Serial list name:	Early Ascot Vale Shops
Addresses:	385-391 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale.
Place Typology:	Commercial/retail
Construction date range:	Circa. 1890-1895
Architectural style:	Late Victorian Italianate Renaissance
Assessment:	heritage ALLIANCE, April 2021
Recommendation:	To be added to the existing serial listing of Early Ascot Vale shops HO363.

Photo of places:



385-391 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale. Source, heritage ALLIANCE, April 2021.

Statement of Significance:

What is significant?

385- 391 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale is significant as a two storey, late Victorian Italianate commercial building, built ca. 1890-1895. The lower level is divided into four shopfronts. Significant features of the place include:

- The two storey parapet form with ornate late Victorian Italianate Renaissance styling.
- The stucco mouldings below the projecting parapet cornice with brackets and swags.
- Ornate stucco hood moulds with brackets and swags over double hung timber windows with moulded architraves and sills with moulded heads as brackets.
- Engaged pilasters with Corinthian capitals which break the frontage into four separate residences.

The alterations to the shopfronts and verandah at 385 and 387 are not significant.

How is it significant?

The four shopfronts and residences at 385 - 391 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale are of local historic and architectural (representative) significance to the City of Moonee Valley.

Why is it significant?

The four shopfronts and residences in a two storey late Victorian Italianate Renaissance building built circa 1890-1895, is historically significant. The intact building with altered shopfronts is representative of commercial buildings developed in Mt Alexander Road at a time when this was the centre of commercial and community activity in Ascot Vale. This section of Mt Alexander Road became a hub of the community with the building of the former Flemington and Essendon Borough Offices (1864) on the opposite side of Mt Alexander Road and the grand, gothic styled ES & A bank (1884) a few doors up on the corner of Mt Alexander Road and Bank Street. (Criterion A & D)

Description:

A group of four two storey brick shops rendered in late Victorian Italianate Renaissance style. The parapeted fronts are identical on the upper level whilst the four shopfronts below have been remodelled and altered. The first floor residential level of the building has pairs of double hung windows with moulded hoods supported on decorative brackets and swags, and below the window a moulded sill with faces as the brackets. Above the window is a deeply moulded cornice and supporting brackets and swags. The four residences are divided by engaged classically styled pilasters which originally ran to the ground.

The lower portion is less intact with the four shop fronts having been altered (385 and 387 significantly altered) and consequently have lost much of the original detail of the pilasters dividing the frontages into four elements along with the loss of the flat stallboards. No shop front is original although one (number 389) has a partially intact Inter-war glass shopfront, transom and angled entry. The two shopfronts at 385 and 387 are now a single business with an opening between the two buildings. This building has a poured concrete slab above the original floor level and has remodelled the arrangement of the entrances in an intrusive manner, set back slightly from the street with concrete planters to the front of double folding glass doors. There are large gas and electrical meters placed in the front of the shopfronts which are also intrusive.

A single verandah originally ran along the entire frontage as shown in the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) plan (possibly as a metal post-verandah with cast iron frieze arrangement) but today a skillion verandah on timber posts runs across only numbers 385 and 387. This verandah is not in its original position and the above awning sign board has been lost along with highlight windows. An exposed timber beam above the transom window of number 389 indicates the position of the original verandah.

At the rear there have been changes to some of the rear wall arrangements which originally existed. The chimneys mostly remain, some as plain brick and some as renderwork in Victorian styling similar to the frontage.

Overall, the front portion is only partially intact above the verandah but the arrangement of four late Victorian period shop-residences is very clear. The body of the building is also reasonably intact with a series of gabled metal clad roofs behind the parapet. Restoration of the shopfronts would do much to improve the streetscape.

History:

Early Ascot Vale Shops

The first retail area in Moonee Valley was Mt Alexander Road, which in 1851 became the main route to the Victorian goldfields. Businesses which were set up to service travellers included blacksmiths, saddlers, boot-makers, wheelwrights, stock feed and dry goods suppliers. Clusters of shops and businesses developed along the length of Mt Alexander Road, beginning near Flemington Bridge in the south.[1] A plan of building allotments prepared by surveyor H.D.G.Russell in 1853 shows the group of buildings on the north side of Main's Bridge in the area then known as Flemington-bank.[2]

For quite some time, any further movement up the hill was prevented by the large areas of land occupied by the Glass and McCracken estates, which bordered both sides of Mt Alexander Road, with Ailsa extending up to Kent Street, and Flemington House as far as today's Baroda Street. After that, land on the east side was still only sporadically available for development due to a number of smaller residential estates, such as J.T. Smith's Ascot House, which were built on this side of the road to enjoy views over the Moonee Ponds Creek valley.

