

Steven Avery

Executive Director, Heritage Victoria
Planning | Department of Environment Land Water and Planning
Level 16, 150 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000

Delivered by email: steve.avery@delwp.vic.gov.au

Dear Mr Avery,

As I noted to you on the 24th December 2021, I place Heritage Victoria on notice, that I request that the signage "Hopetoun Tea Rooms est. 1892 TM", is either removed and/or covered appropriately – to not confuse and/or insinuate that the Hopetoun Tea Rooms est. 1892 TM is still located at the Block Arcade.

As you would have noted in today's Herald Sun 02 Jan 2022 – "Row still on the boil", Heritage Victoria has been referred to in the article. Attached for your reference.

As I have said before, I will not cease to take the required actions to ensure that the Business name Hopetoun Tea Rooms est. 1892 TM, is removed.

I particularly asked you on the 5th January 2021 – see attached – as to what permits were required for the removal of the signage, and I have yet to receive a response.

Should Heritage Victoria not intervene appropriately you will no doubt receive a dedicated page on my webpage, with all my communication with you and your attempts to prevent the new purchaser from appropriately removing the signage.

The Regards,

Kelly Koutoumanos

Hopetoun Tea Rooms – EST. 1892 TM | 421 Bourke Street, MELBOURNE 3000

Row still on the boil

Row still on the boil

JOHN DAGGE

THE owner of The Block Arcade is threatening defamation action over a website that purports to tell the “truth” about a long-running conflict which saw the Hopetoun Tea Rooms exit the opulent arcade.

A co-owner of the Hopetoun Tea Rooms has also been hit with at least two intervention orders as the drawn-out dispute becomes increasingly bitter.

The tensions have also generated claims that Hopetoun Tea Rooms owners Kon and Kelly Koutoumanos are trying to sabotage the new cake shop that has gone into The Block Arcade by posting fake online reviews

Tensions run high in tea room dispute

about it. That business is called the Block Arcade Tea Rooms 1892, but heritage protection rules means the Hopetoun Tea Rooms signage remains.

The Koutoumanoses, whose lavish cake display was one of the city’s most photographed attractions, lost a legal battle against their landlord in 2019 over a failed business expansion and were ordered to pay \$1.5m.

The pair have now launched a website where they say they will tell their side of the story for the first time, alleging they are the victims of “land-

lord interference, unconscionable conduct, conspiracy, corruption, professional misconduct, at a minimum”.

The website details a long list of complaints including a massive rent hike and efforts to prevent the pair from selling the business.

“It was clear that The Block Arcade wanted me out of their arcade, and an attempt to take over my business,” the website says.

Mr Koutoumanos declined to comment to the Sunday Herald Sun other than to say the couple would not be intimidated by legal threats of

defamation and were simply telling their side of the story.

The businessman has been hit with at least two intervention orders – one by Block Arcade owner Grant Cohen and another by a builder who did work on the failed expansion of the cake shop – over the past year.

Mr Cohen said the contents of the website were highly defamatory and he was seeking legal advice.

“We will get our lawyers involved and do what needs to be done,” he said.

“They (the Koutoumanoses) went

to VCAT and were not successful.”

Mr Cohen provided the Sunday Herald Sun with a letter from April 2019.

The letter goes into details about an offer from The Block Arcade to halve the outstanding debt owned by the Koutoumanoses and give them until the end of the year to find an acceptable third-party buyer for the business.

The Koutoumanoses put the business that ran the tea room into liquidation following their legal loss in 2019.

But they are now in the process of relaunching it at a new location on Bourke St.

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 Cc: Vikram Singh: info@hopetountearooms.com.au

Dear Mr Avery,

Further to my letter dated the **26th Dec 2020**, I would like to bring to your attention additional information that I wish you to consider.

I have conducted a review of the Block Arcade tenancies, since 2010 and have provide below the table of business name changes that have occurred. As you have noted in you letter dated 22nd Dec 2020 all of these business contained

“gilded historic signs and timber surrounds – which are part of the heritage place. An approval under the Heritage Act 2017 is required for any works to a Heritage place and this requirement applies to anyone who wishes to move or alter the signs.”

Table of Business Name Changes - Since 2010

#	Business Name
1	Royal Selangor
2	Roxanne
3	Hopetoun Tea Rooms (1975)
4	Man to Man
5	Telstra
6	VeryVery
7	Essensorie
8	Cafe DuoMo
9	Le Creperie St Germain
10	Australian By Design
11	Hopetoun Tea Rooms
12	Alpaca Co.
13	Sophie Catherine Jewellery
14	Adrianno Carbonne Tailors
15	Bromley & Co
16	Beechworth Honey
17	Beechworth Honey – NOW removed and VACANT
18	Watchtime – NOW removed and VACANT
19	Dafel
20	Sohum
21	Coal River Farm
22	Australia By Design
23	BeechWorth Lollies
24	TrueFitt & Hill
25	MCM Studio
26	Haute Orology
27	Van Der Tooren Photography
28	Mr Wares
29	Bell & Ross

#	Business Name
30	Cellini Jewellers
31	Keshett
32	Mimco
33	Gurwuzhaus
34	Wittner
35	Chelsea Girl
36	Crabtree & Evelyn
37	L'Coccitane Provence
38	Downies Coins
39	Block Arcade Hairdressers
40	Card & Caboodle
41	Skin Deep
42	Camper
43	BUPA

Please provide applications that Heritage Victoria received and approved for the removal of the signs for all of the above named 43 businesses. Noting that amongst the above list there are signs that are older than the sign “Hopetoun Tea Rooms – Est 1892” that we are seeking to have removed from the Block Arcade, without the consent of the landlord and/or Heritage Victoria.

Shop 1 & 2

Hopetoun Tea Rooms – Est 1892



Glass Panel Located on (RIGHT) Side of Tenancy



Glass Panel Located on (LEFT) Side of Tenancy – installed after 1975

Shop 3

Very Very



Changed to “Essensorie”

Shop 4

The Alpaca Collection



Shop 5 & 6

Kosta Boda – Numerous Panels



Shop 7

HAIGH'S





Shop 9 & 10

Café Duomo

Changed to "Le Creperie Saint Germaine"

Shop 11 & 12

Card & Caboodle



Shop 13

Changed from "Australian By Design"

Changed to "Hopetoun Tea Rooms"

Changed to "Alpaca"

Changed to "Sophie Catherine Jewellery"

Shop 14

Bromley & Co



Changed to "Beechworth Honey"

Removed and now VACANT

Shop 15

Watchtime.com.au



Removed and now VACANT - November 2020

Shop 16

DAFEL



Changed to "Sohum"

Changed to "Coal River Farm"

Shop 17

RUTHERFORD



Shop 18 & 19

The ART of Dr Seuss



Shop 20

Australian By Design



Changed to "Beechworth Lollies"

Changed to "Truefitt & Hill"

Shop 21

MCM Studio



Changed to "Haute Horology"

Shop 22

MR WARES



Changed from "Van Der Tooren Photography"

Shop 23

BELL & Ross



Shop 24

Changed from – Cellini Jewellers

KESHETT



Shop 26

Changed from "MiMCo"

Gewurzhaus



280 – Collins Street

"Chelsea Girl"

Then Changed to "CrabTree & Evelyn"



Changed to "L'Coccitane En Provence"

280 – Collins Street

Wittner



Regards

Kelly Koutoumanos

Hopetoun Tea Rooms – EST. 1892 TM

kellyk@hopetountearooms.com.au

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