

Former Victoria Producers Co-operative
Company Ltd No.5 Wool Store
85-89 Sutton Street, North Melbourne



Expert Witness Statement to Panel
Amendment C207 to the Melbourne Planning Scheme

Bryce Raworth

Prepared under instructions from SBA Law

November 2013

bryce raworth pty ltd
conservation • urban design
19 victoria street, st kilda, vic 3182
telephone 9525 4299

85-89 Sutton Street, North Melbourne

Expert Witness Statement to Panel
Amendment C207 to the Melbourne Planning Scheme

November 2013

1.0 Introduction

This statement of evidence was commissioned on behalf of the owners of the former Victorian Producers Co-operative No.5 Wool Store at 85-89 Sutton Street, North Melbourne. I have been asked to comment on the proposal to apply a site specific heritage overlay to this site under Amendment C207 to the Melbourne Planning Scheme.

This statement addresses the significance of the existing building on the site and the appropriateness of its inclusion in the heritage overlay schedule to the Melbourne Planning Scheme.

The statement has been prepared with assistance from Martin Turnor of my office. The views expressed are my own.

2.0 Sources of Information

The analysis below draws upon a detailed inspection of the exterior and interiors of the building, along with a review of the Amendment C207 documentation, including the statement of significance for the site prepared by Graeme Butler and Associates, and the relevant heritage studies, including the *North Melbourne Conservation Study* (City of Melbourne, 1984) and *Urban Conservation Areas – North Melbourne - Guidelines for Owners* (City of Melbourne, c1986).

I have also been provided with a heritage appraisal of the subject site prepared for the site owner in August 2012 by Lovell Chen Architects and Heritage Consultants.

3.0 Author Qualifications

A statement of my qualifications and experience with respect to urban conservation issues is appended to this report. Note that I have provided expert witness evidence on similar matters before the VCAT, Heritage Council, Planning Panels Victoria and the Building Appeals Board on numerous occasions in the past, and have been retained in such matters variously by municipal councils, developers and objectors to planning proposals.

4.0 Summary of views

My views on the proposed heritage overlay proposed for the site can be summarised as follows.

- The subject site is of sufficient historical and architectural significance to be regraded C, as is proposed under Amendment C207.
- However, the citation/statement of significance prepared on behalf of Council overstates the interest and significance of the place in some respects.
- In my view this is a borderline or threshold candidate with regard to the appropriate level of local significance to support an individual heritage overlay control rather than being a robust and obvious candidate.

5.0 Declaration

I declare that I have made all the inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate, and that no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Panel.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bryce Raworth', with a stylized flourish at the end.

BRYCE RAWORTH

6.0 Listings and Controls

City of Melbourne

The site is currently subject to an interim heritage overlay control (HO1118). As noted above, Council proposes to introduce a permanent heritage control for this site as part of Amendment C207 to the Melbourne Planning Scheme. The proposed site specific heritage overlay covers all of the subject site. External paint controls would apply under this overlay, but not internal alteration or tree controls.

The site was not identified in past heritage studies of this area, i.e. *North Melbourne Conservation Study* (Graeme Butler, 1983), *North and West Melbourne Heritage Review 2000-2002* (Allom Lovell & Associates). Other buildings associated with the Victorian Producer's Co-op at 74-88 Mark Street were identified as D graded buildings in the 1983 study but most have been demolished in recent years.

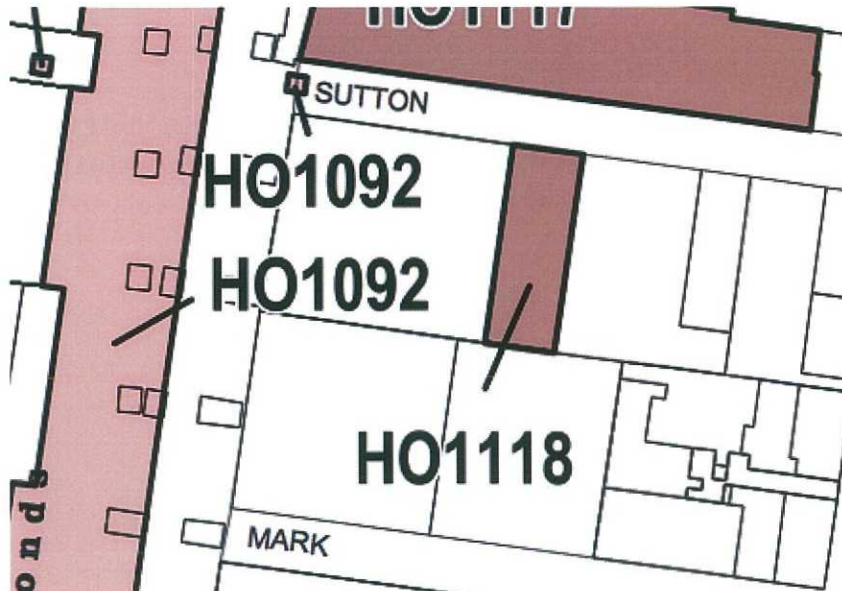


Figure 1 Extent of the heritage overlay proposed by Amendment C207, which covers the entirety of the subject site (HO1118). The overlay is already in place on an interim basis.

Heritage Victoria

The subject site is not included on the Victorian Heritage Register.

