



Melbourne C207 Heritage Overlay – Industrial places

Prepared for National Trust

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1 Background

1.1 Gary Vines - Heritage Advisor credentials

I have been commissioned by the National Trust to provide expert advice on the industrial heritage places proposed for inclusion under amendment C207, as part of the Arden-Macaulay structure planning process.

I am an historic, industrial archaeologist and heritage consultant with over 25 years' experience in Victoria and interstate heritage. My knowledge of the Arden-Macaulay goes back to the late 1980s when I was researching and recording industrial heritage in Melbourne's north and west with Melbourne's Living Museum. This included projects funded by the former Department of Planning and Environment, as part of thematic heritage assessments. My CV is attached.

1.2 Arden-Macaulay planning amendments

The Arden-Macaulay precinct has been proposed for rezoning under amendment C190. Planning and redevelopment of the precinct focusses on it becoming an "extension of Melbourne's Central City".

The Arden-Macaulay Structure Plan 2012 proposes major changes to land use zoning in the precinct:

...from industrial to mixed use (residential) and business zones to enable its urban renewal with residential, retail and business uses and introduce new built form controls to enable the development of dense, generally mid-rise buildings across the area scaled down at the interfaces with the existing low-rise residential areas ...

Heritage has been raised as an issue in many of the submissions to the C190 amendment, and council's response is that both the:

...Arden Macaulay Structure Plan and Amendment C190 recognise the importance of heritage to the character of the area. The Structure Plan includes an action to investigate additional buildings for inclusion in heritage overlay to protect Arden-Macaulay's industrial heritage...

To ensure that new buildings do not undermine the heritage values of a site, the following requirement is included in amendment C190: When new developments adjoin heritage buildings located in a Heritage Overlay, the design of new buildings should have regard to the height, scale, rhythm of and proportions of the heritage buildings.¹

In response to the Arden Macaulay Structure Plan, council commissioned the Arden Macaulay Heritage Review, which examined 65 properties, of which 29 are now proposed for new individual heritage place overlays, while the balance are regradings or amendments to existing individually significant places.

The present assessment has been based on a review of the Arden Macaulay Heritage Review prepared by Graeme Butler & Associates, consideration of the submissions to the C207 amendment, and some minor further research utilising previous studies, heritage reports and historical sources. A brief reconnaissance survey was undertaken to re-familiarise with the places and precinct. It specifically addresses only places for which opposing submissions have been made, with the addition of consideration of the former Kimpton's Flour Mill (Allied Mills), which has not been proposed for inclusion in the HO.

¹ Arden-Macaulay Structure Plan 2012 City of Melbourne,
http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/BuildingandPlanning/FutureGrowth/StructurePlans/ArdenMacaulay/Documents/Arden_Macaulay_Structure_Plan_2012.pdf

2 Assessment of Places

2.1 Character of the Arden Macaulay precinct

Kensington, North and West Melbourne, were among the earliest settled and industrialised parts of Melbourne. The presence of Batman's Swamp to the south, Moonee Moonee Chain of Ponds through the middle, and other swamp land, precluded development in many parts due to both the flood-prone nature of large areas, and the penchant for using such 'wastelands' for disposing of the city's rubbish and waste, and locating the undesirable noxious trades.

Tanneries, fell mongers, boiling down works and other noxious industries, generally processing the products of Victoria's rural hinterland, congregated on the swamp margins and 'Flemington Bank' the sides of the swampy outlet of Moonee Ponds Creek.

The presence of railway lines through the southern part of the precinct by the 1850s, linking initially to Geelong and Bendigo, and then by the 1880s to the North East Victoria, New South Wales, Ballarat and the Western District and South Australia, cemented the location on the junction of all these lines, as a critically important industrial zone processing rural products – wool, hides, wheat, etc.

Drainage, swamp reclamation and flood protection works opened up more of the area to more substantial industrial and commercial uses. The parallel development of North Melbourne's transport industries (from the original catalyst of the horse and hay markets) saw the development of associated transport and engineering industry. Most of the associated housing was for the factory workers and their families, the services supporting the communities, and occasional foreman's and managers houses. This heritage is still very much evident in the mix of buildings in the area.

It is in this context that the subject heritage places should be considered.

