
Darling's Flour Mill



2032 - Brimbank City Council
Post-contact Cultural
Heritage Study 1998

Location

Sydney Street, ALBION VIC 3020 - Property No 2

Municipality

BRIMBANK CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0829

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO4

Heritage Listing

Brimbank City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - February 23, 1998

The Darling & Son Flour Mill survives substantially intact as a representative large capacity roller flour mill of the early 20th century. The technology involved is similar to that adopted widely by flour millers throughout Australia from the 1880s on and which was responsible for the demise of many small country stone mills. Much of the plant is unchanged from its appearance and layout during construction, the primary difference being the concrete grain silos and steel flour silos which flank the mill. The location of the mill was probably a key to its success, being on the main rail line serving the north and west of the state, and within easy reach of the docks and the later Grain Board silos. The mill is an important example of a technology which, although still common, is to be seen in fewer locations as mills close and amalgamate. The degree of originality and intactness adds further significance. The John Darling & Son mill was one of the earliest of the large-scale factories to be established at Sunshine and part of a major phase of development encouraged by H.V. McKay and developed around the concept of the garden industrial suburb.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Brimbank - Brimbank City Council Post-contact Cultural Heritage Study, G. Vines, 2000; Brimbank - Melbourne Western Region Industrial Heritage Study, G. Vines & A. Ward, 1989;
Construction dates	1922,
Hermes Number	106365
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

Description

The site comprises a five-storey brick mill with timber and galvanized iron grain store. Two banks of concrete silos, an office and amenities building and other sheds and workshops. The mill building itself is a large four storey T-shaped structure of load-bearing brick. It has a steep gable roof and clerestory vents along the main west-facing wing and a hip-roofed central tower above. The building has steel windows with a hopper upper sash and cast iron down pipes. To the north, the secondary wing has a corrugated iron-lined gable roof. On its north elevation, a canopy runs along over the rail siding. Internally, the two parts of the T shape designate the two functions of the mill, the shorter axis containing the mill's cleaning and packing operations while the longer axis contains the actual milling operations. Storage of grain and finished flour is provided by large timber bins, which were installed in 1959, in sections almost the full height of the building. The floor structure is of rolled steel joists with timber joists and two layers of tongue and groove flooring. Some of the packaging machinery in the building dates from the 1920s or before. Some has been brought to the site from older plants, including McAlpine's' Abbotsford Factory and Maize Products of Maribyrnong Street, Footscray. The electrical store (former poultry shed and paint room) is a rectangular 1920s structure with timber framed A-C sheet wall and roof lining. Six reinforced concrete vertical silos were constructed in 1973, with attached road receival station added in 1978. The Maintenance Depot was built in 1981 with a lattice truss portal frame clad with tray deck. Lined internally with inflective foil. The twelve 1939 concrete vertical silos have a square stair and grain elevator tower with steel window frames. Five vertical steel flour bins were built on the north-west side of the mill in 1969, and two more added in the 1970s and 1984. These bins have now been removed from the site. Approximations of the relative age of the milling machinery are as follows: The roller mills were originally run on a line shaft drive powered by a single large motor. All of the very recent roller mills are individually motorized, but seventeen of twenty-four roller mills are still on a shaft drive by a new motor. A number of the roller mills are original to the 1920s; however, ten were brought from one of the company's Sydney plants in the 1960s, and others are of more recent origins. The sifters date from the 1960s when they replaced the original centrifugal sifters. Only about 10% of the purifiers are original; the rest date from the 1960s. The dust collectors date from the 1960s. 90% of the original chutes were replaced in the 1960s with new timber chutes. The steel chutes are of more recent origins. Pneumatic conveyors were introduced for the first and second breaks in the 1970s. The store shed was constructed 1926 as a steel

and timber-framed corrugated iron clad store. Internally, the building has steel plate flooring over original tongue and groove flooring, and 1920s timber roof trusses. The toilet block in the far northeast corner of the site is a simple rectangular brick structure dating from the 1920s. A locker room was added in 1971.

Condition/Integrity

Following closure, the building suffered considerable vandalism and decay. However, the roof and windows have been repaired making the building once more secure and weatherproof. Further restoration is proposed by the current occupant. High level of integrity remains. The only significant alterations are the addition of a central concrete stairwell inside the original rope drive bay, and the installation in 1959 of the large timber bins. Apart from this, the mill building is basically intact.

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Historical Australian Themes

3 Developing local, regional and national economies
Developing and Australian manufacturing capacity

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>