

people place heritage

CONTEXT

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

588-590 City Rd,
South Melbourne

25 May, 2017

Prepared for
City of Port Phillip

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Project Team:

Vicki McLean, Heritage Consultant/Architect

Emma Russell, Senior Heritage Consultant

Report Register

This report register documents the development and issue of the report titled *Heritage Assessment 588-590 City Rd, South Melbourne, 25 May 2017* which was undertaken by Context Pty Ltd in accordance with our internal quality management system.

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Context Pty Ltd

22 Merri Street, Brunswick VIC 3056

Phone 03 9380 6933

Facsimile 03 9380 4066

Email context@contextpl.com.au

Web www.contextpl.com.au

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In March 2017, the City of Port Phillip commissioned Context Pty Ltd to undertake a preliminary heritage assessment of the building at 588-590 City Rd, South Melbourne. On the basis of information gathered in the preliminary study, a recommendation was made to undertake a full assessment of the properties. In response to the recommendation, the City of Port Phillip commissioned Context Pty Ltd to undertake this full heritage assessment of the site.

1.2 Existing Heritage Protection

The pair of shops is not currently covered by any statutory heritage protection in the form of a Heritage Overlay or other mechanism.

1.3 Methodology

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Australia ICOMOS *Charter for Place of Cultural Significance*, 2013 (the Burra Charter) and its guidelines. All terminology is consistent with the Burra Charter.

Assessment of the subject properties has been carried out with reference to the HERCON criteria for assessing cultural heritage significance.

In assessing the building, a desktop review of relevant documents, reports and maps was undertaken. The building was inspected from the street/public domain during a site visit in March 2017.

2 HISTORY

2.1 Thematic

These themes are taken from the Victoria's framework of historical themes:

- 5.3 Marketing and retailing
- 6.7 Making homes for Victorians

2.2 Thematic History

South Melbourne, located as it was close to the centre of Melbourne and the main road out of the city, the Yarra River, and the port, has undergone waves of changes since European settlement in the 1840s. During the gold rush of the 1850s a 'Canvastown' established itself for a couple of years. The thousands of canvas tents and rapid flow of gold seekers in and out of the area very quickly turned the place into a slum. The real name of the area, Emerald Hill, was more appealing and with new land sales in 1852, and then the proclamation of Emerald Hill as a borough in 1855, the area quickly transformed into a desirable location. In 1872, a town was proclaimed.

By this time also Sandridge Road, the former name for City Road, stretched from St Kilda Road to the corner of Boundary Road and Crockford Street (which was also the continuation of Sandridge Road). Several industries had established themselves on the north side of Sandridge Road extending from St Kilda Road, but on the south side there was nothing. Residences and businesses had sprung up along both sides of the stretch between Moray Street and Boundary Road however, which also included the railway crossing.

By 1879, when the two bluestone shops and residences were built at what was to become 588 and 590 City Road between Montague Street and Boundary Road they joined a couple of butchers, a furniture dealer, a cab proprietor, architect, tobacconist, tailor, grocer, druggist, several residences, and two hotels.

This mix of shops, dwellings and services continued along City Road and the nearby main roads for many decades. In 1942, the block between Montague and Boundary Streets still reveals a similar mix of drying cleaning services, fruiterers, fish suppliers, butchers, chemists, pawn brokers, confectioners, sporting goods, hardware, cartage, furniture manufacturers and residences. One change was in the mix of names, by now with a smattering of Chinese and European names.

2.3 Place History

This pair of shops and residences was constructed in 1879 as an investment for Robert Henderson who owned multiple properties in the immediate vicinity.

Edward Wallis, a builder, purchased this property (part of CA 10, Section 51, Township of Emerald Hill) in October 1867. He was recorded (as Edward ‘Wallace’) in the 1868 South Melbourne Rate book as the owner of land ‘40 & 160 feet’ with a N.A.V. of 6 pounds.

In 1868, he transferred the land to Robert Henderson. The rate books record that Robert Henderson owned many properties in the surrounding area during the late nineteenth century. By 1876 his holdings included the four, four-roomed brick houses at 1-7 Boundary Street, the land and timber cottages to the rear of these houses off Clyde Place, the City Road Hotel and several shops immediately to the north at nos. 201 to 207 (he was listed as owner/occupier of no.207) and 211 Sandridge Road. This property was vacant at that time, and remained so in 1878 (RB).