One notable early commercial establishment built on the east side of the road was the Prince of Wales Hotel, which was trading by 1854. A commercial and community hub began to form around it, and before long there was a water tank on the other side of the road, and William Eastwood, who lived in South Street, had set up a hay and corn business on the north corner of Bank Street. Local residents clearly identified it as a centre for community activities, and in 1862 after the formation of the Borough of Essendon and Flemington, the majority of local ratepayers and newly elected councillors opted to build their new municipal offices, hall and courthouse next to the Prince of Wales Hotel. William Eastwood became a long-serving councillor, along with Mt Alexander Road blacksmith and wheelwright, George W. Parsons.

Other early traders on Flemington hill included hay and corn merchant, Samuel George, who set up his business opposite the council chambers on the north corner of Moonee Street, and John Twinem, who opened a grocery store on the south corner of Moonee Street in the 1860s. A bakery operated by the Leane family stood just north of Sydney Street from the early 1880s.[3] When a branch of the ES&A Bank opened on Mt Alexander Road directly opposite the borough offices in 1875, the council transferred its account there.[4] Local business must have been good because in 1884 the bank opened an elegant new two-story Gothic building on the site, which remains there today but has ceased to operate as a bank.

Racecourse Road in Flemington also developed commercially from an early date, being the main thoroughfare to the Newmarket saleyards and Flemington Racecourse. While its main development took place at the height of the land boom from 1885 to 1895, there were already 11 businesses there in 1885.[5] Union Road in Ascot Vale began to develop as a commercial precinct between 1885 and the early 1890s with the opening of many small businesses serving local needs. Up until 1888 there were only six businesses established in Puckle Street. Other shops were progressively opened in the 1890s, as well as three bank branches.[6]

References:
[1] Living Histories, Moonee Valley Thematic Environmental History, 2012, p 94.
[2] H.D.G. Russell, 'Plan of building allotments at Flemington', 1853 [State Library of Victoria].
[3] F. Price, 'Flemington', 1881 [map of allotments to be auction by C.J. and T. Ham on Saturday 3 December 1881, held by State Library of Victoria].
[4] James McJunkin, 'History of Essendon', c.1948, p16. [copy held by Moonee Valley Library].
[5] Precinct citation for HO24 Racecourse Road Precinct, accessed 2013.
[6] Living Histories, Moonee Valley Thematic Environmental History, 2012, pp. 94-96.

(From contextual history of serial listing of Early Ascot Vale Shops in *Thematic Places Heritage Study, 2012-2014:* p.40-41)

Place history

The shops and residences at numbers 385, 387, 389, and 391 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale (formerly numbered 329, 331, 333, and 335 respectively) were constructed in pairs by the same builder between 1890 and 1895 as two storey brick shops with first floor residences and rear access (*Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works Plan no. 834*, 1904; *Sands & McDougall*, 1895). The subject sites were originally purchased at auction by Alfred Allison in 1887, and it was then sold to Jesse Cartwright Baker in 1889. Previously owned by the Board of Land & Works, the site was the location of a water tank prior to the construction of the shops (Essendon Historical Society Notes). After Baker, it was then conveyed later in 1889 to Margaret Ann Ferguson, John Alexander Ferguson and William Ingram, for whom the buildings were constructed (Essendon Historical Society Notes).

A description of the shops identifies numbers 385 and 387 as containing six rooms each and numbers 389 and 391 containing seven (*The Age*, 4 Nov 1955, p.7; *The Age*, 25 Sept 1937, p.3). William Ingram sold the shops in 1906 to Mary Maria McLennan before they were then transferred again to Henry Smith in 1922 and Adolph James Goller in 1930 (Essendon Historical Society Notes). In 1941 three of the shops, 387, 389, and 391 Mt Alexander Road, were purchased by William Bickford Carter (Essendon Historical Society Notes). Meanwhile, number 385 was conveyed to George William de Morton, who operated his dairy produce business at the site (Essendon Historical Society Notes).



"Shop & Dwelling Sites," 1886, Essendon Historical Society Plan Collection.

