Serial list name:	Early Ascot Vale Shops
Addresses:	413-415 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale
Place Typology:	Commercial/retail
Construction date range:	Circa 1886
Architectural style:	Victorian Italianate
Assessment:	heritage ALLIANCE, Dec 2021
Recommendation:	To be added to the existing serial listing of Early Ascot Vale shops HO363.

Photo of places:



413-415 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale. Source, heritage ALLIANCE, Dec 2021.

Statement of Significance:

What is significant?

The commercial building at 413 - 415 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale is significant as a two storey, late Victorian Italianate commercial building ca.1886. The lower level is divided into two shopfronts, and the upper level is residences with a separate doorway located next to number 415. Significant features of the place include:

- The two-storey parapet form with ornate late Victorian Italianate styling and curved pediment nameplate to 415 with scrolls and prominent cornice, which says "F. Paul Established 1883". Urns are missing from parapet.
- The first-floor stucco mouldings including a prominent cornice and expressed composite classical pilasters to each side and between the windows, which break the frontage into separate bays.
- The timber double hung sash windows with segmental arched architrave mouldings and keystones.
- The separate moulded timber entry door to the residences located next to number 415.

The alterations to the shopfronts at 413 and 415 are not significant.

How is it significant?

The two shopfronts and residences at 413-415 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale are of local historic and architectural (representative) significance to the City of Moonee Valley.

Why is it significant?

413-415 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale consists of two shopfronts and residences from circa 1886. The building was constructed by the prominent local butcher Ferdinand Paul, who lived around the corner at 3 Bank Street. Both shops were operated by Paul as butcher's shops at different times and when Paul moved to Werribee in 1915 it was taken over by Gilbertsons butchers.

The two shopfronts and residences in a two storey late Victorian Italianate building 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 E.S. & A. bank (1884) on the corner of Bank Street and Mt Alexander Road. (Criterion A & D)

Description:

In this section of Mt Alexander Road, there are five two storey commercial buildings with upper storey residences and ground floor shop fronts from number 407 to 415, followed by a single storey Edwardian shop at 417-419. This is a very intact section of streetscape and 407, 409 and 411 are included in the heritage overlay HO261.

Numbers 407 to 415 are in two almost indistinguishable groupings and at one time they might have shared a single verandah as shown in Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) plan 803 of 1904. An early photograph of this section of street shows the five shops/residences with two different levels of post verandah, with numbers 413 and 415 with a lower verandah arrangement to those at numbers 407 and 409.

Both buildings are similar in that they are two storey Victorian commercial buildings but they are expressed with differing degrees of ornamentation. The styling of numbers 407 to 411 is heavily Italianate. The upper level is broken into groups by classical "composite" pilasters. Numbers 413 and-415 also have a two-storey frontage with less ornate facades which are at first glance of similar scale and set out to the others but with less ornamentation, having no parapet balcony railings, and fewer classical references. The windows are arch-headed but there are no fully arched windows. They are however of similar scale in height and window positioning and appear at first glance as if of the same period.

Number 413 actually has a narrower frontage than number 415 although the shopfront appears to be a similar width. The extra space at ground floor is taken by the separate entrance to the residences above. This is shown in the much narrower window openings at first floor level and closer spacing between them. The MMBW plan of 1904 indicates this narrow frontage.

Number 415 has the words "F. Paul, Established 1883" on the nameplate and pediment above the parapet. Despite the differences in decoration the group of five work together to create a unified setting and an important intact streetscape that could be improved with better shopfront restoration and replacement of the missing decorative urns from the parapet.

At the rear the service wings are all mostly unaltered and all of similar appearance. It is here that the Victorian period rendered chimneys become prominent elements in the side street (Bank Street). Although there are changes to the shopfronts themselves, the body of the building is substantially intact. As a group they are all quite clearly late Victorian in architecture, form and material.

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,* 2012-14: p.40-41)

Place history

413 and 415 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale (Formerly numbered 353-355) were constructed in 1886 for Ferdinand Paul (1858-1934), a butcher. The building was designed by architect Joseph Charles Martin Cowan of Ascot Vale (*North Melbourne Advertiser*, 2 July 1886, p. 2; Essendon Historical Society Notes).

