Shops, 386-388 Malvern Road, Prahran

Heritage Place: Shops
Address: 386-388 Malvern Road, Prahran

HO Reference: HO164
Citation status: Final
Date Updated: 5 April 2024

Designer: Unknown
Builder: Unknown

Year of Construction: 1886-87



Photograph of 386-388 Malvern Road, Prahran (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2022).



Location map and extent of HO164.

Heritage Group: Commercial
Heritage Type: Shop

Key Theme: Retailing and hospitality
Key Sub-theme: Serving local communities

Significance Level: Local

Controls:	☐ External paint controls	☐ Internal alteration controls	☐ Tree controls
	☐ Include on Victorian Heritage Register	☐ Incorporated Plans	☐ Outbuildings and fences not exempt
	☐ Prohibited uses may be permitted	☐ Aboriginal Heritage Place	■ Solar energy system controls

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The property at 386-388 Malvern Road, Prahran is significant. Specifically, the form, scale, detailing, setback, materials, and fenestration of the pair of late Victorian shops is of local significance. Later alterations and additions to the property are not significant.

How is it significant?

386-388 Malvern Road, Prahran is of local historical, rarity and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

386-388 Malvern Road, Prahran is of historical significance as a pair of late Victorian shops constructed in 1886-1887, during the 1880s land boom period. This period saw the influx of factory workers due to the growing brick manufacturing, food processing and textiles industries around Chapel Street and Commercial Road. Over their lifetime, the shops at 386-388 Malvern Road, Prahran have housed a long list of shopkeepers that established their various trades and businesses to meet the needs of this rapidly developing community. Consequently, these shops exemplify Prahran's working-class history. (Criterion A)

386-388 Malvern Road, Prahran has rarity value at the local level for their original timber shopfronts. Single storey shops with this type of shopfront joinery are increasingly rare within the City of Stonnington, especially when compared to double-storey, highly ornamented Victorian era examples. (Criterion B)

386-388 Malvern Road, Prahran is of aesthetic significance as a pair of modest, but highly intact late Victorian era shops. They maintain their symmetrical layout with mirrored shopfronts and are visually distinguished by recessed entryways with timber doors and glazed inset with arched fanlights, sets of three arched windows with profiled timber mullions and set on a moulded foundation course, engaged brick piers with arched brick lintels, and flat parapet with moulded cornice. These features, along with a mostly unadorned façade, combine to create a restrained but coherent late Victorian commercial era property. (Criterion E)

HERCON Criteria Assessment

A	*Importance to the course, or pattern of our cultural or natural history*	386-388 Malvern Road, Prahran is of local historical significance as a pair of late Victorian shops constructed in 1886-1887, during the land boom period. This period saw the influx of factory workers due to the growing brick manufacturing, food processing and textiles industries around Chapel Street and Commercial Road. Over their lifetime, the shops at 386-388 Malvern Road, Prahran have housed a long list of shopkeepers that established their various trades and businesses to meet the needs of this rapidly developing community. Consequently, these shops exemplify Prahran's working-class history.

B	*Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history*	386-388 Malvern Road, Prahran has rarity value at the local level for their original timber shopfronts. Single storey shops with this type of shopfront joinery are increasingly rare within the City of Stonnington, especially when compared to double-storey, highly ornamented Victorian era examples.
C	*Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history*	This place does not meet this criterion.
D	*Important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments*	This place does not meet this criterion.
E	*Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics*	386-388 Malvern Road, Prahran is of aesthetic significance as a pair of modest, but highly intact late Victorian era shops. They maintain their symmetrical layout with mirrored shopfronts and are visually distinguished by recessed entryways with timber doors and glazed inset with arched fanlights, sets of three arched windows with profiled timber mullions and set on a moulded foundation course, engaged brick piers with arched brick lintels, and flat parapet with moulded cornice. These features, along with a mostly unadorned façade, combine to create a restrained but coherent late Victorian commercial era property.
F	*Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period*	This place does not meet this criterion.
G	*Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of the continuing and developing cultural traditions*	This place does not meet this criterion.
H	*Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history.*	This place does not meet this criterion.

