

## **1244-1252 Wharf Street**

### **Yates Block**

**Other Names** McQuade's Ship Chandlers  
Turner, Beeton & Co.



### **Statement of Significance**

#### **Description of Historic Place**

Yates Block is a freestanding brick commercial building located at the foot of Yates Street along the waterfront within Victoria's Inner Harbour Precinct. It sits on a sloping bank between Wharf Street and the Inner Harbour waterway, and has three storeys at street level and five storeys on its western facade facing the water. It can also be identified by a distinctive mural on its northern facade, depicting an underwater scene of whales.

#### **Heritage Value**

Yates Block is valued for its multi-faceted commercial history, for its fine architecture, and for the significant contribution it makes to the heritage character of Victoria's Inner Harbour Precinct.

Originally constructed for local businessman James Yates, this building is a monument to the interrelationship between commerce and the Inner Harbour in Victoria's history. Built in three stages between 1882 and 1896, its asymmetrical composition attests to the variety of tenants who occupied and adapted this building throughout its history: Turner, Beeton & Company Ltd., a pioneer dry goods supplier; W.H. Malkin, grocers; McQuade's Ship Chandlers, one of the earliest marine suppliers in Victoria; and the present-day Chandler's Seafood Restaurant, among others. The waterfront location of this commercial building is central to its heritage value; its evolving function and physical appearance over time is a chronicle of the City's changing reliance on the harbour from primarily shipping-based to tourism-based commercial use.

Architecturally, Yates Block makes an important contribution to the heritage character of the Inner Harbour Precinct. Its free-standing form, accentuated by a unique additive composition which retains key elements of all three stages of its construction adds

interest and a sense of historical context to both the commercial Wharf Street streetscape, and to views of the Old Town District from the harbour.

### **Character-Defining Elements**

The character-defining elements of the Yates Block include:

- Its prominent waterfront location, and the relationship between the building and the Inner Harbour.
- Its free-standing form, with all four facades unobstructed as seen from the water and the street.
- The character of the brickwork of the upper three storeys.
- The integrity of the building envelope, which identifies it as a late nineteenth century commercial structure.
- The evidence of the three phases of its construction, including: the narrow composition of the first and second storeys of the four northern bays, by architect John Teague; the grand central entrance and southern bays; and the third storey with its round-headed arched stonework and deeply recessed windows, by architect A.C. Ewart.
- Its scale, designed to suit both its streetscape and the waterfront uses, with three storeys at street level, and five storeys facing the water.
- Double-hung wooden-sash two-over-two windows on the second and third storeys;
- Surviving elements such as fixtures and fittings, which pertain to its three phases of design and which support its nineteenth-century heritage character, including cast iron window shutters on the harbour elevation.
- The character of the nineteenth-century stonework of the two basement warehouse levels.
- Interior elements original to its three phases of design, and which support its nineteenth-century heritage character.