In 1883, Paul purchased a butcher shop along Brennan Street in Moonee Ponds, formerly owned by A. Bullock (*Sands & McDougall*, 1884; *North Melbourne Advertiser*, 16 March 1883, p. 2). The shop appears to have been quite successful as he was able to construct the buildings at 413 and 415 Mt Alexander Road in 1886. Newspapers, such as the *North Melbourne Advertiser*, were "(…) pleased to notice that F. Paul of Essendon ha(d) erected a new and commodious premises, at Mount Alexander Road, Ascot Vale (…)" (*North Melbourne Advertiser*, 2 July 1886, p. 2). On the parapet of number 415 is written "F. Paul, Established 1883". This likely references the date his business was established in the district, rather than the construction of this building.

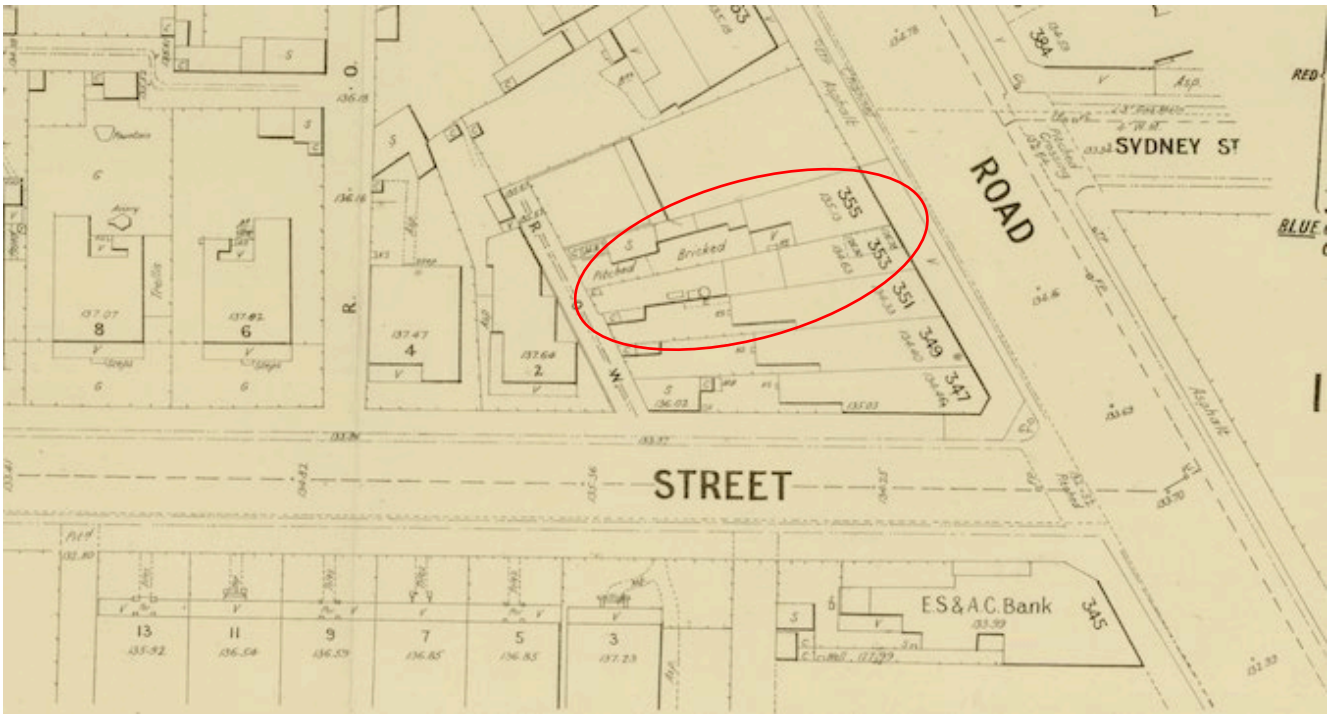
The buildings appeared to have remained vacant for a few years as it was not until 1888 that the first advertisements for Paul's new butcher shop in Ascot Vale began appearing in the local newspapers (*North Melbourne Advertiser*, 6 Oct 1888, p. 1).

