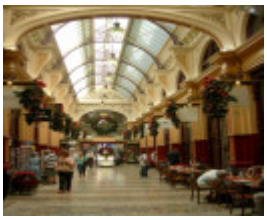
BLOCK ARCADE



BLOCK ARCADE SOHE 2008

BLOCK ARCADE SOHE 2008

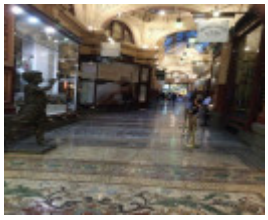
block arcade melb external view

1 block arcade melb arcade view sw oct99

block arcade melb arcade detail sw oct99

block arcade melb detail exterior

BLOCK ARCADE July 2016



BLOCK ARCADE July 2016

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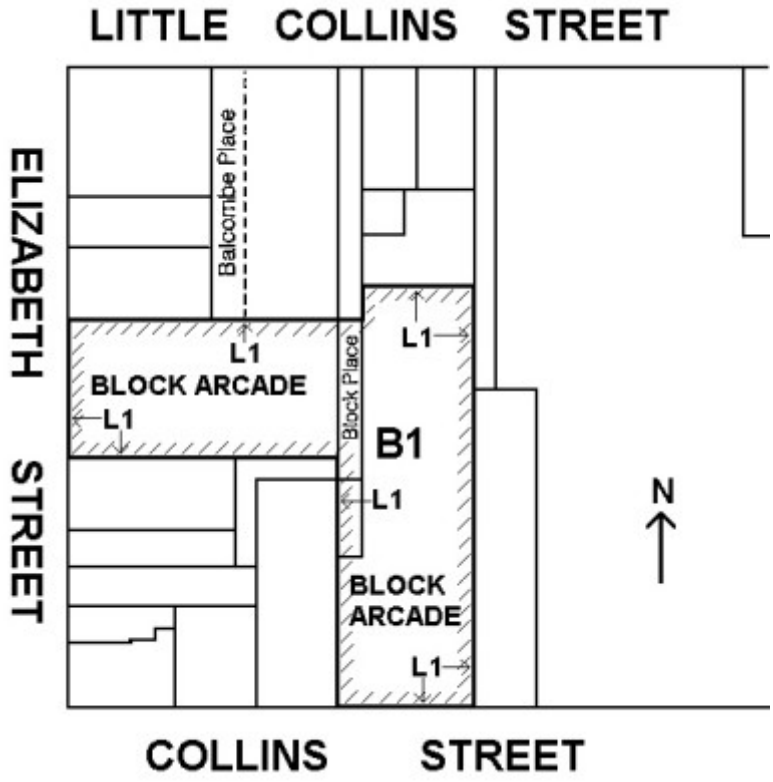

block arcade plan

Location

280 - 286 COLLINS STREET 96 - 102 ELIZABETH STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0032

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO596

VHR Registration

October 9, 1974

Amendment to Registration

February 10, 2000

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - December 2, 1999

What is significant?
The Block Arcade was developed by financier Benjamin Fink. The Collins Street section of the building was completed in February 1892 and is similar in style to the Milano Galleria Vittorio Arcade in Italy. The new shopping arcade was designed by David.C.Askew of the architectural firm Twentyman and Askew. The cost of erection was £46 233. The bluestone footings for the building came from the original structure on the site, the Briscoe & Company Bulk Store. The site of 96-102 Elizabeth Street was purchased by the City Property Company Ltd in January 1892. Architect David Askew was called upon to continue his style for the arcade and this area was completed in October the following year. The Block Arcade comprises of arcade shops with mezzanine levels above for social rooms and offices, shops to Collins Street, Block Place and Elizabeth Street and four levels of office space above. The arcade forms an L-shape with a polygonal planned space with a glazed roof at the corner of the L. The kink in the plan was due to the shape of the original block subdivision and the location of Block Place, the lane behind. Linking the two spaces is an elaborately patterned mosaic floor of tiles, which were imported from Europe. When the arcade was constructed the Building and Engineering Journal noted that the flooring contained the largest area of mosaics yet laid down in Australia. In 1907, scenic artist Philip Goatcher for the Singer Sewing Machine Company decorated the ceiling of their premises on the east corner of the Collins Street entry to the arcade. The other shop to Collins Street, which housed the first Kodak shop in Melbourne contains an elaborate pressed metal ceiling. The facades to Collins and Elizabeth Street are designed in the Victorian Mannerist style with elaborate stucco decoration. Particular facade elements include; triangular and segmental pediments; rustication and an exaggerated cornice with brackets. Features of the upstairs office spaces include timber joinery around lift entries, tessellated tiles to the lobby spaces, elaborate leadlight windows and decorative plasterwork to arches in the corridors. There is also one surviving communal timber telephone box situated in a corridor.

