, set back from Johnston Street, along with the Collingwood council chambers (used 1860- 1887), the Collingwood police station and Working Men's Club. The Collingwood Technical School (later Collingwood TAFE) and the Gregory Steel Products Pty Ltd. engineering workshop complex absorbed these buildings and eventually replaced most of them. This was after the Collingwood Council sold land for the school, subdivided in 1910 from the original municipal reserve. Only the Court House Hotel (refaced, at rear of 31-33 Johnston Street) and the later Working Men's Club building opposite (64 Johnston St) survive <sup>(61)</sup> from this former centre of Collingwood's civic life.

In the 20th century, the Collingwood Technical School complex developed as an alternative public centre to the former town hall and court house. The school was opened in 1912 at the former Collingwood municipal offices and the first purpose-built school structure was completed in 1913 (facing Perry St) but most of the complex developed around the World War Two era, playing a major role in retraining of returned soldiers. The school complex contains the highly significant 1938 Administration Building, with its arched Johnston Street entry bay. A superior example of international Dudok Modernism, the building was designed by the Public Works Department Chief Architect, Percy Everett.

Other significant buildings include hotels such as the Galloway Arms of 1888 (115 Johnston Street) and the Bendigo Hotel of 1911 (125 Johnston Street); shops like G Mateer's Victoria Bakery 1888 (67 Johnston Street) and Williams' Buildings of 1895 (153-157 Johnston Street) and recreational sites like the former Austral Theatre, later the Austral Picture Theatre, of 1921 (202-204 Johnston Street). <sup>(62)</sup>

#### Main development era

The main development period evident in the heritage overlay is that of the Victorian era with a substantial contribution from the Edwardian-period. There is also a contribution from some well preserved inter-war buildings and individually significant places of all eras.

#### Contributory elements

The Johnston Street Heritage Overlay Area contributory elements include (but not exclusively) generally attached Victorian-era and Edwardian-era mainly two-storey shops with residences over, having typically:

- . Facade parapets, with pitched roofs set behind;
- . Two storey wall heights;
- . Face brick walls (red, dichrome and polychrome) or stucco walls (typically originally unpainted) with some significant moulded or pressed cement detailing on parapets;
- . Corrugated iron roof cladding, with some slate roofing;
- . Chimneys of either stucco finish (with moulded caps) or of matching face brickwork with corbelled capping courses;
- . Post-supported street verandahs as shown on the MMBW Detail Plans <sup>(63)</sup>,
- . Less than 40% of the street wall face comprised with openings such as windows and doors; and
- . No front or side setbacks typically, but with some garden setbacks with picket front fences; also
- . Timber-framed display windows and entry recesses, with some tiled surrounds on Edwardian-era and later shopfronts, and some use of copper or bronze finish shopfront frames.

Some of these shops and residences also have:

- . residential verandahs, at two levels with cast-iron detailing;
- . carriage ways beside shops allowing access through to yards behind;

Contributory elements also include:

- . Well preserved buildings from key periods in Collingwood's and the City's development, including industrial buildings from the pre Second War era and the significant Collingwood Technical School complex with key buildings dating from 1913 to 1945; and
- . Public infrastructure, expressive of the Victorian and Edwardian-eras such as bluestone pitched road paving, crossings, stone kerbs, cast iron fire plugs, and channels, and asphalt paved footpaths.

How is it significant?

HO324 Johnston Street Heritage Overlay Area, Collingwood is **aesthetically and historically** significant to the City of Yarra (National Estate Register [NER] Criteria E1, A4)

Why is it significant?

The Johnston Street Heritage Overlay Area is significant:

- . As a good demonstration of mainly Victorian and Edwardian-era commercial and retail development in Collingwood, including hotels, a former theatre, former shops with residences over, small industrial buildings and some residential development, that represents the second and major generation of settlement that occurred in the area in the late nineteenth century, promoted by the establishment of a cable tram service there in 1887;
- . For the important architectural elements such as the ornate Italianate or Edwardian details on the upper storey shop facades; and
- . For individually significant buildings and building groups such as the Collingwood Technical School complex, a significant 20th century school design, also
- . As the site of the first Collingwood Municipal Reserve and a number of locally historic buildings that evolved around it.

## References

60 see MMBW Detail Plan 1196 (1899).

61 A permit has been issued for its demolition

62 see Appendix 9 for comprehensive list of individually significant buildings in the heritage overlay area

63 See MMBW Detail Plan 1196 of 1899

Heritage Study/Consultant	Yarra - City of Collingwood Conservation Study, Andrew Ward & Associates, 1989; Yarra - City of Collingwood Conservation Study, Andrew Ward & Associates, 1995; Yarra - City of Yarra Heritage Review, Allom Lovell & Associates, 1998; Yarra - City of Yarra Review of Heritage Overlay Areas, Graeme Butler & Associates, 2007;
Construction dates	1939,
Hermes Number	102521
Property Number	

## Physical Description 2

A simple Moderne style facade to an Edwardian-era shop & residence building but has significant original or early shopfront of curved glass (shopfront frame painted) and a long association with the Metropolitan Gas Company.

## Integrity

Good

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*