Henderson himself is a little elusive and appears to have moved around a bit. From 1869 to 1871 a Robert Henderson, cab proprietor, lived at 112 Bank Street, Emerald Hill just three blocks to the south east of Sandridge Street. He had moved out the following year but a Robert Henderson, no recorded occupation, lived at 207 Sandridge Road in 1872 – 1876, and then appeared in neighbouring Pickles Street in 1879 when he began renting 207 Sandridge along with his other investment properties. (S&M 1867-1882).

This pair of shops is first listed in 1879 rate book. No. 199 (the present no.590) was vacant and described containing seven rooms and constructed of stone with a N.A.V. of 70 pounds. No. 197 was occupied by John Brown, a baker, and was described as a seven-roomed stone building with a brick house and a higher N.A.V. of 100 pounds (RB). Mr Henderson continued as owner of these buildings and the surrounding properties described above.

This pair of shops, by then numbered as nos. 191 and 193, is shown on the MMBW Detail Plan #492 produced in 1895. By that time, the surrounding area had been almost fully developed with shops and residences. The City Road Hotel was at the corner of Boundary Street and Meagher’s Hotel was diagonally opposite at the corner of Pickles Street.

Henderson (if he remained the owner) rented these two properties out to a variety of tenants. Number 588 (originally 197 then 191 Sandridge Road) was occupied by John Brown baker, William McLean grocer, and then Jones & Son Undertakers from c1896 to c1915. By 1920 the house had been renumbered 588 and was occupied by Robert Patterson, a carrier.

Number 590 (originally 199 then 193 Sandridge Road) was occupied by a number of different tenants with an occasional vacancy until the early 20th century when William Taylor began operating a laundry there for at least twenty years.

Sources:

Land Victoria (LV), Certificate of title Vol. 1983 Fol. 409

Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Detail Plan No. 492, dated 1895

Sands & McDougal Directories (M&M) 1865-1942, various

South Melbourne Council rate books (RB), 1868 (no. in rate 3046), 1876 (4186-4194, 4197-4200), 1877 (4225), 1878 (4312), 1879 (5489, 5490).

Notes from David Helms, Heritage Advisor, City of Port Phillip

3 DESCRIPTION

3.1 Place Description

This pair of Victorian era, double story bluestone shops and residences (588-590) is located on the northern side of City Road, between Montague Street and Boundary Street, close to the boundary between South Melbourne and Port Melbourne. The streetscape of this section of city road is currently dominated by commercial properties built or substantially altered in relatively recent times. A nineteenth century shop front with intact upper facade is still evident at number 602. On the southern side of the road, buildings are mostly residential, with an intact row of Federation era houses remaining. A nineteenth century hotel building on the corner of Pickles St still operates as a hotel.



Figure 1. Image shows the pair of shops buildings with 588 to the right of the photo and 590 to the left. (Context 2017)

The pair of double storey bluestone shops with residences is set right on the street frontage. At the ground level, the shopfronts have been remodelled - number 590 retains a bluestone plinth and threshold, but these have been removed on number 588.

The upper façade of both shops is very intact. Designed as a pair, the detailing is simple with a moulded parapet running across the width of the unpainted bluestone face. A moulded string course has a dentil cornice below. Each shop has an arched pediment inscribed with the date of construction - 1879. Rendered pilasters run down the outer edges of the pair of shops. Pairs of rectangular window openings punctuate the upper façade with stone sills, lintels and quoining currently painted white.

Windows have been replaced in number 590 but may be original in number 588. Canvas window hoods have been added on number 588.

Each building has a hipped roof with early corrugated iron cladding evident. Rendered chimneys are intact.

4 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This section brings together all the evidence gathered to provide an assessment of the architectural and historical values associated with the building at 588-590 City Rd, South Melbourne. A comparative analysis will compare the heritage values of this site, with those of similar sites/buildings in the City of Port Phillip. A Statement of Significance will summarise the heritage values associated with the site.