2.2 Sisalkraft

152-160 Miller Street, West Melbourne, former Sisalkraft building, (1950s), now owned by CFMEU, proposed HO1119.



Figure 1: Sisalkraft (Google street view)

Sisalkraft was an offshoot of a British firm initially exporting paper products to Australia from about 1911 through the Sydney based paper and stationery merchant, F.W. Williams & Co. Pty Ltd, who were appointed as the sole Australian importers and distributors for a range of bitumen based building papers known as Sisalkraft® and manufactured by the British Sisalkraft Company Pty Ltd.

In the 1930's the Australian Sisalkraft Company started manufacturing products used in packaging and as a wallwrap and building membrane. After WW2 they developed the concept of adding foil to Sisalkraft kraft paper to provide insulation known as Sisalation ²

The company was known for the provision of materials for temporary housing of soldiers for the Royal Australian Army and construction of the ANZAC War Memorial in Hyde Park, Sydney. The company was involved in the development of easily erected temporary buildings during World War II, such as the standard design officer's mess constructed entirely of bush timber and Sisalkraft with a palm thatched roof and a concrete floor at headquarters, Lae, New Guinea Force.



Figure 2: Headquarters, Lae, New Guinea Force. 1944-07-01 <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/074418>

In 1947, F. W. Williams & Co. formed a partnership with the American Reinforced Paper Company to create a joint venture, to be known as Australian Sisalkraft, to manufacture and sell reinforced laminations of paper, aluminium foil and other substrates for use as insulation and vapour barriers in Australia. A modern factory and mill were built on Arthur Street Flemington NSW (later to be designated Homebush) for the manufacture of Sisalkraft bituminous papers and insulation between 1949 and 1951. ³

The Victorian depot was erected shortly after, reflecting the expansion of both the use of building insulating materials and the Australian Sisalkraft business around Australia.

The Miller Street building was designed in a modernist style (perhaps with De Stijl pretensions), and the product played a role in the history of late 20th century Australian architecture. The changing nature of

² Fletcher Insulation <http://www.insulation.com.au/about/about-fletcher-insulation>

³ WREN INDUSTRIES and The History and Science of Foil Insulation in Australia Tim Renouf June 2012 <http://www.concertinafoilbatts.com/wrenhistory.pdf>

architecture and building, from an essentially traditional guild craft, to a formalised science, can therefore be seen in this building, both in its history (as one of the more prominent companies devoted to architectural and building products) and in the design of the building – adopting a modernist form to express the modernity of its product.

The significance of Sisalcraft can be seen in the connections with the architectural fraternity, through such examples as the Sisalkraft Research Scholarship in Architecture,⁴ and the naming of the Sisalkraft Theatre in the Architecture department at the University of Melbourne

2.3 Melbourne City depot

208-292 Arden Street, former Melbourne City depot, (1950s), now owned by Citywide. (HO1107 and associated pepper trees HO1095)

Melbourne City council had a number of depots around the municipality, for example the manure depot at Royal Park, the rubbish depot and destructor off Dynon Road and the dust cart depot near North Wharf. The council rubbish tips were generally west of the city – along with the Harbour Trust and Victorian Railways tips, where rubbish, locomotive ash, and other waste was basically tipped from the edge of the high ground and left to be picked over, most notoriously by the inhabitants of Dudley Flat in the 1920s and 30s. The provision of sanitary services, road making, and maintenance facilities was seen as an essential part of a civilised city. Almost nothing of this survives as heritage fabric.

The Arden Street Depot is one of the few places where substantial fabric related to the provision of council services, more than 50 years old can be found. The surviving pepper trees along Arden Street are the characteristic 19th century plantings for this and a range of utilitarian sites (even if not original, they are likely to be ancestral to the first trees planted here). The architectural treatment of the Depot offices, while somewhat 'retardataire' by the late 1950s, reflects the contemporary social and political desire to be 'modern' with its attendant clean and streamlined aesthetic.



Figure 3: MCC Depot office (Google street view)

As an expression of an important social value in the International Modernist building, almost certainly designed by the council's own architect, and therefore demonstrating the Council's view of itself, the building demonstrates an important social and historical theme.

⁴ Management in the building industry : Sisalkraft Scholarship report, 1964 / Neil Everist NLA Npf 692.068 E93

My view is that the case for the inclusion in the heritage overlay is made.

