

PLACE	WHISTLESTOP BAKERY			Other names	Austral Store; O Gilpin Ltd, G J Coles & Coy		
Address	28-30 Graham Street WONTHAGGI						
Study No	534	HO No	HO167	HPD No	210	Allotment No	9 (Section 2)
LGA	Bass Coast	Ward	Hovell	Parish	Wonthaggi	County	Mornington

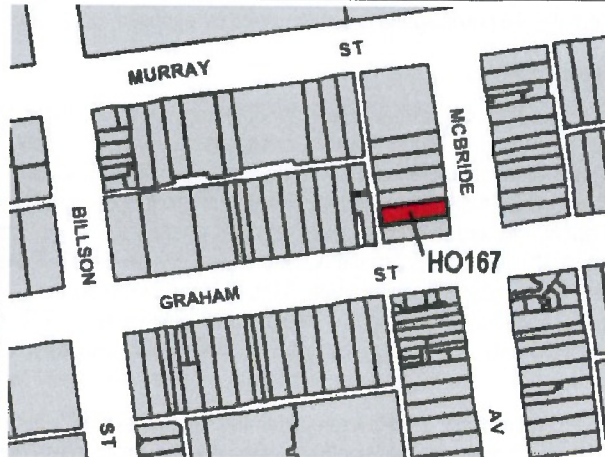


Image Date	3 July 2009	Extent of listing	Whole of allotment				
Designer/architect	D R Dosseter	Architectural style	Federation/Edwardian Period (1901-1918)				
Builder/maker	Unknown	Commenced	1910 (June)	Completed	1910 (July)		
Her Act Category	Heritage place	Historic Theme/s	13.1 Larger Centres				
Her Item Group	Retail and Wholesale	Assessed by	F Woodhouse	Date	20/08/04		
Her Item Category	Shop	Reviewed by	S Reeves	Date	29/06/09		
Usage (2009)	Shop (bakery/cafe)	Condition	Good	Intactness	Fair (altered)		
Significance	Local	Recommendation	Include in VHR <input type="checkbox"/>	Include in RNE <input type="checkbox"/>	Include in HO <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The Whistlestop Bakery at 28-30 McBride Avenue, Wonthaggi, is a double-fronted single-storey brick shop with a distinctive shaped parapet. Designed by local architect D F Dosseter and built in mid-1910, the shop was originally occupied by J G Rawson's drapery, the *Austral Store*, and subsequently by a succession of other drapers well into the post-war period.

How is it Significant?

The building is of historic, architectural and aesthetic significance to the Shire of Bass Coast.

Why is it Significant?

Historically, the building is significant as the oldest surviving shop in Wonthaggi, providing rare evidence of the township's initial boom of commercial expansion during 1910 (*AHC Criterion A.4*). Erected on land purchased at the first auction of commercial sites in March of that year and opened for business within four months, it remains as the only surviving shop from that key phase of development (*AHC Criterion B.2*).

Architecturally, the shop is significant as an example of the work of D R Dosseter, Wonthaggi's first resident architect, who advertised in the local press as early as June 1910 (*AHC Criterion H.1*). One of few examples of his work that have been conclusively identified, it is also one of the first (if not the first) architect-designed commercial building in the new township (*AHC Criterion B.2*).

Aesthetically, the building is significant as a distinctive example of an Edwardian shop in Wonthaggi. Notwithstanding changes to the shopfront and parapet line (which are not entirely unsympathetic), the building can still be readily interpreted as a product of its era. With its eye-catching curved parapet, capped piers and inter-war cantilevered verandah, the building remains a prominent element in the commercial streetscape (*AHC Criterion E.1*).

Physical Description

The Whistlestop Bakery is a single-storey double-fronted Edwardian brick shop with a pitched roof (rising at the rear to form a clerestory) concealed from the street by a curved parapet between capped piers. While the shopfront itself has been refurbished, its current configuration, with a central splayed recessed entrance flanked by large fixed-sash windows, is nevertheless evocative of a typical pre-war shop. The cantilevered awning, clad with flat sheet metal, dates from the 1930s and replaced an earlier timber-framed verandah. The current parapet signage, while not original, is appropriate and evocative of the building's pre-war character. Internally, the public space is distinguished by exposed roof trusses with varnished beaded timber lining to the raked ceilings.