National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

The subject site is not included on the Register of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria).

Australian Heritage Council

The subject site is not included on the Commonwealth Heritage List nor is it on the National Heritage Lister. Neither was the site listed on the Register of the National Estate (this register has been discontinued).

7.0

History

The Victorian Producers Co-operative

The Victorian Producers Co-operative (VPC) was formed in 1910 by a group of Victorian farmers who no longer wished to deal with middlemen in the sale of their produce and the purchase of farming supplies.¹ The VPC operated as a pastoral agent, selling wool, livestock and real estate (mostly farms) for commission, providing short term seasonal finance to farmers, retailing farm supplies (veterinary products, chemicals, fencing materials etc) and insurance services.

Up until the late 1930s, a large part of the VPC business was in wheat but this was terminated when the Australian Wheat Board was established to take statutory control of the marketing of the wheat crop.

The VPC had wool stores in Melbourne, Geelong and Portland and approximately 50 branches spread through rural Victoria, the Riverina District of New South Wales and the South East of South Australia. At the organisation's peak in the late 1980s, the VPC had an annual turnover exceeding \$500 million, over 300 permanent and several hundred casual and part-time employees and boasted over 5000 members. The VPC was taken over by rival Elders in 1999.

No. 5 Wool Store

The wool department of the VPC was established in 1915-1916 and handled 2,100 bales in its first season. Their share of the wool trade grew so rapidly that by 1919 they received 39,000 wool bales. Around 1920, the VPC acquired 'commodious' wool stores in North Melbourne.² A newspaper article of September 1920 reported on the company's plans to complete their own wool store on the site the following year at a cost of £40,000.³ By 1934, the VPC had approximately 5½ acres of warehouse floor space at North Melbourne serviced by a rail siding at Macaulay station.⁴



Figure 2 A 1934 illustration of the VPC's North Melbourne warehouse (this building was presumably located adjacent to the railway line, fronting Marks Street). Source: *Gippsland Times*.

¹ <http://www.australia.coop/cspastoral.pdf>

² *Mercury*, 20 September 1920.

³ *Mercury*, 20 September 1920.

⁴ *Gippsland Times*, 1 November 1934, p.5.

A 1945 aerial photograph shows large sawtooth roofed buildings occupying much of land on the east side of the railway line between Sutton and Mark Streets, although the subject site appears undeveloped at this time.

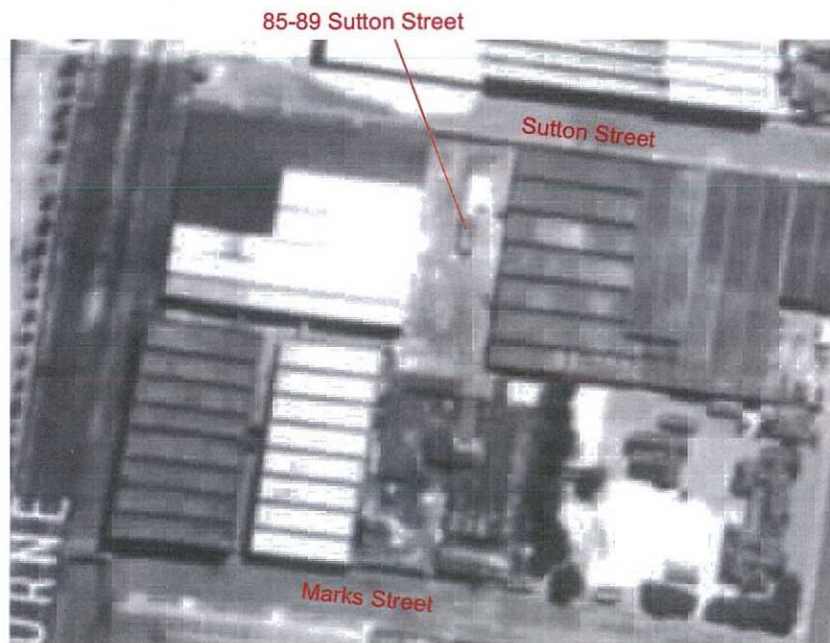


Figure 3 1945 aerial photograph showing the wool store/warehouse complex in place around the subject site. Source: State Library of Victoria.

Prosperity in the Australian wool industry peaked in the early 1950s when American demand for wool during the Korean War generated high prices. This was the period when Australia was said to 'ride on the sheeps' back'.⁵

Concurrent with booming wool trade, the VPC expanded their North Melbourne warehouse complex. In 1950, the company sought a building permit from the City of Melbourne for a new £10,000 building. Plans for a further £17,000 worth of additions to their wool stores were submitted in 1954.

The VPC's turnover for 1954 was second highest on record, when profit rose from £95,082 to £128,173.⁶ Despite a decline in wool intake, the VPC directors continued with the expansion of the company's wool storage facilities. In 1956, plans were submitted for a six level wool store fronting Sutton Street – known as the No.5 Wool Store. The estimated cost of the wool store was £272,000. The building is understood to have been designed by consulting structural engineer Cyril Hudspeth.⁷ It was not until 1961 that Sands and McDougall Directories first list Victorian Producers Co-operative on the south side of Sutton Street. This could mean that No.5 Wool Store was built c1960 (some four years after plans were submitted). Alternatively, the store could have been built c1956-57 and was

⁵ See Australian Bureau of Statistics 'The wool industry - looking back and forward', <http://www.abs.gov.au/>.