2.4 Goldsbrough/Younghusband

2-50 Elizabeth Street and Chelmsford Kensington proposed HO1162

The Goldsbrough/Younghusband complex has been identified as an important heritage place for at least 25 years.⁵ These three, four and five level brick stores with saw tooth roofs providing the only light to the top show floors and regular pilastered elevations with a mix of flat brick arched timber windows and concrete lintel steel framed windows, form a monumental group in conjunction with the adjacent Kimpton's Four Mills and brick railway retaining walls behind. The buildings demonstrate both the importance of the wool industry to Victoria (and other rural product based business such as hides and tallow), both in their scale and position. Located on the junction of the western and north eastern railways the site was perfectly positioned to manage the transport and trade of wool between the hinterland and wharves for export.



Figure 4: Younghusband Woolstores (Google street view)



Figure 5: 1945 and contemporary aerial images showing small changes to roof areas of wool stores.

The whole set of buildings should be included in the overlay. – My opinion differs from Lovell Chen in that, even if it is constructed in the 1950s, the Number 5 store is critical to the history of the place, which reflects

⁵ See for example the Western Region Industrial Heritage Study Gary Vines, 1989, pp.446-7 and G Butler 1985, Kensington Heritage Study p.30

the progress and evolution of the wool trade, handling facilities and architectural responses to the industry's needs. It is a consistent part of the building group and reflects an important period of expansion and evolution. It reads as a cohesive whole, from above (which given the likelihood of more residential towers in the neighbourhood will become a more common view), and on three sides.

It can be seen for the comparative aerial photos above, that the No 5 Store was rebuilt following 1945, but comprises much the same form and scale as the structure replaced. A closer inspection suggests at least part of the earlier pre WWII fabric was retained and incorporated into the larger reconstructed building.

This is one of the most dramatic industrial streetscapes in Melbourne, and possibly the last place where you can get a real appreciation for the nature of nineteenth and early twentieth century commerce and work environments at a nationally important scale. While some internal alterations have been carried out in the stores, they still represent one of the largest and most intact, and include the oldest surviving Melbourne woolstore. In comparison, the city wool trade buildings have either been drastically altered, or of a quite different character, for example the Goldsbrough building on the corner of Bourke and William Street was primarily for offices with a top sale floor designed for sale by sample. Some of the Geelong waterfront wool stores also operated in this way. The more comparable stores are the Victorian Producers Co-op nearby, the two vast but gutted Tottenham stores, and some of the larger surviving later Geelong stores.



Figure 6: Sale Floor of No 2 Store (<http://www.commercialview.com.au/>) this is much the same view as would be had from No 5 store.

Adaptation and reuse of the site while retaining the heritage values will be a challenge in the future. This will not be facilitated by excluding a part of the structure as it will actually prevent a holistic approach to design and adaptation. Excluding a part of the complex from the heritage overlay could lead to the arbitrary demolition of that part, exposing the adjoining structures to inappropriate interface.

My view is that the No 5 store is integral to the heritage place and should be included in the overlay.

2.5 City of Melbourne substation and coal yard

146-166 Laurens Street, North Melbourne, former City of Melbourne substation and coal yard, (1938) (proposed HO1111).

The immediate post war period was one of dramatic growth in commerce and industry. Improved standards of living, high levels of immigration and population growth and increased prosperity created demand, while the production of more consumer goods and public expectations saw increased consumption of electricity. To meet this demand, the Melbourne city council and SEC expanded the city electricity grid. Unlike the domestic pavilion structures built by the council in residential areas, the North Melbourne substation was serving a growing industrial area, and so was appropriately designed in a more modernistic industrial form.

This is another International Modern polychrome brick structure, comparable with the roughly contemporary Sisalcraft warehouse, council Depot offices, and several other buildings of the period. It is interesting to note that these seem to reference the nearby 19th century polychrome buildings such as the gas works building, cable tram engine house and Melbourne Omnibus stables (under the paint).



Figure 7: MCC substation (Google street view)

E N Beilby travelled overseas to Britain, Europe and North America in the 1930s to examine the latest in municipal design, and is likely to have embraced the modernism of Northern Europe as a result.⁶ The intervening war may have delayed implementation of his new ideas, and hence the already dated style of buildings which were erected later. Much of the MCC architectural input in the immediate post war period was focussed in improvements to services – replacing the abattoirs and market buildings, providing new infrastructure. The Laurens St substation reflects the Dutch Modernists, such as Willem Dudok, but in a simplified and two dimensional form.

