
Shops & Offices



B4770 236-252 Brunswick Street

Location

236-252 Brunswick Street,, FITZROY VIC 3065 - Property No B4770

Municipality

YARRA CITY

Level of significance

State

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 21, 2008

This block of shops and offices, constructed in 1888, is one of the best surviving examples of a boom-style brick commercial premises in Victoria. The building is of a highly individual style incorporating a wide range of distinctive elements. A dominant as well as distinctive structure, the building is a key part of the Brunswick Street streetscape and, visible also from nearby areas, it is a landmark in this part of Melbourne. Added significance lies in the fact that the building was designed by prominent Melbourne architect John Beswicke; the structure is actually one of the most substantial, intact, surviving commercial works by this architect.

Classified: 18/03/1982

Revised: 03/08/1998

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This building is included in the Brunswick Street Classification, "State" level 4/12/2000

Statement of Significance

The shopping strip of Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, developed from the 1840s, and predominantly dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, is of State historical, architectural and social significance.

Historically, Brunswick Street was the first significant shopping area outside the city, described as rivalling Bourke Street in the 1850s. It developed as a major general shopping precinct by the 1900s, when it was overtaken in pre-eminence by Smith Street, Chapel Street, and the ever growing city stores. The following decline was not reversed until its establishment as an 'alternative' shopping strip from the 1980s, reinvigorating the now well preserved building stock.

Architecturally, Brunswick Street is notable as a particularly cohesive and intact 19th and early 20th century shopping strip, which includes a number of individually significant shop/house and shop/warehouse developments, such as the Beswicke Building, the post office and early hotels. In some instances the buildings' size is testimony to the success and aspirations of the people who traded and shopped in the street. There is also an unusually high proportion of original nineteenth century shopfronts for the metropolitan context. The urban picture created by the building stock is further enhanced by the intactness of most upper-floor facades, and the tram route which still runs along the street. The view of St Patrick's Cathedral is one of the major urban vistas in the whole of Melbourne, and is comparable with the view to the Shrine along St Kilda Road.

Socially, Brunswick Street has played an important role in serving the diverse population of Fitzroy, including the artisans and working classes of the nineteenth century, the low income residents particularly of the numerous boarding houses of the twentieth century, and the large number of migrants after the Second World War. From the 1980s Brunswick Street has been considered Melbourne's most "Bohemian" and varied shopping strip, quite distinct from other shopping strips in the inner city. It is home to a range of shops, bars and cafes catering to a clientele looking for a creative, challenging, or socially aware experience. Visitors value the interesting ambience, the egalitarian feel of the place, and the artistic expression in the signs and street furniture.

Hermes Number 66963

Property Number

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/>