Historical Notes

When the first commercial sites in Wonthaggi were auctioned in March 1910, the leasehold of the present site (Lot 9 of Section 2) was purchased by Hugh Rawson, a successful Kyneton draper, for £44. Two months later, local architect D F Dosseter called tenders for a "double-fronted brick shop" at Wonthaggi, which is likely to refer to the present building. It was certainly completed by 26 July, when the local press announced the "great opening scale" of the *Austral Store* in McBride Avenue – a new shop devoted to "drapery, millinery, furniture, boots, etc". It opened four days later amidst much fanfare (and a full-page advert in the *Express*), despite the fact that its proprietor, Hugh's son James Gerald Rawson, had damaged the new plate glass windows whilst unloading them at the railway station. A year later, in May 1911, architect C I Rice called tenders for "external alterations and additions (brick). *Austral Store*, for H Rawson". Over the next few years, J G Rawson not only built the business into "one of the leading drapery establishments" in the town, but also became well known as a "talented elocutionist on the concert programme", without whom, it was later reported, "no entertainment was complete in the early days of Wonthaggi".

In September 1914, J G Rawson joined the AIF and served with the 59th Battalion in France, where he was killed in action on 5 July 1918. In his absence, his Wonthaggi shop – still referred to as *Rawson's Buildings* – was run by Edgar Vistarini, who continued to do so after Gerald's death. A photograph of the street at that time (now held by the Wonthaggi Historical Society) shows that the signage had been updated accordingly, with the name of E VISTARINI on the verandah, and the words DRAPERY & MILLINERY replacing THE AUSTRAL STORE on the parapet. During 1923, Vistarini was succeeded as proprietor by O Gilpin Ltd, a prominent Melbourne-based drapery chain, which purchased the premises outright after Hugh Rawson's death a year later. Gilpin Ltd retained ownership for over two decades, during which time the original posted verandah was replaced by a cantilevered one (which still remains) and the top of the shaped parapet was truncated to its present flat-topped profile. The company changed its name to F & G Stores in 1949, then to Coles Country Stores Ltd in 1952, before being fully absorbed by the G J Coles retail chain in 1963.

Comparisons

An assertion that the *Austral Store* was one of the first shops in Wonthaggi is confirmed by further research. When commercial sites in the town were first auctioned in March 1910, the blocks on both sides of McBride Avenue (between Graham and Murray Streets) and the south side of Murray Street (between McKenzie and Billson streets) were the first to be sold. Amongst the original leaseholders who developed their lots promptly were Miss Slocomb (who built a boarding house at 13 Murray Street), G N Heywood, chemist (15 Murray Street), Reynolds Brothers, grocers (3 Murray Street) and Llewelyn & Wilson, drapers (12 McBride Avenue). None of these shops, however, remain today. The first shops along the next (south) block of McBride Avenue were of slightly later date, and, in any case, the earliest ones have long since disappeared, such as Allen's Corner (No 33) and the outlets of drapers F J Bird (No 59-61) and Ronald Northcott (No 67-69), and Beard Brother, butchers (No 63-65). Those remaining on McBride Avenue, notably Ludbrook's Corner (No 32) and the second Llewelyn & Wilson store (No 70-72) are both later in date than the *Austral Store*. Tenders for those shops were called, respectively, in December 1910 (architect C I Rice) and March 1911 (architect W Kerr). The remarkable survival of the *Austral Store* is explained by the fact that it was both larger and more substantial than its timber counterparts (evidenced by rate book listings in June 1911, which note that it was one of only six shops with a NAV over £100). Unlike those early timber shops, the brick *Austral Store* premises did not require rebuilding or replacement as the town developed.

Recommended Management

The curved parapet should not be concealed by modern signage or other accretions. If the parapet or verandah signage requires repainting for a new tenant, the typeface and colour scheme should be sympathetic to the pre-war character of the shop.

References

Author	Title	Year
Borough of Wonthaggi	Rate Books (held by Public Record Office)	
<i>Powlett Express</i>	1 Jul 1910, 26 Jul 1910 (adverts) & 12 Jul 1918 (J G Rawson's obituary)	
<i>Cazaly's Contract Reporter</i>	31 May 1910 and 9 May 1911 (tender notices)	