⁶ *Argus*, 8 September, 1954, p.28.

⁷ Graeme Butler and Assoc., *Arden-Macaulay Heritage Review*, p. 530.

listed collectively with other parts of the Victorian Producers Cooperative stores under a common Mark Street address until 1961.

By the time the No.5 Wool Store was completed, there had been a sharp decline in wool prices from the peak years of the early 1950s.⁸ Wool prices remained favourable until the mid 1950s but were on a downward trend. Continuing development of synthetic fibres combined with changing consumer tastes led to a falling demand for wool. Other agricultural industries – particularly wheat and cattle – overtook wool in terms of economic importance.

Falling demand for wool might explain why Sand and McDougall directories cease to list the Victorian Producers Cooperative on Sutton Street from c1974. It could be that the company had vacated the No.5 Wool Street by this time, or it might also be the case that the wool store remained in use but was not separately listed in the directories (Victorian Producers Cooperative were still listed at 74-88 Mark Street at this time).

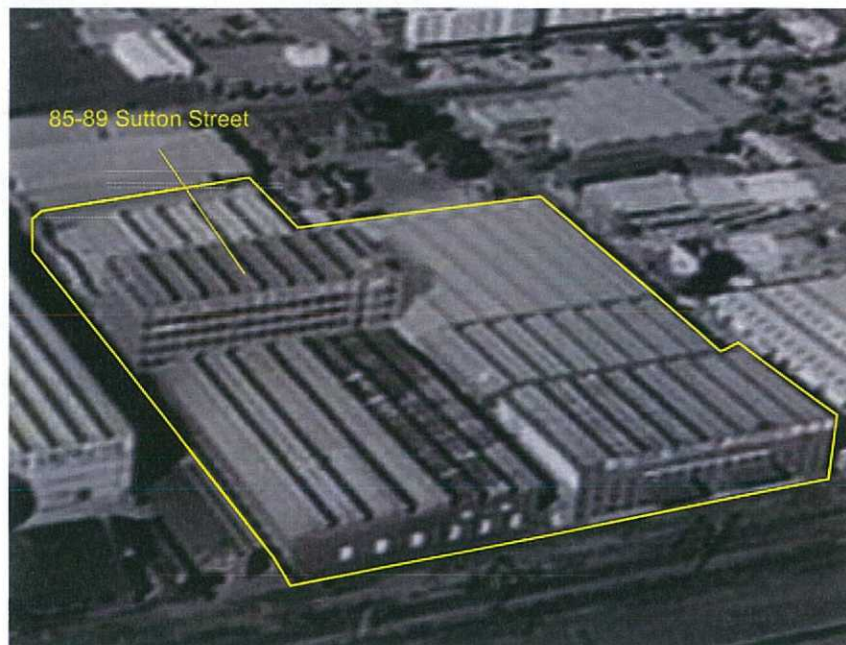


Figure 4 A 1971 oblique aerial photograph of the site. The full extent of the VPC warehouse complex (as understood) is outlined in yellow. Source: State Library of Victoria.

8.0 Description

The subject site is located on the south side of Sutton Street, between Boundary Road and the Upfield railway line, above which is the elevated City Link freeway. The site is occupied by a large six-storey warehouse with a south facing sawtooth roof. The building has a steel frame encased in concrete and expressed externally as a grid with non-structural red-brick infill. The north and west elevations have bands of steel framed windows with brick spandrel panels. The

⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics 'The wool industry - looking back and forward', <http://www.abs.gov.au/>

windows have multiple panes interspersed with glass louvres at regular intervals. Stairwells on the north elevation and south elevation are delineated by a vertical strip of glazing to the full height of the building. The steel-framed sawtooth roof has corrugated asbestos cement sheet cladding and south facing lights. Two large signs with black lettering on white backgrounds are displayed prominently on the upper levels of the east and west elevations. They read: 'VICTORIAN PRODUCERS CO-OPERATIVE CO LTD' (the west sign being mostly concealed by an advertising banner). The west elevation also has two smaller painted on signs reading 'No 5 STORE'. There are a series of loading bays on the ground floor of the west elevation with sliding metal sheathed doors.



Figure 5 The west elevation of the subject building.



Figure 6 The north (Sutton Street) elevation of the building.

The building appears to remain largely intact externally. The lower levels of the west elevation are heavily defaced by graffiti and windows in this area have broken or missing glazing and some have been boarded over. The concrete encasing the building's structural frame is spalling in many locations, exposing corroded steel, a form of deterioration generally known as 'concrete cancer'.

The utilitarian character of the exterior is carried through into the interiors. Most spaces are open plan interrupted by a 'forest' of columns supporting the floor above.



Figure 7 Typical interior.



Figure 8 Wool bale elevator.

9.0 Significance

The documents exhibited in support of Amendment C207 include a statement of significance for the subject site, prepared on behalf of Council by Graeme Butler and Associates. This is reproduced below.

What is significant?