The significance of the building blends the historical, architectural and social values, reflecting the socially modern values of the 1950s of improved efficiency, functionalism and simplified building. The beginnings of an international outlook of the city can be read into such buildings.

2.6 Victorian Producers Cooperative Company

85-105 Sutton Street, Victorian Producers Cooperative Company Ltd No.5 Woolstore, proposed HO1118.

The Victorian Producers Co-op represents the culmination of the city based wool warehousing sale and marketing system. The VPC was formed in 1910 by a group of Victorian farmers attempting to escape what the founders termed "the tyrannical conditions imposed on them by middlemen in the sale of their produce and the purchase of their requirements."⁷

⁶ NEW MARKETS FOR MELBOURNE. (1935, February 9). *Mirror* (Perth, WA : 1921 - 1956), p. 2. Retrieved November 8, 2013, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article75633454>

⁷ Co-operative Pastoral Agent John Gill December 1998 <http://www.australia.coop/cspastoral.pdf>



Figure 8: VPC No 5 Wool Store, and adjacent buildings

Like the commercial operators – Elders, Goldsbrough Mort, Younghusband, etc., they operated as pastoral agent selling wool, livestock and farms real estate for commission, providing short term seasonal finance to farmers, retailing farm supplies and insurance services. Up to the 1940's the VPC also traded in wheat until the Australian Wheat Board was established to take statutory control of the marketing of the wheat crop.

VPC had 50 branches through country Victoria, the Riverina District of NSW and the South East of SA with wool stores in Melbourne, Geelong and Portland. At its peak in the late 1980's, annual turnover was over \$500 million, with over 300 permanent and several hundred casual and part-time employees and over 5000 farmer members.⁸ The VPC was taken over by Elders in 1999 ending the long period of farmer controlled co-operative businesses.



Figure 9: North Melbourne showing Victorian Co-op Producers Warehouse, 1971, SLV H92.20/13997-4004

The No 5 Store is one of a large group of saw tooth roofed, multi-story wool stores built in the mid 20th century. Combined with the Commonwealth Wool Producers Co buildings on the north side of the street and

⁸ Co-operative Pastoral Agent John Gill December 1998 <http://www.australia.coop/cspastoral.pdf>

the associated Mark Street stores this is the largest remaining wool store complex in Melbourne - covering a larger total area than Younghusband in Kensington and bigger than any group of Geelong wool stores. The loss of New Zealand Loan and Mercantile, and the gutting of the later Sunshine stores, leaves only a couple of good examples of the vast wool storage which once characterised Melbourne's western approaches.



Figure 10: VPC No 5 store left distance, Commonwealth Wool and Produce Co on Right

In addition to these vast brick and concrete multistorey complexes, there were also many smaller single story shed stores, including the emergency built structures of WWII such as those at Brooklyn which subsequently provided migrant accommodation.

The Victorian Producers Co-op No 5 store is a relatively late example – but it has a monumentality that demonstrates very clearly the post WWII boom. It is also significant as a representation of the impending change, where single story clear-span stores would take over in the post war period. Mechanised handling with fork lifts and the separation of the auction from the stores be going back to sample sales, meant that the form of building would be drastically different.

As part of the vast group of wool stores in North Melbourne and Kensington, which even combined represent only a fraction of the facilities which once existed, it clearly warrants the Heritage Overlay.

2.7 Weston Milling 146-166 Laurens Street,

24-78 146-166 Laurens Street, North Melbourne, Weston Milling (HO1111 extension of existing HO455)

Kensington and North Melbourne were once (and remain) the centre of flour milling in Melbourne. The dominance of the flour mill rehabilitation scheme under KMM (Kimpton Minnie McAlpin), resulted in dozens of small country mills being closed and centralisation of flour production in a few mills, Kimpton in Kensington and Brunton in West Melbourne being the largest. The nearby biscuit factories provided an obvious extension to the milling industry.

The Laurens St and Munster Terrace group of industries are of a scale comparable with Kimpton's, but more complex and with diverse uses. The building forms are equally diverse, many demonstrating functional designs which relate to their intended purpose.



