

PART OF FORMER FOY AND GIBSON COMPLEX



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AND GIBSON COMPLEX
SOHE 2008



H0896 H0896 plan

Location

79-93 OXFORD STREET COLLINGWOOD, YARRA CITY

Municipality

YARRA CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0896

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO127

VHR Registration

December 11, 1991

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - July 20, 1999

What is significant?

The Part of the Foy and Gibson complex that consists of the buildings at 79-93 Oxford Street, Collingwood is part of the Foy and Gibson complex of warehouses, factories and showrooms which was constructed to the design of the notable architect William Pitt over a long period beginning c.1887.

How is it significant?

The Part of the Foy and Gibson complex that consists of the buildings at 79-93 Oxford Street, Collingwood is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Former Foy and Gibson complex is of historical significance as both a magnificent 19th and early 20th century industrial complex and as an example of the development of early department store retailing, demonstrating the articulations between retail and manufacturing functions that typified the organisation of consumption in the 19th and early 20th century city. As such the complex provides extremely important information about the economic, industrial and social organisation of the period. The Foy and Gibson company was a pioneer in the history of retailing in Melbourne. Its department store chain, Melbourne's earliest, was modelled on the trading principles of the "Bon Marche" of Paris and other European and American stores. The Foy and Gibson factories and warehouses, which were responsible for the production and delivery of goods to the department stores, were remarkable for the range of goods that they produced, including soft furnishings, manchester goods, clothing, hats, hardware, leather goods, furniture and a range of foods. Such production, wholesaling and retailing arrangements, which were an indication of the largely local focus of producer, supplier and retailer networks, are rare in contemporary retail establishments which source their products from all over the world.

The Former Foy and Gibson complex is of historical significance as a rare surviving major industrial establishment of the late 19th and early 20th century. As early as 1906 it was described as "undoubtedly the largest factory in the Southern hemisphere". The complex employed 2000 people and was considered technologically advanced, employing steam and electric power from an early date. Today, however, the equipment and shafting have been removed and the boiler house stacks form the only extant evidence of Foy and Gibson's technological achievements.

The Former Foy and Gibson complex is of architectural significance as an imposing and substantially intact example of late 19th century industrial architecture and for its associations with the eminent Melbourne architect, William Pitt (1855-1918), who retained Foy and Gibson as a client for most of his professional life. Visually, the complex is remarkably cohesive, the formula for the design, once established, being repeated with little change in the selection of materials and decorative motifs. Although a few of the buildings have been gutted, the exterior fabric remains substantially intact. The principal facade elements consist of rusticated pilasters between windows above a lower cornice line and capped by a similar cornice and parapet. The street level and first floor facades have chamfered pilasters whilst the cornices and lintels (in later work) are stuccoed. The street environments are rare in Melbourne for their uniformity and are complemented by the bluestone pitched drains and crossings and the remarkable weighbridge in Oxford Street.

William Pitt was a respected architect, with a great talent for distinctive industrial buildings. As well as the vast Collingwood factory complex, Pitt was responsible for the retail store design for the 1911 Smith Street Diamond Cut Lingerie building in Fitzroy. The factory complex can be compared with Pitt's early sections of the Victoria Brewery complex, the facade of which formed the prototype for many later additions, and with his Bryant and May complex in Church Street, Richmond.

The buildings at 79-93 Oxford Street, Collingwood are significant because they contain a four storey section, possibly built prior to 1887, thought to be the earliest building still extant in the Foy and Gibson complex. The four storey building is reasonably intact. The two level buildings on either side of it were added in 1900 (to the south) and 1908 (to the north). These buildings are also reasonably intact, especially the upper levels, which have elaborate timber roof trusses with turned struts incorporating long rectangular roof lanterns. The remnants of the laneway divisions between the original buildings are also of interest as interpreted from the brick piers at ground level, and the light wells on the upper level.

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](#).

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| Construction dates | 1887, |
| Architect/Designer | Pitt, William, |

Heritage Act Categories Registered place,

Hermes Number 312

Property Number

History

Associated People:

Plaque Citation

Designed by William Pitt, this magnificent 19th and early 20th century complex of factories, warehouses and showrooms saw the production of a remarkable range of goods for Foy & Gibson, Melbourne's earliest department store chain.

Extent of Registration

AMENDMENT OF REGISTER OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Historic Building No. 896.

Part of former Foy and Gibson Complex

79-93 Oxford Street, Collingwood

To the extent of all the buildings marked B-1 on Plan 605012C, endorsed by the Chairperson, Historic Buildings Council, and held by the Director, Historic Buildings Council, and land on which the building is situated being all the land described in Certificates of Title Volume 8814 Folio 808; Volume 2326 Folio 036; Volume 2671 Folio 126; Volume 8814 Folio 809; Volume 2142 Folio 260; Volume 3188 Folio 595; Volume 183 Folio 592; Volume 2042 Folio 340; and book 717 No. 806.

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No. G48 11 December 1991 p.3455]

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/>