This six-level red brick sawtooth profile building of 1956 includes:

- *Modernist design character devoid of any of the stylistic ornament of most previous wool stores in the City;*
- *a vast floor space with the requisite sawtooth roof on the top floor;*
- *roof clad with deep profile corrugated fibre cement sheet;*
- *continuous aluminium framed horizontal glazing strips encircle the building, divided by cavity brick clad spandrels;*
- *window glazing with heat absorbing glass;*
- *a concrete encased steel frame expressed on the exterior of the building;*
- *metal clad sliding timber doors regularly spaced along the ground floor, broken only where they meet a vertical glazed curtain wall extending the height of the building at its south end;*
- *an interior of broad expanses of suspended concrete floor slabs, punctuated only by the drop elevator enclosures for the bails; and*
- *originally a large goods lift was located next to the reinforced concrete escape stair at the south end of the building's west elevation.*

How is it significant?

Victorian Producers Co-operative Company Ltd No. 5 Wool Store is significant historically and aesthetically to North Melbourne and the City of Melbourne.

Why is it significant?

Victorian Producers Co-operative Company Ltd. No. 5 Wool Store significant [sic]

Historically, as a major built symbol of the importance of primary production and in particular, wool growing and marketing, to Australia, particularly in the post Second War period, and the strength of growers in successfully organising this market. The building is one of the few surviving structures built for a company that received wide national press coverage because of its representation of growers from many parts of Australia, its evolution being part of a national primary producer cooperative movement: the Victorian Producers Co-operative Company became one of the biggest. Also by its scale as indicative of the special role played by North Melbourne and Kensington in industrial expansion for the City of Melbourne and the State and the traditional link with primary industry (Criterion A); and

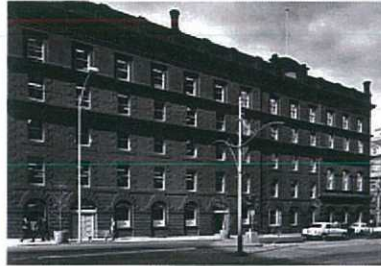
Aesthetically, as an austere but totally functional example of the Modernist approach to a building type that has simple and lingering requirements from the Victorian-era onwards as indicted by its layout, open floor space, and sawtooth top level (Criterion E).

Under Amendment C207, the subject building would be a C grade place in a level 2 streetscape. These gradings are defined as follows:

C buildings. Demonstrate the historical or social development of the local area and /or make an important aesthetic or scientific contribution. These buildings comprise a variety of styles and building types. Architecturally they are substantially intact, but where altered, it is reversible. In some instances, buildings of high individual historic, scientific or social significance may have a greater degree of alteration.

Level 2 streetscapes are of significance either because they still retain the predominant character and scale of a similar period or style, or because they contain individually significant buildings.

10.0 Comparative Analysis

Wool Stores*Goldsbrough Mort Wool Store*

Cnr Bourke and William St (VHRH104)

A four-storey blue stone warehouse of 1862, with 1882 upper storey addition. The largest and most imposing of the blue stone warehouses remaining in the CBD. Notable for the quality of the stonework. It has historical significance for its association with a firm that dominated the early wool trade.

*PB Curtain Wool Store*

660-668 Bourke Street, Melbourne (HO552)

A three-storey warehouse with an elegant Roman revival facade of render and dressed blue stone. It built in 1879 for the woolbrokers P B Curtain and Co. The architect was John Flanagan.

*Denny Lascelles Wool Stores*

Moorabool Street, Geelong (VHR H857)

The former wool store (now National Wool Museum) is a three level blue stone structure with cement rendered ornamentation and a saw tooth roof covered in slate. It was built in 1872 to general acclaim for its size, facade treatment and innovation – it is understood to be the first building in Victoria to allow for the storage, inspection and marketing of wool in the one place. A major annexe was added in 1881 and demolished in 1983. A major extension to the wool store was the ingeniously designed ‘bow string truss building’ of 1910 (demolished in the 1990s). This building was a very early and innovative use of reinforced concrete. Of particular note were the large span trusses on the top show room floor, designed to provide a much natural light as possible.

1872 Wool Store



Bow String Truss Building

*Strachan Murray and Shannon Wool Stores*

Malop Street, Geelong (VHR H596)

Occupying a prominent corner site, the store was built in 1889 and extended a number of times in a manner sympathetic to the original design. The building presents a remarkably homogeneous external form considering that it was built in a number of stages over a 61 year period.



1934 wool store (prior to alterations)



1901 store

Western Beach, Geelong

Substantial wool stores survive on the Geelong waterfront (now occupied by Deakin University). The complex includes a six-storey wool store built in 1934 for the Dennys Lancelles Company. It has an imposing red-brick facade largely devoid of ornament (HO1189). Now altered externally and internally, the store originally had over 3.5 acres of floor space, to accommodate more than 25,000 bales of wool, and was equipped with lifts and modern woolhandling appliances. Immediately adjacent the 1934 building is the former Dalgety & Co wool store of 1901 (HO386). It has a handsome and substantially intact red-brick facade with arched window bays.

*Youngusband Wool Stores*

Elizabeth Street, Kensington (recommended for HO control under Amendment 207)

A vast and physically imposing complex of red-brick industrial buildings with five wool stores built in stages from 1901 to 1957. The Amendment C207 citation describes this as ‘as a key metropolitan example and one that is distinct from other wool stores in the region.’