How is it significant?
The Block Arcade is of architectural, aesthetic, social and historical importance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?
The Block Arcade is of architectural and aesthetic importance as an excellent intact example of a shopping arcade. The design draws on early and influential European models and as such is important in its ability to demonstrate the essential and typical qualities of those designs and the continuity of the tradition of covered shopping streets. The Elizabeth and Collins Street facades are fine examples of the Mannerist style demonstrating many of the characteristic elements, such as a combination of triangular and segmental pediments and rustication. The Block Arcade is of architectural and aesthetic significance as it features lavish interior decoration, including an extraordinary mosaic tile floor. Based on the Milan Galleria Vittoria, it has a glass roof over the arcade with a glass dome at is corner. Its internal spaces, with their high quality finishes, have been maintained and the arcade remains a grand and prestigious retailing precinct. Attention to detail has also been carried through to the office spaces on the levels above the arcade.

The Block Arcade is of social and historical importance as the grandest and most fashionable amongst what became an extensive network of retail arcades that provided an alternative pedestrian route to Melbourne's major streets. Many of the arcades constructed in Melbourne before the turn of the century have not survived or have been altered considerably. The Block Arcade is important as an essential element in the social institution of doing The Block. This was a friendly expression referring to the stylish shopping trend of the late 19th century which involved starting in Collins Street at Swanston, then moving west to Elizabeth, north to Little Collins Street and back to Swanston. The Block was the place to be seen and those who frequented the popular thoroughfare, its shops and tea houses were often recorded by caricaturists in the city's social pages.

Permit Exemptions

General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must notify the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions here.

Specific Exemptions:

GENERAL CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO THESE EXEMPTIONS:
1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.

2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering that alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.

3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.

4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending and rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

Nothing in this declaration exempts the owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable Exterior:

* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
* Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.

* Installation or repair of damp-proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method. Interior:

* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
* Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves, skirtings and decorative strapping.

* Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.
* Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.
* Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and

other wall mounted artworks.
* Refurbishment of existing bathrooms, toilets including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.
* Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves and provided that the location of the heating unit is concealed from view.
* Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ. Note: if wiring original to the place was carried in timber conduits then the conduits should remain in-situ.
* Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.
* Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors Retail Areas:

Occasional refurbishment of shop interiors to accommodate tenants' requirements is intrinsic to the continued usage of these spaces for retail operation. The display of merchandising material is an essential component of retailing. Alterations to decorative ceilings will be subject to permit approval. The following works are considered permit exempt:

* The interior design and fit out of retail tenancies including shelving, display units, associated furnishings and lighting design provided there is no damage to walls, floors and ceilings. This includes removal and replacement of fittings.
* Alteration to existing decorative schemes to shop interiors, provided they do not remove or damage evidence of original paint and other decorative schemes. Proposals to alter existing pictorial representation are subject to permit approval. Colour schemes are to be approved by Block Centre Management.
* Removal or infilling of false walling in the dividing archway between two adjacent shops to create a larger tenancy or two separate tenancies provided that such works do not damage or remove existing building fabric.
* Installation of air conditioning to tenancies in accordance with existing systems and Management approval.
* Installation, removal or replacement of kitchen benches and fixtures including sinks, stoves, dishwashers etc and associated plumbing and wiring provided installation does not damage significant built fabric. (Installation of air extraction systems for commercial kitchen tenancies will be subject to permit approval.)