Figure 11: Munster Terrace – Guests Biscuits- N B Love Mills on far right.

The proposed southern extension of the existing HO 455 is a logical inclusion as it encompasses biscuit manufacturers which were closely related to the flour milling to the north and part of a cohesive industrial streetscape.

2.8 James Hill

57-9 Robertson St. (proposed HO1102)

James Hill is quite remarkable – a 100 year old tin shed – once the most common industrial building found around Melbourne's inner suburbs and beyond, but which is now practically extinct. It makes an interesting group with the adjacent Gibson & Sons.



Figure 12: James Hill iron works.

Although a simple vernacular timber and corrugated iron factory shed, entropy of this form of building has left almost no examples left, not just in city of Melbourne, but throughout the greater metropolitan area. Some nearby examples from 20 years ago included Parson's & Lewis horsehair works in Kensington, Cooks Blacksmith in Essendon or Blunts boatshed in Williamstown. The small business comprising often only the proprietor and his apprentice, was once the mainstay of manufacturing in Melbourne, gradually made unviable by modern manufacturing methods, disposable products and imports.

Hill is a unique survivor representation a whole class of activity and built form. It is of historical significance and warrants the overlay.

2.9 Gibson & Son

106-111 Stubbs St. (proposed HO1102)



Figure 13: Gibson & Son (Google street view)

Gibson & Son Pynerzone works is a rare survivor of a building related to the noxious trades which once dominated this part of Kensington. Facing the Moonee Ponds Creek channel, it is sited on the former swampland which made the area unattractive to all but the most ostracised industries that once characterised 'Flemington Bank'.⁹ Disinfectant was an essential commodity in Melbourne's polluted inner suburbs, particularly prior to the construction of the sewerage system around the turn of the century. Various formulation using the unappealing Phenol, or more pleasant pine oil were the main options.

Gibson & Son played a notable role in the development of the local industry – their Pynerzone competing with similar imports and presumably leading to the modern equivalent such as Pinoclean. The factory is quite elaborate architecturally for such a firm, which tended not to be impressive. It has some nice brickwork in the prevailing modern styles of the period and a good representative 30s deco factory.

These are places which reflect a theme in Melbourne's history which is exceedingly rarely represented in surviving fabric. – almost as rare as finding a wattle and daub hut in the city. It compares with the only other known disinfectant factory in the inner suburbs, Lewis and Whitty's Odourbane works in Fitzroy.



⁹ See Vines, G & Churchward M, 1990, Northern Suburbs Factory Study and Vines G 1989, Western Region Industrial Heritage Study

2.10 Moonee Ponds Creek

Moonee Ponds Creek is an artificial waterway for most of its length in the metropolitan area. The section upstream of Racecourse road was channalised in the 1960s for the construction of the Tullamarine Freeway, downstream however is an older and more complex history of flood management, drainage and land fill, tied into a series of royal commissions in the latter half of the nineteenth century which became necessary because of the extreme befoulment of Melbourne's waterways, and the serious flood problem which saw hundreds of homes and businesses inundated.

The remaining stone channel and shape of the waterway is a surviving element of late nineteenth century hydraulic works associated with the post floods and Low Land Commissions findings in the 1870s, and subsequent draining and filling of Batman's Swamp, river widening and other works to protect Melbourne. The fact that Kensington still floods in parts indicates the works importance at the time in allowing the clean-up of this noxious area and development of surrounding land.

The proposed Heritage Overlay narrows to the low flow central channel, a bluestone lined drain in the middle of a wider flood channel. The actual works were designed as a combination of low and high flow channels to prevent stagnation of water in the upper reaches, and wide dredged tidal channel below. Macaulay road. The tidal channel fed into the Coal Canal, also an artificial waterway which allowed coal barges to discharge to the railway locomotive depot below Dynon road.

The swamps were both a barrier to transport and development and the impetus for redevelopment of this area. The Moonee Ponds Creek channel demonstrates in its surviving form and function, the process of reclamation, and by association the historical factors which created such a need.

The heritage overlay for the full width of the creek works from Racecourse Road to dockland is therefore appropriate.