*J Kennon & Sons Wool Store*

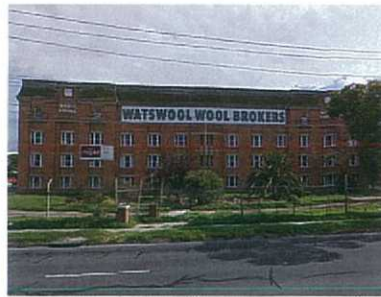
Palmer Street (River Street), Richmond (HO282)

A three-storey red-brick building constructed in 1922 by architects Albion Walkley and William Pitt & Sons. It has a Classically derived facade with steel framed and rendered spandrels set between brick piers.

*Commonwealth Wool & Produce Company*

Sutton Street, North Melbourne (recommended for HO control under Amendment 207 as B2 graded building)

A large red-brick and reinforced concrete store built in stages in 1934 and 1940. It has Moderne elements and the company name in giant bas-relief lettering. Other elements such as the sawtooth roof, red-bricks walls and open plan spaces are more typical of wool stores. Multi-coloured paintwork detracts from the presentation of the building.



Sunshine Road facade

Australian Estates Wool Store

47-61 Sunshine Road, Footscray West (HO160)

Constructed c1941, this is a four story brick structure with a sawtooth roof lighting the top sampling floor. The perimeter elevations and facade feature a distinctive mansard roof styled parapet and bold lettering proclaiming the company name and the function of the building. It is one of the largest single wool store buildings in Victoria, and one of the last of its type to be given an architecturally elaborate facade treatment – subsequent wool stores are generally more prosaic in appearance. The utilitarian side elevations are more in keeping with the austere post-war approach to industrial buildings.



Side elevation

*Goldsborough Mort Wool Store*

63 Sunshine Road, Footscray West (HO161)

A large red-brick building constructed in 1940-41 with 1956 additions. It shared a rail siding with the adjacent Australian Estates Wool Store. Concrete framing (expressed externally) supported floors designed to take heavier loadings. The saw-tooth roof has steel framed trusses to the south facing roof lights designed to give an even lighting to the sales floor.

Compared to the examples listed above, the subject building demonstrates typical characteristics of wool store design of the early to mid twentieth century in its use of red-brick (as an infill panel or structural wall), provision of large open plan interiors, and sawtooth roofs to light top level sales floors. It is not a particularly innovative design having regard for the fact that two similar (but much larger) redbrick and concrete stores were built some 15 years earlier at Footscray West (albeit with a ornamental facade and roof in the case of the Australian Estate Wool Store). In this respect the subject building can be seen to be demonstrative of trends in wool store design (and industrial architecture more generally) that were well established by the post war period, including the trend toward a functional built form expression rather than a decorated expression.

In terms of the 'modernity' of the scheme, it is better seen as a utilitarian engineering design of its period. There is no sense that there has been a conscious modern aesthetic introduced to the scheme, but rather its appearance is the result of a series of already conventional structural and material choices.

With regard to issues of historical significance, the prosperity of the wool broking

firms and the contribution of the wool trade to the national economy is better demonstrated in the much larger wool stores surviving in Footscray West, and on the opposite side of Sutton Street. This building is not in itself able to represent the full extent of the postwar operations of the Victorian Producers Co-operative. As a single entity, the subject building does not have a good capacity to demonstrate the historical growth of the wool industry and evolving approaches to wool store design, unlike the stores on the Geelong waterfront and the Younghusband stores in Kensington, where stores of different eras exist in close proximity. While the subject building is large, it is not large compared with other buildings of its type from the middle of the 20th century. The Younghusband wool stores stand out as the preeminent example of this building type in the City of Melbourne and are very much superior to the subject building in terms of their architectural quality and historical interest.

Post War Industrial Buildings

Industrial buildings of the 1950s and 1960s are emblematic of Australia's burgeoning post war industrial revitalisation program. At this time Australia was moving out of its post war austerity and developing a more prosperous economy on the strength of its primary industry. Melbourne was regarded as Australia's manufacturing capital and Victorian government legislation opened the way for industry to occupy greenfield suburban sites, dedicating large tracts of land at the urban fringe to industry. The resulting relocations to large new suburban complexes offered opportunities for architects to engage at the forefront of industrial design: the architecture of these industrial buildings is an unabashed expression of the 'modern era' and the modern movement.

Important factory developments of the 1950s include the HJ Heinz factory (1953-55) by Hassell & McConnell and the General Motors Holden plant by Stephenson & Turner (1956-57) both at Dandenong; the innovative ETA factory, Braybrook designed by Grounds, Romberg and Boyd (1958-61); and the Nicholas Aspro complex at Chadstone (demolished) to designs by Graeme Lumsden (1956-57). These complexes are generally seen as the four best resolved and most significant factory complexes built in Melbourne during the 1950s.⁹

In comparison to the best contemporaneous industrial architecture, the subject building adopts an outmoded expression in terms of its red-brick materiality and sawtooth roof. It seems more closely related to an earlier generation of factory development which took place on confined inner-city locations. These sites offered little room for expansion and often necessitated the construction of multi-storey buildings quite unlike the low, spreading factories built on outer-suburban sites in the 1950s.

The subject building dates from a time when clear span flat roofed sheds with artificial lighting were superseding sawtooth roofed buildings. Masonry construction was also being increasingly rejected for industrial buildings in favour of new lighter weight forms of construction. The ETA factory, and boiler rooms at

⁹ Bruce Trethowan 'Nicholas Administration Building', submission to Historic Buildings Council, 1992.