Description

- ### Physical Analysis

386-388 Malvern Road, Prahran features a pair of attached, single-storey commercial shops. The structure is reflective of a late Victorian era commercial property containing a simple, mostly unadorned façade. The bagged brick building is laid with a stretcher bond and finished with paint. The double gable and skillion roof are clad with corrugated sheet metal, however this is obscured by the flat front parapet and the scale of neighbouring buildings. The gable roof form is seen mirrored in the parapet of the side elevations. A single storey rear extension with a skillion roof extends from the south elevation.

The front façade presents a symmetrical layout with mirrored shopfronts. The flanking main entrances each consist of a timber paneled and glazed door with an arched fanlight. The main window consists of a group of three arched glazing sets within arched and profiled timber mullions. The windows are set on a moulded foundation course. The shopfront fenestration is finished with paint and is slightly recessed, with the arched forms further emphasised by arched brick lintels. Engaged piers extend from a sill course and have been infilled with brick to form a flat parapet with a moulded cornice.

The structure has no setback from the street and the footprint of the building occupies the entirety of the allotment. The shops front Malvern Road to the north, adjacent to the junction with Cromwell Road. They are set within an area largely characterised by medium-density development.

386-388 Malvern Road remains in use as a commercial property. Apart from some damage to the arched lintel of the main entrance to 388 Malvern Road, the building is in good condition overall. While the internal spaces are altered to suit the contemporary commercial use and the front façade has been repainted overtime (unknown if the building was originally face brick), it retains its original form and fenestration and is of overall high integrity.

- ### Alterations and Additions

- Shopfront framing repainted white (by 2014).
- Shopfronts repainted black (by 2017).
- Contemporary wall mounted signage added to the front façade.
- Side courtyard serving 386 Malvern Road infilled.
- Skylights added to the main roof.
- Extension added to the south elevation.
- Roof reclad with corrugated steel.

History

- ### Historical Context

The area presently known as Stonnington is the traditional home of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples of the East Kulin Nation. Formerly characterised by pre-contact plains, grassy woodland, and floodplains on the banks of the Yarra River (Birrarung), Gardiners Creek (Kooyong Koot) and Hawksburn Creek (now channelised), this once thriving habitat provided Traditional Owners access to a range of water, plant, and animal resources integral to their way of life. The onset of colonialism not only saw the transformation of these landscapes, but also Woi wurrung and Bunurong displacement through violence and land dispossession, as is

evident in the establishment of George Langhorne's Aboriginal Mission Station Reserve along the southern banks of the Yarra River in present day Prahran and Toorak. Operating under the guise of 'protection', this reserve ultimately became a focal point for segregation, dislocation, and colonial control of Aboriginal people's lives (Context Pty Ltd 2009, 31).

Despite decades of ongoing dispossession, the rich cultural heritage of Traditional Owners in Stonnington has an enduring presence to this day. Through continued resistance and the passing down of Indigenous knowledge, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong people maintain an ongoing connection to, and care for Country.

European settlement in what would become the suburb of Prahran grew gradually following the 1849-1850 Crown Land Sales, which saw the subdivision of land bounded by present day Toorak Road, Orrong Road, Dandenong Road and Punt Road into fifty-one allotments (Context Pty Ltd 2009, 39). George Langhorne, the Commissioner of an 1837 Aboriginal mission in the area south of the Yarra River around Punt Hill, called this area 'Pura-ra-ran', a compound of two Bunurong words believed to mean land partially surrounded by water (O'Callaghan 1922, 54). In 1840 the name was changed to Prahran for official use.

While higher ground overlooking the Yarra to the north of Prahran was quickly acquired and settled by the colonial elite following the 1840 Crown Land Sales, the majority of present-day Prahran, being of poorly drained low-lying land characterised by wetlands, was primarily purchased by land speculators. These areas were subsequently and re-sold for farming, industry and housing the working classes. The high level of natural deposits of alluvial clay in the area meant that pockets of low-lying land were used as brickyards (Context Pty Ltd 2009, 17). By 1856, the land encompassing Prahran was primarily characterised by a scattered series of timber and brick workers cottages set on narrow allotments to the west of Williams Road, while land to the east and south remained undeveloped or in use as paddocks (Surveyor-General's Department 1856). The area was also distinguished by its strong market garden character during this period, with much of the land awaiting development being used for cultivation during the 1850s and 1860s (Malone 1983, 12).