4.1 Assessment against criteria

Historic significance

Importance to the course, or pattern, of the City of Port Phillip's cultural history. (Criterion A)

The pair of shops with residences at 588-590 City Rd, South Melbourne is significant as early (pre-1880) and relatively rare surviving example of commercial buildings in this once thriving commercial locale close to the border of South Melbourne and Port Melbourne.

Architectural significance

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects. (Criterion D).

The pair of shops with residences at 588-590 City Rd, South Melbourne is significant as an unusual and intact example of an unpainted bluestone commercial building within this locality. The upper façade is intact and is representative of the relatively simple commercial façade of the pre-1880 period, pre-dating the more elaborate shopfronts of the boom period of the 1880s.

4.2 Comparative analysis

588-590 City Rd, South Melbourne is comparable to the following shops in the City of Port Phillip, which are located outside the original Emerald Hill subdivision and development, and were constructed pre-1880.

397 Bay St, Port Melbourne (HO87)

The citation for this shop states:

397 Bay Street is of local significance. Constructed probably before 1863, it is among the earliest surviving shops in Bay Street, and its bluestone construction is unusual in the area.

The building at 588-590 is comparable as an unusual example of a surviving bluestone shop/residence buildings in the area. Both buildings were constructed prior to 1880, although the Bays St example is earlier (c.1863). The Bay St building has a coursed rubble façade, now painted white, and transverse gabled roof whereas the City Rd building has a smoother,

unpainted bluestone façade and a hipped and gable roof set behind a parapet. At ground level, shopfronts have been altered on both buildings.

235-237 Bay St, Port Melbourne (significant in precinct HO1)

The citations for this property states:

235 - 7 Bay Street is of local significance. Like the adjacent pair of shops at 239 - 41 Bay Street (q.v.), these shops were constructed at a relatively early date and are substantially intact above the verandah. They are important streetscape elements.

239-241 Bay St, Port Melbourne (significant in precinct HO1)

The citations for this property states:

239 – 41 Bay Street is of local significance. Like the adjacent pair of shops at 235 - 7 Bay Street (q.v.), these shops were constructed at a relatively early date and are substantially intact above the verandah.

The pair of shop/residences on City Road compares favourably with these two other paired shop/residence buildings. All are dated pre-1880, although the examples above are earlier than the City Rd building (235-237 dated 1869 and 239-241 dated 1871). All three buildings have intact upper facades with the simplified detailing typical of the pre-1880s boom period, including corniced parapets and paired rectangular window openings. Number 239-241 also has quoining to the building edges and urn finials at either end of the parapet. The Bay St examples have a rendered finish to the façade. The City Road building compares favourably with additional detailing including pediments over each shop and a dentil cornice. Importantly, the building also has a face bluestone finish visible to the front and sides of the building.

4.3 Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The pair of shops with residences at 588-590 City Rd, South Melbourne.

How is it significant?

The pair of shops at 588-590 City Rd, South Melbourne is of local aesthetic (architectural) and historic significance to the City of Port Philip.

Why is it significant?

The pair of shops with residences at 588-590 City Rd, South Melbourne is significant as an early (pre-1880) and relatively rare remaining example of a commercial building in this once thriving commercial locale close to the border of South Melbourne and Port Melbourne. *(Criterion A)*

The pair of shops with residences at 588-590 City Rd, South Melbourne is significant as a relatively rare example of an unpainted bluestone commercial building. The upper façade is intact and is representative of a relatively simple commercial façade of the pre-1880 period, pre-dating the more elaborate shopfronts of the boom period of the 1880s. Detailing includes the face bluestone finish, the corniced parapet with dentil cornice below a moulded string course, the arched pediments inscribed with the date of construction (1879), the rendered pilasters at the outer edges of the building, the paired rectangular window openings (sills and lintels and quoining have been painted), and rendered chimneys. Also important are the original windows which survive in 588 City Road, and the bluestone plinth and threshold at 590 City Road. *(Criterion D)*

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- The pair of shops with residences at 588-590 City Rd, South Melbourne is of local significance to the City of Port Phillip. It is recommended that it be included on the Heritage Overlay of the City of Port Phillip Planning Scheme to the extent of the whole title boundaries, as shown below.

