
Prahran Arcade

Location

284 Chapel Street PRAHRAN, Stonnington City

Municipality

STONNINGTON CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1960

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO16

Heritage Listing

Stonnington City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

When opened in July 1890, the Arcade buildings were considered one of the most important buildings in the city and the building today is a distinctive landmark of the opulent boom years. The decorations of the facade epitomises the excesses of late nineteenth century architecture in Victoria. The intact interior is a notable example of an arcade in Melbourne.

Heritage
Study/Consultant

Stonnington - References to Victorian Heritage Register, Heritage Victoria, 1900;
Stonnington - Prahran Conservation Study Identification of Buildings & Areas of
Major Significance, Nigel Lewis & Associates, 1983;

Construction dates	1889,
Architect/Designer	McMullen, George,
Other Names	284 Chapel Street, Prahran,
Hermes Number	30504
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The Prahran arcade, block arcade in central Melbourne and Queen's Arcade at Armadale are among the best surviving examples. The old Prahran arcade at 282-284 chapel street was designed as the Prahran arcade in 1889 by George McMullen, a local prominent architect, and built by James McMullen. This substantial but elegant arcade incorporated about 30 shops along with Turkish baths. The Arcade Club hotel billiard rooms, a restaurant, a bakehouse and capacious cellars. The arcade opened on July 31st 1890 with a grand banquet in the hotel attended by the Mayor and local dignitaries and organised by the first owner, Mrs Elizabeth Delaney. By 1891 the arcade was recorded as being owned by the Caledonian and Australian finance agency co. The many varied tenants covered a wide cross-section of the community and included estate agents, the register of births, deaths and marriages, the independent workers' Union, the theosophical society an oyster saloon, Prahran school of Art, centre way disposals co. And wine merchant. The old arcade is a face brick building with stucco facade to both upper storeys, with projecting, wide central bay and narrow end Bays. The recessed sections are faced with arches supported on columns. The end bay originally had pointed roofs, capped by flagpoles and widow's walk. The whole facade is richly decorated and features spread winged birds, acroteria, elaborate pediment, rich mouldings, balustrades and cast-iron work to the balconies. The arcade runs through the centre of the building for its full depth. This interior space is two storeys high, roofed by a partly glazed roof supported on arched iron trusses which have decorative spandrels. The upper arcade walls are designed as a facade and are stuccoed and faced with pilasters at each shop division. Half way along the length of the arcade on the north side are stairs which divide into two upper flights at the landing, giving access to the first floor above the shops. Along the South End of the front block is a passage leading to the stair which serves that section. The third floor facade arch has a half circle window behind and this motif is repeated at each end of the facade. The basic structure of the bakehouse oven survives in the cellar. The very elaborately detailed front elevation has not changed much except for a few alterations to the pavement entrance area, but the removal of the high mansard roof has significantly affected the Overall appearance of the building. The shopfronts inside the arcade which were built of brick and cement following the front design have also been removed. Prahran arcade forms a notable part of the chapel streetscape, it is a well known Prahran landmark and its occupiers have played a significant role in the history of the locality. This section of Chapel Street, one of Melbourne's longest suburban shopping streets, contains a number of landmark buildings, including the Town Hall (1960-1915). Old Love and Lewis store (1913) and domed Moores Store (1914).

There has been little change to the exterior with the exception of the removal of the high mansard roof which has significantly affected the Overall appearance of the building and a few alterations to the pavement entrance area. Internal alterations include the removal of internal shop fronts.

Local Historical Themes

7.3 Creating Melbourne's leading shopping centres

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.

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