Figure 14: Moonee Ponds Creek looking south from Racecourse Road 16/1196 Ian Hill. 1996 SLV H99.20/28



Figure 15: Moonee Ponds Creek and Arden Street bridge Melbourne Library Service 20598

2.11 Kimpton's/Allied Mills

The major omission from the proposed heritage overlays is the Kensington flour Mill Complex on Elizabeth Street. Oddly the most recent of the mill buildings and least representative structure of the former Kimpton Flour Milling company, the former Barastock feed mill on the south side of Arden street is proposed in the Heritage Overlay (HO1091), but none of the main mill buildings.

Kimpton's, later Goodman fielder and now Allied mills, is the largest, oldest and most distinctive of the surviving Metropolitan flour mills. The nearby Minnie and Brunton Mills demonstrate that the West Melbourne Kensington area was and still is the most important metropolitan flour milling district, and these mills ultimately captured the vast majority of flour production in the state, with only Darling in Albion, the Ballarat and Bridgewater mills being able to compete into the late 20th century.

That Allied Mills has not been given heritage protection already would seem a question unrelated to the question of its heritage value, which has been well established in studies going back more than 25 years.¹⁰

¹⁰ See for example Western Region Industrial Heritage Study Gary Vines, 1989, pp258-9, and G Butler 1985, Kensington Heritage Study

The Arden Macaulay structure plan notes that:

Today, Arden Macaulay retains much of this industrial heritage with key landmarks such as the iconic Weston Milling silos, the saw-toothed Youngusband Wool Store buildings and its neighbouring Allied Milling complex all prominent in locals' collective consciousness about the area and representing some of the best surviving examples of large-scale industrial processing facilities that were once common to the west of Melbourne. (My emphasis)

Inclusion of an amendment from C190 proposed addition of:

When new developments adjoin heritage buildings located in a Heritage Overlay, the design of new buildings should have regard to the height, scale, rhythm of and proportions of the heritage buildings

The combined result would be that future redevelopment of the Allied mills site would be in conflict with the policy for surrounding uses. Operation of the mill will increasingly become a nuisance for surrounding property occupants and be inconsistent with the government and council planning objectives for the larger area.

While the company argues that the inclusion of a heritage overlay will impede their business, this argument could be made by any commercial or industrial property owner. The continued operation of the mill is not inconsistent with preserving the heritage values of the site, as is evident in the actual retention of buildings more than 100 years old. Normal heritage protection processes also require the separation of the assessment and listing processes from the permit processes, so it would be appropriate to include the site on the Heritage Overlay, and if the company requires future changes they can argue the need through the permit process.

3 Planning outcomes

Identification of the Arden Macaulay precinct as a major development area, will ultimately lead to the outcome of conversion from predominant industrial uses to residential and commercial, and consequent abandonment of most existing industrial uses. Even outside the rezoned areas, pressures will exist to push changes. For example, the Allied Mills site, excluded from both the Heritage Overlay amendment and rezoning, would be an industrial island in the midst of residential and commercial uses.

Melbourne planning scheme clause 22.05 Heritage places outside the capital city zone, states:

The Municipal Strategic Statement identifies that Melbourne has a high-quality, rich and diverse urban environment. Heritage is an extremely significant component of Melbourne's attractiveness, its character and its distinction, and therefore its appeal as a place to live, work and visit.

This policy is the mechanism to conserve and enhance places and areas of architectural, social or historic significance and aboriginal archaeological sites and to encourage development which is in harmony with the existing character and appearance of designated heritage places and areas.

With one of the objectives being to:

...ensure that new development, and the construction or external alteration of buildings, make a positive contribution to the built form and amenity of the area and are respectful to the architectural, social or historic character and appearance of the streetscape and the area.

There is a broader argument also the proportion of the industrial landscape of C207 that will survive development, regeneration and gentrification may be limited by the capacity and willingness of the development sector to accommodate heritage.

We have seen other development areas (Docklands, Southbank, possibly soon to be developed Fishermans Bend URA) stripped of their heritage, with only a couple of less-than-token buildings left. The claim that planning for these extended capital city precincts will build on their distinctive heritage characteristics is disingenuous if real efforts are not made to preserve the fabric of the heritage buildings and landscapes. Therefore my recommendations are for the inclusion of heritage overlays of the places as described, and preparation of site-specific conservation management plans as the means for guiding the sympathetic development of these sites.

Gary Vines

8/11/13.