The area underwent a period of rapid change following the 1880s land boom, which spurred the replacement of many small, mid-nineteenth century cottages with more ornate, single-fronted Victorian and Edwardian style terraces that could house the influx of factory workers as part of the area's growing brick manufacturing, food processing and textiles industries around Chapel Street and Commercial Road. Additionally, upper-middle class enclaves and mansion estates in the formerly undeveloped area of eastern Prahran were also developed to house the wealthy settling adjacent to the suburb of Armadale (Malone 2000, 20). Comprising higher ground with no major drainage problems, this area attracted comparably wealthier residents (Malone 2003, 1). These transformations were also compounded by the construction of impressively detailed shops along Chapel Street, solidifying the strip as a popular retail and commercial centre by the late nineteenth century (Allom Lovell 2000, 45).

Pockets of the suburb continued to be used as a centre for small-scale manufacturing into the early- and mid-twentieth centuries. Although business restructuring and trade liberalisation in the late twentieth century ultimately resulted in the closure and demolition of many of these factories, built remnants of this era can be seen at the c.1910 Former Kia-ora Cordial factory chimney at 181-187 High Street, Prahran and at the former milliner factory at Grattan Street, Prahran (Context Pty Ltd 2009, 95). Today, Prahran's working-class history is best represented

through the relatively modest late nineteenth and early twentieth century single fronted cottages and dwellings that dominate the suburb's building stock. Meanwhile, traces of late nineteenth century middle-class residential development are best seen in the grand Victorian dwellings adjacent to Armadale along Grandview Grove.

• Place History

386-388 Malvern Road, Prahran is located on land that formed part of the Crown Portion 43 (Surveyor General's Department 1849). Portion 43, with approximate boundaries of Bangs Street and Lewisham Road North, was sold to William and John Payne at the 1849 Crown Land Sales for £6 per acre. William and John Payne, along with their older brother Thomas Budds Payne and his colleague Hugh Glass acquired substantial amounts of land in Prahran as part of these sales (Malone 2001, 2). The 1856 map shows the beginnings of commercial development, following the initial sales along Chapel Street, and a few scattered shops along Malvern Road (Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd 1998, 2). The burgeoning commercial development is also evident in an 1856 map, which shows several structures occupying the land adjacent to present 386-388 Malvern Road (Surveyor-General's Department 1856) .



Figure 1. 1855 map showing the approximate location of present day 386-388 Malvern Road, Prahran (then vacant) in red. *Source*: Public Record Office Victoria.

The 1885 rate books indicate the subject site was occupied by grocer James Sutherland in a weatherboard shop of five rooms, with Thomas Copeland listed as the owner (Prahran Rate Books 1885). By 1886 the weatherboard shop had been replaced by a brick shop of five rooms (Prahran Rate Books 1886). An identical shop was constructed in 1887, completing the pair of shops (Prahran Rate Books 1887). At this time the shops were numbered 78 and 78A Malvern Road (Prahran Rate Books 1887) and were re-numbered in 1889 to 386 and 388 Malvern Road respectively (Prahran Rate Books 1889) (see Figure 2).