General Motors Holden and Australian Paper Manufacturing in Fairfield were notable for their early use of curtain wall technology.

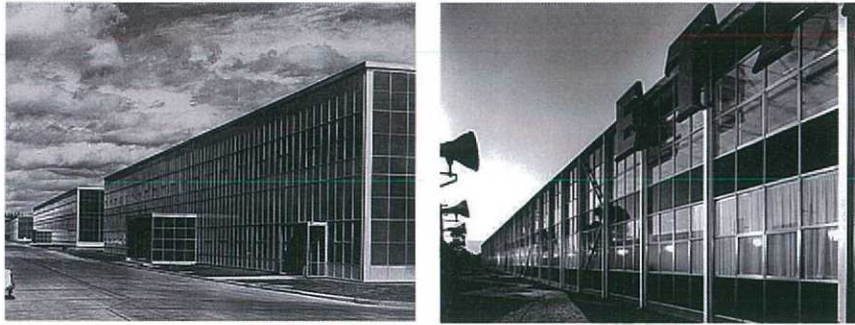


Figure 9 (left) General Motors Holden factory, Dandenong. Source: National Library of Australia

Figure 10 (right) ETA Factory Braybrook. Source: National Library of Australia

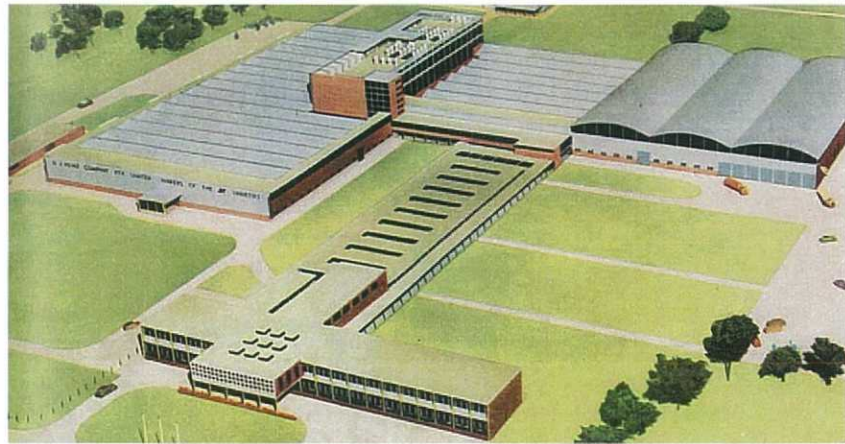


Figure 11 Illustration of the HJ Heinz Factory, c1955. Source: Architecture and Arts.

11.0 Discussion

It is accepted that the subject site is of sufficient significance to be regraded C, as proposed. In looking at the site today, I think it reasonably meets the first part of the description of a C grade building, ie:

Demonstrate the historical or social development of the local area and /or make an important aesthetic or scientific contribution. These buildings comprise a variety of styles and building types. Architecturally they are substantially intact, but where altered, it is reversible. In some instances, buildings of high individual historic, scientific or social significance may have a greater degree of alteration.

The building is not in my view a building of high individual historic, scientific or social significance that has been altered.

This being said, the place is at the lower end of the spectrum of buildings that would typically be given a heritage overlay control in Melbourne's metropolitan municipalities. It is not a place of high significance in a broader local, regional or

metropolitan context.

Looking first at issues of historical significance, I do not believe the association with the wool trade should be seen to elevate the significance of the building above other industrial enterprises in the Municipality. It may be the case that the subject building was the last of Victoria's purpose built multi-storey wool stores but this seems more indicative of falling consumer demand and declining wool prices than of a matter of significance. As noted in the site history above, wool prices had peaked before the subject building was completed and were on a downward trend. Indeed, this may explain why the Victorian Cooperative Producers seem to have vacated stores on Sutton Street by 1974. Sands and McDougall Directories are ambiguous with respect to the construction date and period of occupancy but suggest that the store could have been built as late as c1960 – meaning that subject building might have been used for its original purpose as a wool store for a relatively brief period of approximately 13-14 years.

There is no significance arising from the wool store having been designed (and perhaps built) concurrent with the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. It would have been but one of many buildings erected around this period and has no direct association with Olympic sporting events. This is a matter of temporal coincidence rather than significance.

Issues of historical significance aside, I am not aware of any information to suggest that the subject building is in any way innovative in terms of its design and construction. Indeed, the building seems little evolved in terms of its overall form and construction technology from wool stores of earlier periods that were built on multiple levels with sawtooth roofs.

Earlier wool stores had load bearing masonry walls, but grid-like concrete frames had been used in conjunction with non-structural spandrels or infill panels for decades before the subject building was constructed using a similar method (albeit with structural steel encased in concrete rather than reinforced concrete in the truest sense). As early as 1903, architect Albert Kahn designed a large reinforced concrete building with glass and brick infill for the Packard Motor Company in Detroit. Kahn's Trussed Concrete Steel Company was also building factories in England with exposed reinforced concrete frames and brick infill panels from about 1910, notable among which is the Birmingham Small Arms Factory of 1914.

