

# FORMER HOFFMAN BRICKWORKS



FORMER HOFFMAN  
BRICKWORKS SOHE 2008



Excavation 15-18 Aug 11,  
1.jpg



former hoffman brickworks  
dawson street brunswick front  
view



former hoffman brickworks  
dawson street brunswick side  
view & chimney



former hoffman brickworks  
dawson street brunswick  
storage entrance



former hoffman brickworks  
dawson street brunswick  
vaulted cellar



Excavation 15-18 Aug 11,  
1.jpg



Excavation images 15-  
18 Aug 11.jpg

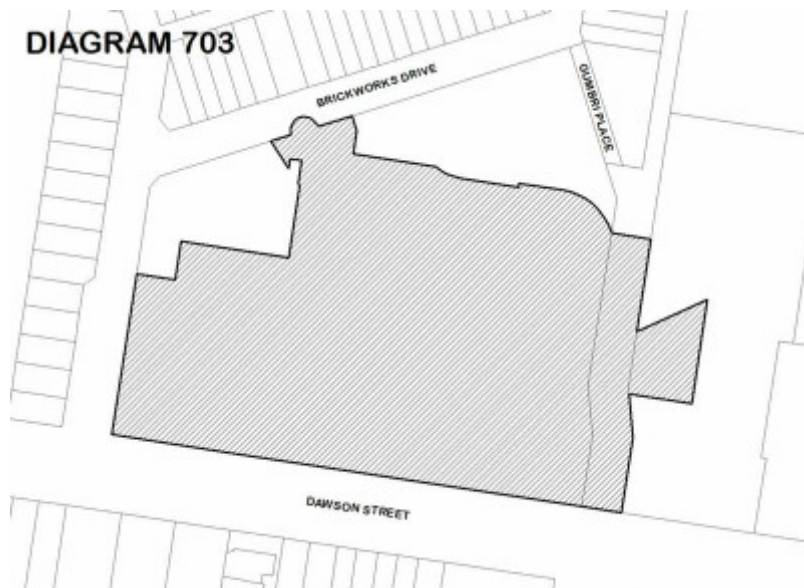


DIAGRAM 703



Aerial view of extent of registration

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### **Location**

72-106 DAWSON STREET BRUNSWICK, MORELAND CITY

### **Municipality**

MERRI-BEK CITY

### **Level of significance**

Registered

### **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H0703

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO63

## VHR Registration

September 20, 1989

## Amendment to Registration

February 10, 2022

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - February 17, 2022

### What is significant?

A portion of the original No 2 works of the Former Hoffman Brickworks, Dawson Street, Brunswick, including two Hoffman kilns, a remnant chimney from a third Hoffman kiln, a large brick press building containing nine brick presses, an edge runner mill, an engine house and an area of the former pottery works which may contain sub-surface remains of two kilns.

#### *History Summary*

A large number of brickworks and potteries were established in the Brunswick area from the 1870s due to the presence of quality clay deposits. Formed in 1870, the Hoffman Patent Brick and Tile Company introduced large scale brick making to Victoria when they established brickworks on 4.9 hectares (12 acres) in Albert Street, Brunswick (not extant). Central to their brickmaking process was the revolutionary Hoffman kiln for which the company had patent rights. This kiln, developed in Prussia in 1859, allowed a continual process of loading 'green' bricks and allowed an economical use of fuel. Hoffman kilns were constructed at the original site in 1870, 1871 and 1875. In 1884 the restructured 'Hoffman Patent Steam Brick Company' purchased an additional 14.6 hectares (36 acres) of adjacent land to the south and opened their No 2 works fronting Dawson Street. This enabled an increase in production which reflected the dramatic growth of Melbourne at the time. Hoffman kilns were constructed at the No 2 works in 1884, 1888 and 1908; the latter replacing a Foster tunnel kiln erected in 1885. In 1887 a technologically advanced mechanised steam powered brick press was added to the site, based on the English Bradley-Craven principle and manufactured in Victoria. This resulted in a fully industrialised brick making process. Established as one of the largest brick manufacturer in Victoria by the late 1880s, the company began to diversify its range of products, and the eastern section of the site was developed as a pottery producing ceramic pipes and sanitary ware, and later tessellated tiles, terracotta items, Marseilles roofing tiles and decorative pottery ware. This included the production of drainage pipes for the Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works for the sewerage of Melbourne from the 1890s.

By the early twentieth century the site contained three kilns, a large brick grinding and pressing building, an engine house, a special brick department to the west, a pottery works to the east and three tramways which connected with the main Coburg train line and transported bricks from the site. The depressions of both the 1890s and 1930s temporarily halted production at the Hoffman Brickworks and the No 1 works were permanently closed in 1941. Production continued at the No 2 works, however as kiln technology advanced after World War II, the Hoffman Company did not keep up with advances in the industry and fell behind in the market. Clifton Holdings bought the business in 1960 and the closure of the drain pipe division followed in 1962 and the other pottery works in 1969. Much of the pottery land to the east of the site was subdivided and sold. Nubrik purchased the brick making operations in 1986, but production ceased in 1993 and the site was sold to a development company in 1996. It has subsequently been redeveloped as parkland and for residential purposes.

