

Victorian Heritage Database Report
Balfour's Motors

Location:

155 Mercer Street, GEELONG VIC 3220 - Property No 216244

Heritage Status / Level of Significance:

Individually Significant

Heritage Overlay Numbers: HO1638, HO1048

Listing Authority: Greater Geelong City

Precinct:

Woolstores Industrial Heritage Area

Statement of Significance:

C Listed - Local significance

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Balfours Motors building, 155 Mercer Street, Geelong, has significance for its long-term associations with motor car servicing, repairs and parts from 1918 until the present day (2002). Originally built for the woolbrokers Dennys Lascelles in 1918 to a design by the Geelong architects, Laird and Buchan, the building experienced several alterations and additions from 1918 until the 1960s. The Balfours Motors building also has significance as a moderately intact example of an important early 20th century motor garage in Geelong that continues to operate as originally intended.

The Balfours Motors building, 155 Mercer Street, is architecturally significant at a LOCAL level. It demonstrates original and early design qualities from the early 20th century. These qualities include the rudimentary capped parapet of the main building, as well as the projecting moulded cornice and horizontal composition that is punctuated by three vertically-oriented arched pavilions with raised parapets. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the single storey height to the Mercer Street facade, two storey height to the Gheringhap Street facade, arched pavilions, timber framed shopfront windows with upper awning sashes, slightly projecting stringcourse above the Mercer Street shopfront windows, rendered and/or painted brick wall construction, timber framed windows within the arch of the Gheringhap Street pavilion, timber framed basement windows, shallow rudimentary Gheringhap parapet that extends to the height of the slightly projecting stringcourse on the Gheringhap Street pavilion, double hipped (M) roof form clad in lapped galvanised corrugated iron painted grey, regularly spaced painted brick piers that extend from ground level and terminate at the top of the parapet (Gheringhap Street facade), three banks of timber framed windows at first floor level (Gheringhap Street facade), shopfront window openings at ground floor level (Gheringhap Street facade), timber framed four paned double hung windows (Gheringhap Street facade), galvanised iron rainheads and round downpipes, and the timber flagpole that surmounts the central pavilion on the Mercer Street facade.

The Balfours Motors building, 155 Mercer Street, is historically significant at a LOCAL level. It is associated with commercial developments in Geelong in the early 20th century, particularly in relation to the motor car

industry. In particular, this building has associations with Dennys Lascelles, original owners from 1913. However, the historical significance of the building especially lies in its long-time associations with the Balfour family, who have operated the motor garage and parts store from 1918 and the business continues to be known as Balfours Motors to the present day (2002). The building has further associations with the R.A.C.V., when the local headquarters in 1931. There are also associations with the Geelong architects, Laird and Buchan, who were responsible for the original building design in 1913, as well as the alterations and additions from 1918 until the at least the late 1930s.

The Balfours Motors building, 155 Mercer Street, Geelong, is socially significant at a LOCAL level. It is recognised by sections of the Geelong community as an important, long-standing motor garage and motor parts building. Overall, the Balfours Motors building is of LOCAL significance.

REFERENCES

Nicholls, T., Balfour Motors - Conservation Report, School of Architecture & Building, Deakin University, 1990 (copy held in the Geelong Historical Records Centre).

Geelong Town Plan, 1881, Geelong Historical Records Centre

Description

Description

The Balfours Motors Building, 155 Mercer Street, Geelong, is situated on the north-west corner of Gheringhap and Malop/Mercer Streets. The building takes up all of the site and abuts the front boundaries.

The rendered and/or painted brick early 20th century building is characterised by a rudimentary capped parapet, projecting moulded cornice and horizontal composition that is punctuated by three vertically-oriented arched pavilions with raised parapets. The building also emphasises its corner location by sweeping around the corner with angled walls. Between the arched pavilions are early timber framed shopfront windows with upper awning sashes. A slightly projecting stringcourse provides further horizontal accentuation above the shopfront windows. This Mercer Street frontage appears single storey from the exterior.

The flanking vertically-oriented pavilion on the Gheringhap Street frontage has early timber framed windows within the arch, which is situated at first floor level. There are also early basement openings with timber framed windows under the arched windows and to the south of the pavilion.

The northern section of the building fronting Gheringhap Street is different from the main Mercer Street facade. It is two storeys in height (due to the slope of the site) has a shallow rudimentary parapet that extends to a height of the slightly projecting stringcourse on the pavilion. Beyond the parapet is a double hipped (M) roof form clad in early lapped galvanised corrugated iron painted grey. This section of the building is also characterised by regularly spaced painted brick piers that extend from ground level and terminate at the top of the parapet. There are three banks of timber framed windows at first floor level, and shopfront windows at ground floor level that appear to have been altered. There are however some early timber framed four paned double hung windows to the south of the southern ground floor shopfront (between the vertical pavilion of the main building and the southern shopfront). Other early features of the design include the galvanised iron rainheads and round downpipes, and the timber flagpole that surmounts the central pavilion on the Mercer Street facade.

Heritage Study / Consultant	Greater Geelong - Geelong City Urban Conservation Study, Volumes 2-5, Graeme Butler, 1991; Greater Geelong - Geelong City Urban Conservation Study, Graeme Butler, 1993; Greater Geelong - Geelong City 'C' Citations Study, Dr David Rowe, 2002
Construction Date Range	
Architect / Designer	
Municipality	GREATER GEELONG CITY
Other names	
Hermes number	19920
Property number	216244

This place/object may also be State heritage listed. Check the Victorian Heritage Database. For further details, contact the local Council or go to [Planning Schemes Online](#)