The shop at 385 Mt Alexander Road was first occupied by Luck & Robotham (ladies' underclothing). The business was first listed in the *Sands & McDougall Directory* in 1895 (*Sands & McDougall*, 1895; 1900). After Luck & Robotham, Charles Ford operated a bootmakers from 1895 to 1903, at which time the "Boot Making and Repairing Business" was put up for rent at £1 ½ a week (*The Age*, 21 March, 1903, p.7). In 1904, Arthur Barnes was identified as the occupant and by 1905, the shop changed hands again, as Mrs. R Smith opened a confectionery store (Australian Electoral Commission, 1904; Sands & McDougall, 1905). The nearby state school on Bank Street made the location ideal for such a shop.

The shop at 387 Mt Alexander Road was constructed as a pair to number 385 (Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Plan no. 834). The first occupant and proprietor was saddler Lewis J. Heald. In 1885, the shop was operated by fishmonger Richard Bastian (Sands & McDougall, 1885). Bastian operated out of the shop until 1901, when it appears he moved his shop to 289 Mt Alexander Road (Australian Electoral Commission, 1901; 1905). By 1904, the shop was operated by J. Chambers, a tea merchant, and then by confectioner Allan Donnolly in 1906 (Australian Electoral Commission, 1904; 1906). The shop continued to operate as a confectionary until at least 1920, before becoming a grocery (Sands & McDougall, 1910-1925; Australian Electoral Commission, 1906).