Nor does the subject building's use of heat absorbing glass seem especially remarkable for the period. As early as 1934, Australian Window Glass of Sydney were manufacturing 'Insulux' (Agee) glass bricks that supposedly dispersed the rays of the sun and prevented heat concentration. Glass designed to reduce the transmission of ultra-violet rays was used in 1955 for the new Colonial Mutual Life Assurance office in Toowoomba, Queensland, and in 1956 double glazing with heat-resistant glass was used in Murray House, Grenfell Street, Adelaide. In the same year the Allied Insurance Building in Collins Street was clad in Vitrolab, an English product consisting of an outside layer of heat-resistant glass, a

layer of plastic film, and an inner face of plain glass.¹⁰

The citation's description of the building as 'modernist' is inappropriate and suggests a degree of architectural sophistication and refinement that it not apparent to me. Modernist architecture of the post war era encompassed a broad spectrum of attitudes and stylistic tendencies but is most commonly seen to have eschewed historicist ornament in favour of an honest expression of structure and materials. The subject building is devoid of ornament and has an exposed structural framework but this does not mean that it can be aligned with the modernist school of architecture – the building is more indicative of a pragmatic, engineering approach.

It is also incorrect to describe the building's stair well glazing as a 'curtain wall'. The glazing here is set into the concrete frame in the form of an infill panel. True curtain wall systems are positioned externally from the primary structure and are continuous across multiple levels.

The fact that the subject building was ungraded in past heritage studies of the area is further evidence of its low heritage interest. I do not think it was a case of the building being inadvertently overlooked given that the author of the first North Melbourne heritage study identified the earlier wool stores immediately south of the subject site (also belonging to the Victorian Producers Co-operative).

By virtue of its large size the subject building presently has landmark qualities, but it has not always been so prominent in the urban landscape. Demolition of adjacent warehouses in the recent past has exposed hitherto concealed parts of the building to open view, and the construction of the elevated city link freeway has brought it to wider public attention. It is reasonable to expect that the land neighbouring the warehouse to the south and west will be redeveloped at some point with multi-storey buildings and some of that prominence lost.

Accepting that there is no impediment to the redevelopment of most of the surrounding warehouses to the south, east and west (at least in terms of heritage planning), retention of the subject building as a single-entity would not give a full impression of the scale of the Victorian Producers Co-operative stores at its peak period of development. As explained in the history above, the subject building formed only a relatively small part of the warehouses complex occupied by the Victorian Producers Co-operative. Other parts of the complex have been demolished, or do not warrant a heritage overlay control on account of alterations or generally low architectural qualities.

Further to the residential development of the environs of the site, the building presents difficulties in terms of the potential for viable adaptive reuse, notably having regard for the poor condition of the concrete frame. Rectification works are likely to be very costly and require removal of large amounts of original fabric.

It is not unusual for industrial sites to raise difficult issues such as these. Indeed, it

¹⁰ Miles Lewis, *Australian Building: A Cultural Investigation*, www.mileslewis.net/australian-building/pdf/11-finishes/11.05-glass.pdf

is not uncommon for industrial sites to be recognised as having cultural significance, only to be demolished in substantial part or in full due to their lack of adaptability, or the fact that they are dangerous or polluted. The issue has been commented upon in several recent Panel hearings in relation to industrial sites, and in the case of Maribyrnong has led to the inclusion of an industrial heritage policy in the planning scheme (clause 22.01-16) that specifically anticipates the potential for partial (or even substantial) demolition of industrial sites of cultural heritage significance at a local level. *Inter alia*, it is policy to:

- *Seek to achieve a balance between the achievement of conservation objectives and other relevant planning scheme policies, and objectives in relation to economic viability and occupational health and safety.*
- *Where possible, conserve fabric considered to be of primary significance unless the fabric has been made redundant and must be replaced by new buildings, plant or equipment associated with an ongoing or new industrial use, or its retention is outweighed by other more important policy outcomes.*

The difficulties inherent in the retention and reuse of industrial buildings is also demonstrated at the former Gilbertson Meatworks in Altona, where most of the complex has been demolished, or approved for demolition. The former Bradmill site in Maribyrnong has also been cleared of most of the early factory buildings apart from the iconic boiler house and the outer red-brick shell of a dye house.

If a heritage control is implemented, it should be recognised that the significance of the place as it is understood today – i.e. as a relatively prominent building due to its size and exposure – would in all likelihood be diminished through redevelopment of adjacent sites with tall built form concealing the subject building. The condition of the building is also such that demolition may be inevitable (at least in part).

Moreover, it would be reasonable to expect only the front part of the building to be retained. Council's heritage policy for C graded buildings generally requires only the front part of a C graded building to be retained – typically understood to mean retention to a depth of 'two rooms' or 8 metres. Accepting that this policy is framed with smaller scale residential or commercial buildings in mind, a suitable depth of retention for the subject building may ultimately be two sawtooth bays back from Sutton Street.

12.0 Conclusion

In summary, it is my view that the subject site is of sufficient historical and architectural significance to be regraded C, as proposed. However, the citation/statement of significance prepared on behalf of Council overstates the significance of the place in some respects. In my view the building is a borderline or threshold candidate with regard to the level of local significance to support an individual heritage overlay control rather than being a robust and compelling candidate.