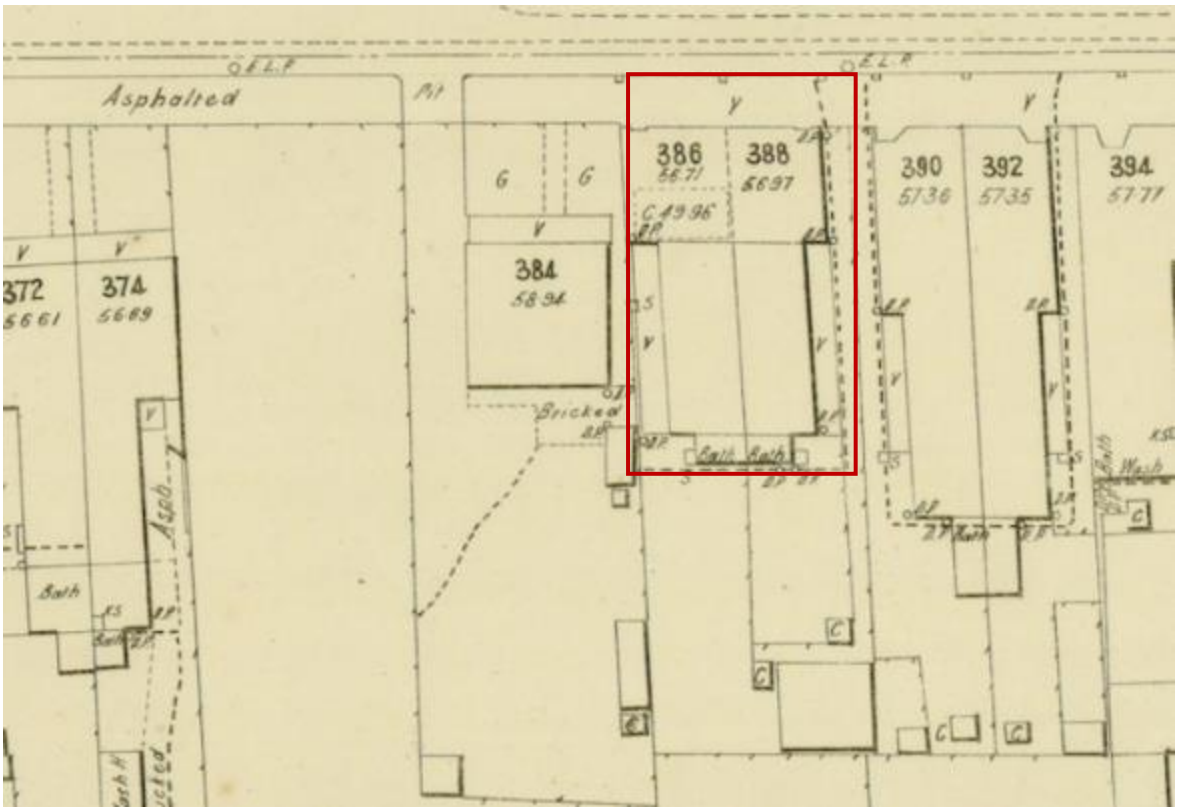


Figure 2. 1896 MMBW detail plan 984 showing the shops at 386-388 Malvern Road, Prahran in red. Source: State Library of Victoria.

Although the buildings had fairly consistent and lengthy periods of ownership over 100 years, the tenants changed frequently. The tenants were shopkeepers who established their various trades and businesses to meet the needs of the rapidly developing community (Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd 1998, 3). By 1885, grocer James Summers had occupied the weatherboard shops of five rooms on the site for at least ten years. Following the construction of the new brick shop at 78 (386) Malvern Road, dealer John Gillespie was listed as occupier. In 1887, Bootmaker Michael occupied number 78A whilst number 78 was occupied by warehouseman Dennis Coghlan and then in 1888 by Architect Edward Roberts. In 1889, the buildings were described as having three rooms each and poulterer James Grace occupied number 386. Throughout the late 1880s-1890s, tenants included dairymen, a bookseller, dressmaker, costumier and milliner, a quarryman and bicycle maker.

The shops were listed for sale in 1903 by executors of the estate of the late Thomas Copeland (The Age 1903, 2). The advertisement describes the shops as having three rooms and a bath each. The advertisement also extolls the shops' position, being 'always able to command tenants and good rentals.' By 1910, both shops had been sold with a Mrs Chinn listed as the new owner. The occupants at this time are listed as Agnes King, confectioner, and Mary Somerville. In 1920, the property was listed as being owned by Mrs Chinn's estate. At this time a laundry occupied number 386 and by 1935 a grocer occupied number 388. In later years importer Alfred Bunning owned the shops and K.G. McCombe was listed as a tenant at 388 for at least a period of ten years (Sands & McDougall 1950-60). In the 1970s the shops appear to

have been leased as one offering and were occupied by a Kelly M (Sands & McDougall 1970-74). The shops remain in use and are currently being occupied by a health service.

Comparative Analysis

The single storey pair of shops at 386-388 Malvern Road, Prahran were built in a late Victorian style. The pair of shops have been occupied by a long list of shopkeepers over time that established their various trades and businesses to meet the needs of the rapidly developing community (Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd 1998, 3). The shops are relatively modest structures but are notable for their largely intact original shopfronts.