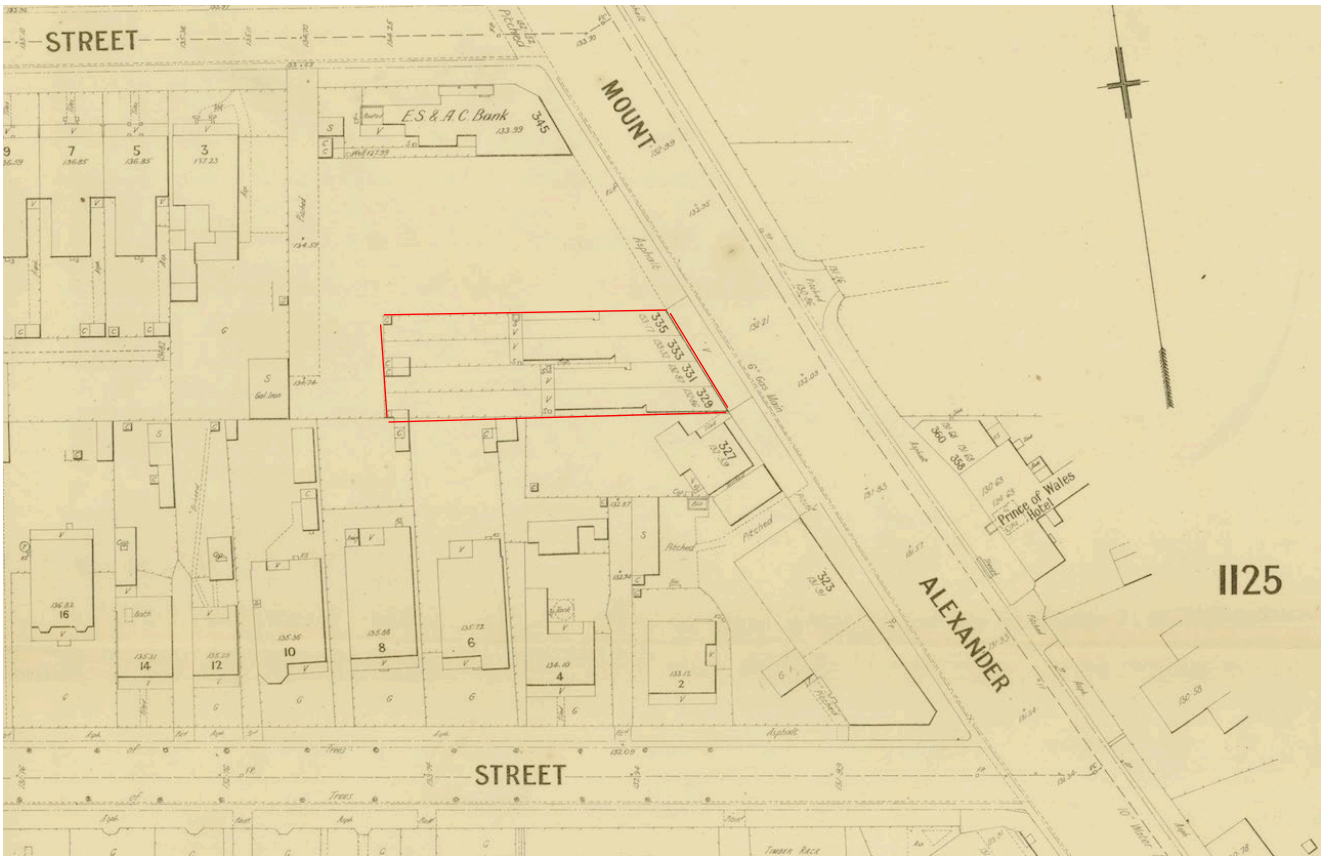


Main Street, Ascot Vale 1906 (Source: State Library of Victoria). Looking to the north on the west side of the road, past Moonee and Regent Streets, the subject building of 385-391 is shown at the end before the tall roofline and red brick of the E.S. & A. bank building on the corner of Bank Street.

In 1930, a new title is issued for all the shops at numbers 387, 389, and 391 Mt Alexander Road (Certificate of Title, Vol. 5709, Folio 721). In 1937, the shops are put up for sale together with advertising stating the annual rents approximating £253 10/ a year (*The Age*, 25 Sept 1937, p. 3). The title shows local grocer, William Bickford Carter of Puckle Street, Moonee Ponds, as the new owner in 1941, and ownership is transferred to his company Carters Store Pty Ltd in 1957 (Certificate of Title, Vol. 5709, Folio 721). This title is cancelled in 1963 and new titles issued for each of the three properties.

389 Mt Alexander Road, was first opened as a bootmakers by David Amos (Essendon Historical Society Notes). The *Sands & McDougall Directory* identifies James E. Taylor as the second occupant from 1893 until 1899, when N. Russell took over (*Sands & McDougall*, 1893; 1899). The shop continued to operate as a tobacconist and hairdresser until 1914, when advertisements for Louis Goldstein's tailor shop first appear (*Sands & McDougall*, 1893-1910; *Spectator and Methodist Chronicle*, 13 March 1914, p.450). In 1912, A.G.E. Smith's boot shop opened a branch at this location (*Flemington Spectator*, 17 Feb 1916, p. 5; Australian Electoral Commission, 1912). The residence above the shop was rented out separately throughout the years, advertised in 1899 at 3 shillings and 6 pence a week (*The Age*, 18 Nov 1899, p.6).

The Sands & McDougall directory shows the earliest date of occupation for 391 Mt Alexander Road as 1893 (*Sands & McDougall*, 1893). At this time, the shop was run by George Beachcroft, a fruiterer. Until 1904, the business continued to operate as a grocery under a number of different shopkeepers (*Sands & McDougall*, 1893-1904). By 1910, the *Sands & McDougall Directory* lists Douglas Russell, a newsagent, as the occupant, and in 1915, his sister Miss Edith Russell (*Sands & McDougall*, 1910; 1915). At this time, Douglas, also known as Peter Douglas, was operating their parents' newsagency at 355 Mt Alexander Road, now number 415 (Probate, Public Record Office Victoria, VPRS 28/P0, 81/569) Miss Edith Russell was engaged to Henry Smith who lived above the shop (*Sands & McDougall*, 1920; *The Argus*, 10 Aug 1922, p.1). At this time, it appears she no longer operated the newsagency, with the directory now listing it as a dry cleaner operated by G. Scott (*Sands & McDougall*, 1920). The shop would resume operations as a grocery in 1935 when the Carter Bros opened a new branch at the address (*Sands & McDougall*, 1935).



Extract of Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works plan no. 834, 1904, State Library of Victoria. Note the building with four separate shops are the earlier numbering system, 328-335.