While "F. Paul" is listed on the parapet above number 415, it appears that as of 1895 Paul's butcher shop operated out of 413 Mt Alexander Road (*Sands & McDougall*, 1895).

Paul sold his shops in Ascot Vale and Moonee Ponds in 1915, moving his business to Werribee (*Werribee Shire Banner*, 11 Feb 1915, p. 3). The Ascot Vale shops were purchased by R.J. Gilbertson and continued to operate as a butcher shop until 1922, when Harry Cox began operating a saddlery (*Sands & McDougall*, 1920; 1922). Gilbertson, according to the Sands & McDougall Directory, moved three doors down to 407 Mt Alexander Road, where Cox had previously operated his business (*Sands & McDougall*, 1920; 1922).

By 1895, the directory shows that 415 Mt Alexander Road was occupied by newsagents, Russell & Co (Sands & McDougall, 1895). The business was first operated by Peter Russell and his wife Mary Ann, who had previously run news agencies in Auburn (*The Age*, 22 Nov 1890, p. 6; *The Argus*, 3 Aug 1901, p. 9). The family business at number 415 was taken over by son Peter Douglass in 1898 (Sands & McDougall, 1898). Following Peter's death in 1901, the business was valued at £440 (Probate, Public Record Office Victoria, VPRS 28/P0, 81/569).

In 1925, the shop was no longer a newsagency and was then operating as a confectioner (Sands & McDougall, 1925). Peter had two children that operated newsagencies in Ascot Vale, including son Harry along Station Street and daughter Edith at 391 Mt Alexander Road (*The Age*, 25 Aug 1949, p. 2; *Sands & McDougall*, 1915).



Extract from Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) plan Town of Essendon, Detail plan 833, 1904. Numbers 413 and 415 shown as numbers 353 and 355.

Sources:

Primary Sources

The Age
The Argus
North Melbourne Advertiser
Sands & McDougall Directory
Probates, Public Record Office Victoria
Werribee Shire Banner

Secondary Sources

Essendon Historical Society Notes

Thematic Context:

City of Moonee Valley Thematic Environmental History, 2012

5.3 Marketing and retailing

5.8 Working

Comparative Analysis:

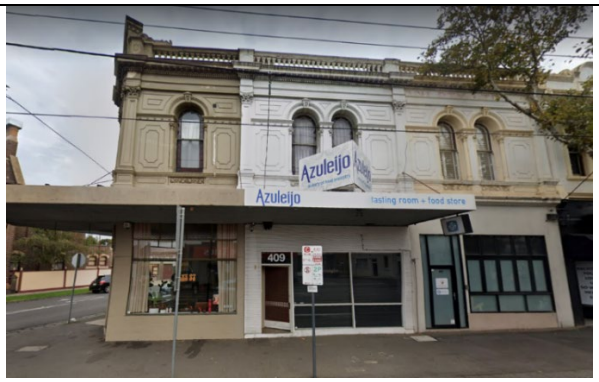
Most of the suburbs of the now City of Moonee Valley, particularly Flemington, Ascot Vale, Moonee Ponds and Essendon, underwent a large amount of speculative development during the land boom of the late 1880s and early 1890s. This period saw the major development of the municipality's major shopping 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 407-411 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, 433-437 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, *2015 Heritage Study,* 2016: p. 240).

The two shops at 413 and 415 Mt Alexander Road are of a similar architectural type and date to 363-379 Mt Alexander Road, which is already listed in serial listing HO363. The level of integrity of the upper storey of numbers 413 and 415 is much higher than numbers 363-379. 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 on the heritage overlay. Next to numbers 413 and 415 is the individually listed 407 to 411 Mt Alexander Road which is known as the Victoria Building.

	Photos sourced from Google Streetview or heritage ALLIANCE
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. It has as a similar level of intactness to 413 and 415 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale.	
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 to 411 Mt Alexander Road, Ascot Vale (HO261), is significant. The Victorian building consists of a splayed 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 413 and415 which adjoin it, as a partially intact commercial building which has an introduced cantilevered verandah and two altered shopfronts with slightly lesser ornamentation.	

Recommendation:

To be added to the Heritage Overlay Schedule HO363 as part of the Early Ascot Vale Shops serial listing

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