Office Areas:

* Refurbishment of office interior colour scheme is to be approved by Block Arcade Centre Management.
* Installation of venetian blinds to external windows in accordance with Block Arcade Centre Management's selected colour and style.
* Refurbishment of existing decorative schemes to stairways and corridors

Signage:

The Block Arcade Centre Management provides external signage for all tenants of the Block Arcade to maintain consistent presentation of signage for all tenancies. Signage installed in accordance with Management policy is permit exempt. Management will approve all proposals for signage prior to installation.

Signage utilising the following are **not** permitted in any location within the Block Arcade:

*Strobe, flashing or activating signs or lighting.
*Moving, rotating or stroboscopic signs.
*Cardboard or foam lettering.
*Boxed or cabinet-type signs, unless totally recessed.
*Cloth, paper, cardboard and similar stickers or decals around or on any surfaces of the shopfront.
*Signs utilising luminous, vacuum-formed, plastic letters.
*Signs utilising unedged or uncapped plastic letters, or letters with no returns and exposed fastenings.
*Temporary, handwritten or portable signs used to display ?specials? or sale prices.

External Signage: Retail Area

* Suspended glass arcade signage, with black and white text/logo for each tenant, gilt stallboard signage to be located at the foot of shop windows and the main shopfront window. (Signage is restricted to shop name only.)
*Installation of directional signage in arcade areas provided there is no damage to significant building fabric.

Internal Signage: Shops:

* Location of internal signage is to be placed no less than 900mm from either side of the shopfront.
* Maximum signage area is 0.15m² per 1000mm of shop frontage.
* Neon signage is acceptable provided that the sign is not to be viewed side-on.

Office Area:

Signage to commercial tenancies is provided by the Management to maintain consistency throughout the building. This is limited to the following:

* Name inserts in three Arcade directories.
* Wall signage adjacent to the lift lobby on the tenant's floor.
* Numbering on the tenancy door.

Construction dates	1891,
Architect/Designer	Askew, David C,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	730
Property Number	

History

Contextual History:
Between 1861 and 1891 Melbourne?s population quadrupled, and the high rate of household formation encouraged massive suburban development, culminating in the land boom. The city centre benefited from the concentration of financial institutions catering not only to Victoria but to much of Australia. Melbourne wholesale merchants also serviced intercolonial areas, like the Riverina of New South Wales, and the newly opened tracts of Queensland. Retailers included the ironmongery giant, James McEwan & Co., and familiar firms like Buckleys, The Leviathan and Samuel Mullens (later Robertson & Mullens) were established in this period (Melbourne, The City?s History and Development, Miles Lewis, City of Melbourne, 1995).

This was the period of shopping arcades which, considered in economic terms, were simply a mechanism for turning the dead heart of a commercial block into prime retailing space. The Lowther Arcade had begun the process in 1853, though this seems not to have lasted very long. The Royal Arcade, opened in 1869 and the Block Arcade of 1892 were the most striking later examples (Melbourne, The City?s History and Development, Miles Lewis, City of Melbourne, 1995).

Shopping Arcades were the 19th century answer to making full use of a deep ground floor plan. They brought the street inside. The Block Arcade was the grandest and most fashionable amongst what would become an extensive network of retail arcades that provided an alternative pedestrian route to Melbourne?s major streets. Doing The Block was an 1890s social institution. It was the place to be seen and those who frequented the popular thoroughfare, its shops and teahouses were often recorded by caricaturists in the city?s social pages (Philip Goad, 1999 p.70).

History of Place:
The site of The Block was occupied by Briscoe?s grain store until 1883, when it was taken over by the drapers George and George (Georges). That building was destroyed by fire in 1889.

