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# Underneath those arches

By MICHAEL CONNOLLY

SOME fascinating old Melbourne architecture will be revealed shortly if hotelier Frank Dennis's plans to redevelop vaults under the Flinders St. railway viaduct are approved.

You may remember that the Dennis family used to run one of Australia's most famous (some may prefer "infamous") eating houses, the Pieteria, in one of the vaults.

This week Frank Dennis announced that with the assistance of plans drawn up by Robin Boyd — it was one of his last projects — he hopes to transform the vaults into a lively late-night shopping arcade.

Expanding the idea yesterday, Mr Dennis said: "Though I realise this is a commercial thing I want it to be creative and beautiful as well. That's why I gave the job to Robin Boyd.

"He saw the vaults and thought they had great natural beauty which could be revealed if their brick fronts were pulled out.

"I want to replace these with glass fronts, footed by rockeries and put an arched arcade down the centre of the vaults to give a honeycomb effect — what I call a vault village.

"We've also got to have a walkway over Flinders Street so that people will have access to the vaults without being hindered by the city traffic.

"On the river side there will be several jetties for



Robin Boyd  
... one of his  
last jobs

boats to off-load passengers from the Yarra or perhaps to even take them for cruises up to the Botanic Gardens.

"At night the vaults will be lit by gaslight. When work is completed we will have transformed the 18 separate vaults into 36 units and this should provide for 20 shops and three restaurants.

"I want to recreate the atmosphere of an old European market place. We may even have shop assistants in national and period costume."

Mr Dennis, chairman of Dennis Catering Pty. Ltd., which celebrated its 50th anniversary on Wednesday, intends spending about \$440,000 on the scheme and, if Government and City Council approval is soon given, hopes to have it ready for Moomba celebrations in 1973.

"This end of the city has needed cleaning up for a long time," he said. "I hope this idea will be something travellers from all over the world will hear about and want to see when they visit Melbourne."