BRYCE RAWORTH PTY LTD
CONSERVATION•URBAN DESIGN
CONSERVATION CONSULTANTS
ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS

BRYCE RAWORTH
M. ARCH., B. A. (HONS), ICCROM (ARCH)

Bryce Raworth has worked with issues relating to heritage and conservation since the mid-1980s, and has specialised in this area since establishing his own consultant practice in 1991. **Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd, Conservation•Urban Design**, provides a range of heritage services, including the assessment of the significance of particular sites, preparation of conservation analyses and management plans, design and/or restoration advice for interventions into significant buildings, and detailed advice regarding the resolution of technical problems relating to deteriorating or damaged building fabric.

From 2004-2011 Raworth was a member of the Official Establishments Trust, which advises on the conservation and improvement of Admiralty House and Kirribilli House in Sydney and Government House and The Lodge in Canberra. As a member of the former Historic Buildings Council in Victoria, sitting on the Council's permit, planning and community relations committees, Raworth has been involved with the registration and permit processes for many registered historic buildings. In 1996 he was appointed an alternate member of the new Heritage Council, the successor the Historic Buildings Council, and in 1998 was made a full member. At present he provides regular advice to architects and private owners on technical, architectural and planning issues relative to the conservation and adaptation of historic buildings, and is occasionally called upon to provide expert advice before the VCAT. He is currently the conservation consultant for the cities of Kingston, Frankston and Stonnington, and conservation consultant to the Melbourne Heritage Restoration Fund.

Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd has prepared conservation plans for a number of registered historic buildings, including Walter Burley Griffin's Essendon Incinerator. The company's experience with institutional buildings has led to preparation of conservation plans for the Mac.Robertson Girls' High School, Castlemaine Gaol, J Ward, Ararat, the former Russell Street Police Headquarters, Ballarat State Offices, Camberwell Court House, Shepparton Court House and the Mont Park asylum precinct.

With respect to historic precincts, the company has provided detailed advice towards the resolution of heritage issues along the Upfield railway line. The company is currently contributing to redevelopment plans for the former Coburg Prisons Complex (comprising Pentridge Prison and the Metropolitan Prison) and the former Albion Explosives Factory, Maribyrnong. In 1993 Bryce Raworth led a consultant team which reviewed the City of Melbourne's conservation data and controls for the CBD, and in 1997 **Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd** revised the former City of South Melbourne Conservation Study with respect to the area within the present City of Melbourne.

In recent years **Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd** has also provided documentation and advice during construction on the restoration of a number of key registered and heritage overlay buildings, including the Ebenezer Mission church and outbuildings, Antwerp, the former MMTB Building, Bourke Street West, Melbourne, the former Martin & Pleasance Building, 178 Collins Street, Melbourne, and the former Uniting Church, Howe Crescent, South Melbourne. At present the office is documenting substantial restoration works to the MOMA at Heide, Templestowe Road, Bulleen, to the Church of the Sacred Heart, Grey Street, St Kilda, and to the Coburg Prisons Complex (including the Pentridge Prison entry buildings and walls to Champ Street).

BRYCE RAWORTH
STATEMENT OF EXPERIENCE

Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd
Conservation•Urban Design
19 Victoria Street
St Kilda, VIC. 3182

Telephone:
9525 4299 (bh)
9529 5794 (ah)
Facsimile:
9525 3615

BRYCE RAWORTH

- Professional Status:** Conservation Consultant and Architectural Historian
- Current Positions:** Conservation consultant to the cities of Kingston, Frankston and Stonnington
- Conservation consultant to the Melbourne Heritage Restoration Fund
- Organisation Membership:** Royal Australian Institute of Architects
- Professional Experience:** independent practice as conservation consultant and architectural historian from January 1991 (ongoing). Services include: identification and assessment of the significance of sites and complexes; preparation of guidelines regarding the safeguarding of significant sites; provision of technical, design and planning advice to architects, owners and government on issues relating to the conservation of sites of cultural significance; expert witness advice on conservation issues before the VCAT
- member, Historic Buildings Council (architectural historian's chair) 1993-1996; member, Heritage Council (architect's chair) 1998-2002
- conservation consultant to the cities of Brighton, Northcote and Sandringham (1989 only), Essendon, Hawthorn and Kew (1989-1994), Melbourne (1992-2009) and Prahran (1992-1994)
- established the Metropolitan Heritage Advisory Service on behalf of the Ministry for Planning & Environment - this service was offered to the cities of Brighton, Essendon, Hawthorn, Kew, Northcote and Sandringham in 1989-90
- Studies:** Certificate of Architectural Conservation, ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and the Restoration of Cultural Property at Rome), 1994
- Master of Architecture by thesis, University of Melbourne, 1993 (thesis: *A Question of Style: Domestic Architecture in Melbourne, 1919-1942*)
- B. Architecture (First Class Honours), University of Melbourne, 1986
- B. Arts (Second Class Honours, Division A), University of Melbourne, 1986
- Committee Membership:** Twentieth Century Buildings Committee, National Trust of Australia (Victoria), 1990-1994 (Chairman 1992-1993)
- RAIA Jury, Conservation Category, 1995, 1996, 1998 and 2001 Awards (Chairman 1996 & 1998)
- Awarded:** Henry and Rachel Ackman Travelling Scholarship in Architecture, 1987-88
- JG Knight Award, conservation of Heide 1, Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Victorian Chapter, 2003
- Lachlan Macquarie Award for heritage (commendation), conservation of Heide 1, Royal Australian Institute of Architects National Award program, 2003
- Palladio Scholarship, Venice, 2006