The Block Arcade was developed by financier Benjamin Fink. The Collins Street section of the building was completed in February 1892 and is similar in style to the Milano Galleria Vittorio Arcade in Italy. The new shopping arcade was designed by David.C.Askew of the architectural firm Twentyman and Askew. The cost of erection was £46 233. The bluestone footings for the building came from the original structure on the site, the Briscoe & Company Bulk Store. The site of 96-102 Elizabeth Street was purchased by the City Property Company Ltd in January 1892. Architect David Askew was called upon to continue his style for the arcade and

this area was completed in October the following year. The Block Arcade comprises of arcade shops with mezzanine levels above for social rooms and offices, shops to Collins Street, Block Place and Elizabeth Street and four levels of office space above. The arcade forms an L-shape with a polygonal planned space with a glazed roof at the corner of the L. The kink in the plan was due to the shape of the original block subdivision and the location of Block Place, the lane behind. Linking the two spaces is an elaborately patterned mosaic floor of tiles, which were imported from Europe. When the arcade was constructed the Building and Engineering Journal noted that the flooring contained the largest area of mosaics yet laid down in Australia. In 1907, scenic artist Philip Goatcher for the Singer Sewing Machine Company decorated the ceiling of their premises on the east corner of the Collins Street entry to the arcade. The other shop to Collins Street, which housed the first Kodak shop in Melbourne contains an elaborate pressed metal ceiling.

At the turn of the century Melburnians used a friendly expression when referring to stylish shopping. They were doing The Block. They came in their finery to shop, starting in Collins Street at Swanston, then moving west to Elizabeth, north to Little Collins and back to Swanston. In 1892 when the Block Arcade opened it became an essential part of doing The Block.
Associated People: Financier Benjamin Fink
Architect David Askew of the firm Twentyman and Askew

HOPETOUN TEAROOMS - c. 1976 internal refurbishment by interior designer Murray Sheldrick. Article in *The Age*, August 1976, reported 'he has rehung the walls with black and emerald green wallpaper, draped the ceiling with matching striped velvet, restored chair rails and dadoes, put in more mirrors, comfortable chairs and new carpet - and all with the approval of the National Trust and the Historic Buildings Register (sic)' See site monitoring event X5933 for more information.

Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion A
The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object.

The Block Arcade is of historical importance as the grandest and most fashionable amongst what became an extensive network of retail arcades that provided an alternative pedestrian route to Melbourne's major streets. The Block Arcade is of historical importance as an intact nineteenth century shopping arcade. Many of the arcades constructed in Melbourne before the turn of the century have not survived or are not as intact. It demonstrates the continuity of the tradition of covered shopping streets.

Criterion B
The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness.

The Block Arcade is Victoria's most elaborate shopping arcade.

Criterion C
The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage.

Criterion D
The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects.

The Block Arcade is an excellent example of a shopping arcade. The design draws on early and influential European models and as such is important in its ability to demonstrate the essential and typical qualities of those designs and the continuity of the tradition of covered shopping streets. The Elizabeth and Collins Street facades are a fine example of the Mannerist style demonstrating many of the characteristic elements, such as a combination of triangular and segmental pediments and rustication.

Criterion E
The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.

The Block Arcade features lavish interior decoration, including an extraordinary mosaic tile floor. Based on the Milan Galleria Vittoria, it has a glass roof over the arcade with a glass dome at is corner. Its internal spaces, with their high quality finishes, have been maintained and the arcade is still a grand and prestigious retailing precinct. Attention to detail has also been carried through to the office spaces on the levels above the arcade.

Criterion F
The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements.

Criterion G
The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations.

The Block Arcade is important for its association with the social institution of doing The Block. Doing the Block was a term coined to describe the popular pastime amongst Melbourne's middle classes of promenading outside the plush retail and accessory stores which reached its height in the boom years of the 1880s and 1890s. They came in their finery to shop, starting in Collins Street at Swanston, then moving west to Elizabeth, north to Little Collins and back to Swanston. .The Block Arcade became an essential part of the doing The Block when it was completed in 1892.

Criterion H
Any other matter which the Council considers relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended in that the Heritage Register Number 32 in the category described as a Heritage Place is now described as:

Block Arcade, 280-286 Collins Street and 96-102 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne City Council.

EXTENT:

1. All the building known as the Block Arcade marked B1 on Diagram 32 held by the Executive Director.

2. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 32 held by the Executive Director, being the land described in Certificate of Titles Vol. 4645 Fol. 875, part of Vol. 9409 Fol. 669, Vol. 9924 Fol. 206, Vol. 9409 Fol. 669 and Vol. 4645 Fol. 874.

Dated: 3 February 2000.

RAY TONKIN
Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G 6 10 February 2000 p.221]

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/