

History

The area occupied by the Cosy Corner Café building (163 Lonsdale St) and the adjoining shops in Foster Street, 128-134, form part of Section 21, Allotment 2 of the Parish of Dandenong. They are part of a group of early generally altered shops. The following deals with the main shop group and its context.

The chronology of ownership of allotment 2 is as follows:

- 1902 to 1906 Peter John Wilson and Edward Armes Beaumont of unknown profession ³²
- In 1906 to 1911 Ellen Christopherson also of unknown profession
- 1911 to 1914 John McLeod farmer ³³
- 1914 to 1915 John Morton also of unknown profession
- 1915 to 1916 Edward Ernest Mann
- In 1916 Edward Ernest Mann sold part of Allotment 2 to Maud Rosina Robbins and Charles William Russell
- In 1918 Edward Ernest Mann sold the remainder of Lot 2 to Charles William Russell grain merchant who continued to own Allotment 2 at least until 1957.

The Cosy Corner building at 163 Lonsdale Street may have been built in 1912 for John McLeod. It was described in 1911-12 rate books as a wood yard, dwelling and store. By 1912-13 it was leased by Smith, a storekeeper and in the next year Turner, a fruiterer. The adjoining shops along Foster Street were built between 1919 and 1921, after Russell acquired the land, and are shown on the 1935 plan. ³⁴ It is possible that Russell may have refurbished the corner shop in this development. Walter McConchie was an early owner-occupier of the corner shop after initial occupation by Russell. Thomas Blain was another long term occupier of 126-128 Foster St.

The adjoining shops at 157-159 Lonsdale Street were built between the mid-1930s and the mid-1950s: they are not shown on the 1935 Detail Plan. By the 1950s, near half of the row (159-163 Lonsdale, 134 Foster) was owned by Russell's estate and another major part (130-132 Foster) was owned by Eleonora Crosby.

Description

This is a single storey stuccoed masonry and parapeted shop row, generally of the same style with slight variations in the parapet detail and arched or horizontal raised parapet entablatures. Each shop is separated by a pilaster at ground level (sometimes treated as smooth ashlar) which extends to the parapet line as a parapet pier.

The corner Cosy Corner Café, now part of a large hardware store, has a distinctive eight-sided corner tower with a crowning cupola roof and flag pole in the Edwardian Baroque style. The tower has multi-paned arched windows joined with heavy cemented impost and sill moulds, with expressed mullions forming bullseye motifs and ornate border patterns. Decorative cement motifs on the walls include panels, urns and garlands. This shop has early metal-framed shopfronts (copper, bronze?), with plinths and transom lights (painted over), a timber framed glazed entry door, and ornamental metal scrolling at the corner doorway recess. All other shop fronts have been altered to accommodate new openings but original cemented parapet details are still evident over all of the shops although some parapet arches may have been removed.

External Condition & Integrity

The corner shop retains much of its integrity with the decorative cupola and detailed shopfront but the remaining shops have been extensively altered at ground level and some at parapet level with probable removal of arched parapets along the Lonsdale St elevation.

Context

The shops are surrounded by some contemporary and other more recent commercial development in the Lonsdale Street streetscape, lending distinction to this row by way of contrast.

³² Application 43556 in VPRS460/P

³³ RBs 1911 to 1957 (entries 2838, 2839, 2839a, 2841, 3806-09, 4506-08, 4906-4910, 4938-4942, 4940-4944, 5001-5003, 1630-1632, 1895-1897, 2647-2649, 7198-7201, 8828-8832, 8852-8856, 8910, 8861, 8864-67, 8908, 7947, 7948, 7886, 7947, 7886, 5114-5117, 6052-6055)

³⁴ *ibid.*

Significance

The Cosy Corner Café and adjoining shops in Foster St (163 Lonsdale Street and 126-134 Foster Street) are significant to Dandenong:

- For the Cosy Café's long-term role as a well preserved major corner element in the early 20th century Lonsdale Street commercial development (criteria A.4);
- For the Cosy Café's landmark and distinctive architectural qualities among more recent construction (criteria B.2);
- For the architectural value of the corner building with its tower and detailed shopfronts. (Criteria F. 1) and
- For the contributory role of 126-134 Foster St as obviously early shops in Dandenong and part of Russell's development of the corner (criteria A.4);
- The buildings adjoining the Cosy Corner Café are of contributory significance when viewed as a group, supporting the heritage significance of the Café. (Criteria E. 1)

Recommendations

Planning protection?	Recommended
External Paint Controls Apply?	Yes
Internal Alteration Controls Apply?	No
Tree Controls Apply?	No
Are there Outbuildings or Fences not Exempt?	No
Prohibited Uses may be permitted?	Yes
Incorporated plan recommended for inclusion in the planning scheme	Yes
Other heritage registers?	
Included in the Victorian Heritage Register?	No
Included in the Register of the National Estate?	No

Owners should be encouraged to remove added finishes and sign panels and re-instate the original elements to achieve the previous strong architectural identity of the row.

Extent of Heritage Place

The listed buildings (163 Lonsdale Street and 126-134 Foster Street) and title land, with emphasis on fabric from the building construction period.

Council should encourage retention of the existing height and siting for adjoining development in Lonsdale St to protect the corner shop.

References

- Rate Books from the Public Records Office - VPRS 5919/P (various units) and at the City of Greater Dandenong, Springvale offices
- Torrens Application No. 43556 in PROV, VPRS 460/P, Unit 43556
- Torrens Application No. 53561 in PROV, VPRS 460/P1, Unit 1472