Comparative examples include:

- **Shops, 296-298 Malvern Road, Prahran (HO163).** The shops at 296-298 Malvern Road, Prahran are directly comparable to the shops at 386-388 Malvern Road as examples of late Victorian commercial properties with largely intact shopfronts. Key comparative attributes include the use of symmetrical, mirrored shopfronts, recessed entrances, and timber shopfronts. Both are finished in paint, however 296-298 Malvern Road, Prahran is rendered as opposed to the paint having been applied directly to the brick finish. The shops at 296-298 Malvern Road have a highly ornate upper level whereas the shops at 386-388 Malvern Road are single storey with a mostly unadorned façade. The 296-298 Malvern Road shopfront has been altered with its cast iron awning removed, its rendered façade painted light green, and a new glazed door added to 298 Malvern Road. Therefore, it has moderate integrity whilst 386-388 Malvern Road has high integrity. Both sites are in good condition.
- **Shops, 463-465 High Street, Prahran (HO426).** The shops at 463-465 High Street, Prahran are comparable to the shops at 386-388 Malvern Road as an example of a pair of late Victorian era shops. Both sites feature recessed entrances and 465 High Street has an original timber shopfront. The shopfront at 463 High Street has been entirely modernised except for its remnant decorative cast iron lacework. The shops have a second storey with ornate polychrome brick and render facades, whereas those at 386-388 Malvern Road are single storey and finished in paint with an unadorned façade, flat parapet, and moulded cornice. Noting the changes to the lower shopfront, the shops at 463-465 High Street have lower integrity in comparison to the highly intact shops at 368-388 Malvern Road. Both sites are in good condition.
- **Shop, 256 High Street, Prahran (HO427).** This standalone shop at 256 High Street, Prahran is comparable to the pair of shops at 386-388 Malvern Road as an example of a late Victorian commercial property. The upper level is highly decorative and intact, however the lower-level shopfront has been altered through the introduction of a new, though sympathetic, shopfront. Most of the original fabric has been removed from the ground floor façade, or substantially altered, except for the masonry plinths. The shops at 386-388 Malvern Road are of a higher integrity overall.

While the pair of shops at 386-388 Malvern Road are not as elaborate in detailing when compared to other similar examples, they nevertheless compare well in terms of physical condition and level of integrity. This is due to the fact that the shops maintain their original form and fenestration along with timber detailing and panelling, besides some slight damage to the arched lintel of the main entrance to 388 Malvern Road. There are also few other shops in the

municipality which retain their original timber shopfronts, particularly with only minor cosmetic alterations.

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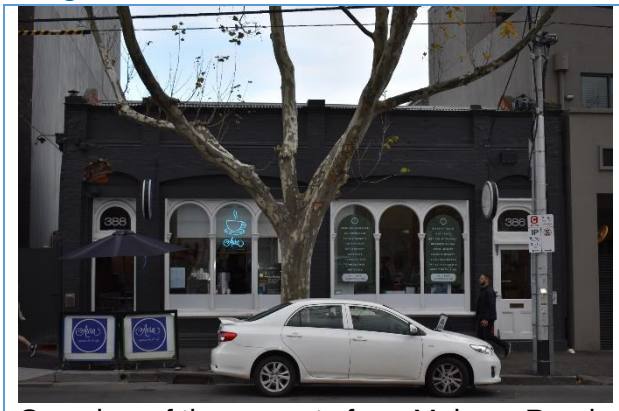
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Limitations

1. Access to all heritage places was limited to a visual inspection from the public domain. The interiors of buildings and inaccessible areas such as rear gardens were not accessed as part of this heritage study.
2. Condition and site modification assessment was limited to a visual inspection undertaken from the public domain as well as desktop resources.
3. The historical notes provided for this citation are not considered to be an exhaustive history of the site.

Images



Overview of the property from Malvern Road (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2022).



View of 388 Malvern Road entryway and windows with their timber joinery (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2022).



Detail view of the damaged arched lintel above 388 Malvern Road entrance (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2022).



Detail view of the eastern side elevation with gable roof form evident (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2022).



South-east facing view of the property shopfront (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2022).



Detail view of engaged brick piers with a flat parapet and moulded cornice (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2022).

Authors

Former citation prepared by: Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd, 1998.
Updated citation prepared by: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd (Larika Desai and Reuel Balmadres), 2022.
Quality assurance review conducted by: Michelle Bashta and Corinne Softley, 2022.