
Former Avon Butter Factory

Location

218 Nicholson Street,, FITZROY VIC 3065 - Property No B7203

Municipality

YARRA CITY

Level of significance

State

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2315

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 19, 2004

What is significant? The former Avon Butter Factory, a small commercial/industrial building, was designed by I G Anderson a prominent Geelong architect and completed in 1932. The building contained a factory, offices and retail outlet for the butter manufacturer, and was commissioned to have a 'unique' architectural character. The administrative building fronting Nicholson Street is constructed of cream and multi coloured bricks with a stepped roof of Cordova tiles. This building shows significant Spanish American influences and detailing, but also has Medieval features, particularly evident in the corbelled corner tower and Gothic arched doorway to the retail shop. The quality and richness of the decorative use of brickwork on the facade is exceptional, integrating colours such as cream, russet, deep red, and jade green. Details include wrought iron window grilles, circular windows, 'sunburst' brick edging and small star patterns. The building reflects the picturesque and Mediterranean style of architecture popularized by Hollywood films of the period. It was intended to attract attention and promote sales rather than conform to pure function. Reviews in the architectural and professional journals of the period were very complimentary on its design.

The principal elevation fronting Nicholson Street and the elevations on the north and east of the building remain largely true to the original design and are in good condition. Some minor modifications have been made to the south and southeast elevations.

How is it significant? The Avon Butter Factory is significant for architectural reasons at a State level.

Why is it significant? Architecturally the building is unique of its type. Although the picturesque Spanish American style was becoming popular during the 1920's for domestic buildings, houses and residential flats, and for leisure buildings such as cinemas and theatres, it was unusual for a commercial/industrial building of this type. A

significant difference between the Avon Butter factory and other stylistically similar buildings of the period is that it is left unrendered and gains much of its quality from the skilful use and coloration of the brickwork. The decorative coursework, fine detailing and unusual compositional elements all combine to enhance the striking visual effect of the building.

The work of the architect, I G Anderson, has been recognized in recent years both for quality of design and evolving architectural styles employed during the 1920's and 1930's. As in his Brunswick Markets of 1929, Anderson shows an ability to assimilate popular vernacular influences and combine them in a unique and picturesque manner. The decorative elements and asymmetrical composition foreshadow many of the details and devices of his later work.

Historically and culturally it is significant that the client, John Fitzpatrick, was prepared to invest so enthusiastically in such an unusual design for his factory and that the results should have received such coverage and praise in the architectural press of the period.

Classified: 07/07/2003

Hermes Number 67148

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/>