Sources:

Primary Sources

The Age
The Argus
Australian Electoral Commission, Ancestry.com
Certificates of Title, LANDATA
Flemington Spectator
Main Street, Ascot Vale, 1906, State Library of Victoria
Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Plans, State Library of Victoria
Probates, Public Record Office Victoria
Sands & McDougall Directory
"Shop & Dwelling Sites," 1886, Essendon Historical Society Plan Collection
Spectator and Methodist Chronicle

Secondary Sources

Essendon Historical Society Notes

Thematic Context:

City of Moonee Valley Thematic Environmental History, 2012

5. Building Victoria's industries and workforce

5.3 Marketing and retailing

5.8 Working

Comparative Analysis:

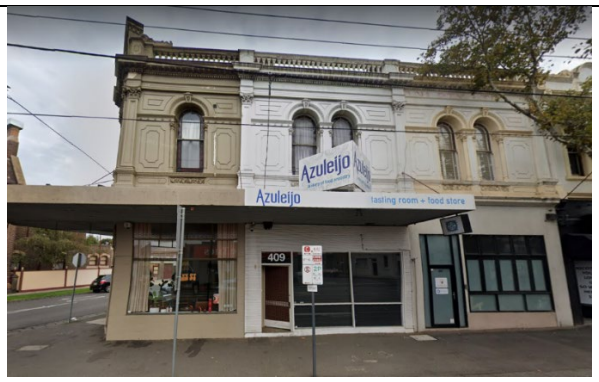
Most of the suburbs of the City of Moonee Valley, particularly Flemington, Ascot Vale, Moonee Ponds, and Essendon, underwent a large amount of speculative development during the land boom of the late 1880s and early 1890s. This period saw the major development of the municipality's major shopping strips on Racecourse Road, Flemington (HO25), Union Road, Ascot Vale (HO26), and Puckle Street, Moonee Ponds (HO14). Thanks to these three large commercial precincts, as well as a number of individually listed commercial buildings on Mt Alexander Road, Victorian shops and hotels in commercial areas are well represented in the heritage overlay.

The Victorian shops that are of individual significance in Moonee Valley's Heritage Overlay, whether or not in a precinct, are mostly recognised for architecturally distinguished treatment of their first-floor elevation and parapet, as almost all have lost their original posted verandah and shopfront. Examples include the Ascot Vale Hall at 140-144 Union Road, Ascot Vale (HO287); Shop and residence at 189 Union Road, Ascot Vale (HO288); Shops at 407 to 411 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale (HO261); and 361, 363-379 & 548 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale (all HO363).

Exceptions that retain an original shopfront are at 97-99 Mt Alexander Road, Flemington (HO196), Venetian Gothic shop-residences that retain one timber shopfront; the Victoria Buildings, 433 to 437 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale (HO365) one of which retains its timber shopfront; 599-603 Mt Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds (HO359), one of which retains a partial timber shopfront; and the Grandview Store, 79 Holmes Road, Moonee Ponds (HO191), a corner store with arched panels to its shopfront. There are also a few examples of Victorian shops with original timber shopfronts that are Contributory to a precinct, including 304 Racecourse Road, Flemington (HO25), and 15 Norwood Street, Flemington (HO24) (Context, 2016, p. 240).

The four shops at 385 to 391 are of a similar architectural type to 363-379 Mt Alexander Road, which is already listed in serial listing HO363. The level of integrity of the upper storey of 385 to 391 is much higher than 363-379 and is a better example of an ornate Italianate style. Although the shopfronts are no longer intact, enough fabric of the building survives overall, for it to be considered for the heritage overlay and it has a similar level of intactness as other examples in the heritage overlay.

	All photos sourced by heritage ALLIANCE or Google streetview
363-379 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale (HO363), is a former Hay and Corn store rendered masonry building built in four stages between c. 1871 and 1900. It has an Italianate style which has been reduced with the removal of the decorative treatment of the parapet and removal of the windows at ground level. It is a very large corner building that is prominent in the streetscape. Its intactness is fairly low in comparison to 385-391 Mt Alexander Road.	

548 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale (HO363) of 1884 is a rendered brick building in a restrained Classical Revival style. It has an intact first floor façade but an altered shopfront and changed verandah. In levels of integrity and intactness it is comparable to 417-419 Mt Alexander Road.	
407-411 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale (HO261), is significant. The Victorian era building consists of a chamfered corner shopfront and two more shopfronts down Mt Alexander Road, within a single Italianate commercial building with first floor residences. Number 407 is rare for its intact corner shopfront and intact corner parapet and pediment. It compares well to numbers 385- 391 as a partially intact commercial building which has an introduced cantilevered verandah and two altered shopfronts.	

Recommendation:

To be added to the existing serial heritage overlay listing at HO363, Early Ascot Vale shops.

Schedule:

External Paint Controls	No

Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Solar Energy Controls	Yes
Fences and Outbuildings	No
Prohibited Uses	No
Aboriginal Heritage Place	No