#### *Description Summary*

The original Dawson Street brickworks site of 14.6 hectares (36 acres) has been greatly reduced. It contains two kilns (1888 & 1908) and a chimney from a third kiln (1884); a brick press building (part of which may date from 1884) which contains nine brick presses dating from the 1920s, 1960s and 1970s and an adjacent edge runner mill, and a small remnant section of the original pottery works to the east. The brick press building, situated to the west of the site, has a large iron clad gabled building at its core. Surrounding sections include a gabled brick building to the south west which was probably the former engine house. Two former Hoffman kilns, with tall brick chimneys, are located to the east of the brick press building and both have been adapted for residential use. The basic forms of these elliptical brick kilns, with battered lower walls, arched wicket openings and hipped iron roofs, have been retained. A third chimney is the only remnant of the first kiln erected in 1884 and this is located to the north west of the other kilns. The area surrounding the kilns is asphalted and an access road has been formed to the east. Further to the east is a small brick paved area; the site of two earlier pottery kilns which were once part of the extensive pottery works. Circular brick paving indicates the position of these kilns and there may be sub-surface remains.

This site is part of the traditional land of the Wurundjeri people.

### **How is it significant?**

The Former Hoffman Brickworks, Brunswick is of archaeological, architectural, historical and scientific significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion A Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history

Criterion B Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history

Criterion C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history

Criterion D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects

Criterion F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

### **Why is it significant?**

The Former Hoffman Brickworks, Brunswick is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

The Former Hoffman Brickworks, Brunswick is historically significant for its association with the development of Melbourne's brickmaking industry in the nineteenth century and the development of the city and suburbs in the twentieth century. This is clearly demonstrated in the establishment of the No 2 Works in 1884 in order to increase production during the Melbourne building boom of the 1880s and in the production of large quantities of pipes, building and household products at the site over a long period from the 1880s. [Criterion A]

The Former Hoffman Brickworks, Brunswick is historically significant as a rare surviving industrial site which is illustrative of Melbourne's brickmaking industry. The site retains a brick press building, with associated machinery, an engine house and two Hoffman kilns and three chimneys. The kilns were the last of their type to operate in metropolitan Melbourne. [Criterion B]

The Former Hoffman Brickworks, Brunswick is archaeologically significant for its potential to contain archaeological features, deposits and relics that relate to the development and use of the site from the mid-late nineteenth century onwards. [Criterion C]

The two remaining Hoffman kilns and the three chimneys at the Former Hoffman Brickworks, Brunswick are architecturally significant as rare remaining examples of these innovative kilns, designed with elliptical plans, battered brick bases and associated chimneys of circular tapering form. They demonstrate the large scale of the industrial process in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. [Criterion D]

The Former Hoffman Brickworks, Brunswick is scientifically significant for its adoption of the latest technology and the full industrialisation of the brickmaking industry in Victoria in the nineteenth century. This demonstration of a high degree of technical achievement included the first use of the Hoffman kiln in Victoria and the use of mechanised steam powered brick presses based on the Bradley-Craven method. [Criterion F]

The Former Hoffman Brickworks, Brunswick is also significant for the following reasons, but not at the State level:

The Former Hoffman Brickworks, Brunswick is of local historical significance as the only remnant example of the once highly important clay manufacturing industry which was central to the history of Brunswick.

## **Permit Exemptions**

### **General Exemptions:**

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which

don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

**Places of worship:** In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must [notify](#) the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

**Subdivision/consolidation:** Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

## **Specific Exemptions:**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this information is to assist owners and other interested parties when considering or making decisions regarding works to a registered place. It is recommended that any proposed works be discussed with an officer of Heritage Victoria prior to making a permit application. Discussing proposed works will assist in answering questions the owner may have and aid any decisions regarding works to the place.

It is acknowledged that alterations and other works may be required to keep places and objects in good repair and adapt them for use into the future. However, under the Heritage Act 2017 a person must not knowingly, recklessly or negligently remove, relocate or demolish, damage or despoil, develop or alter or excavate all or any part of any part of a registered place without approval. It should be noted that the definition of 'develop' in the Act includes any works on, over or under the place.

If a person wishes to undertake works or activities in relation to a registered place or registered object, they must apply to the Executive Director for a permit. The purpose of a permit is to enable appropriate change to a place and to effectively manage adverse impacts on the cultural heritage significance of a place as a consequence of change. If an owner is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that Heritage Victoria be contacted.

Permits are required for anything which alters the place or object, unless a permit exemption is granted. Permit exemptions usually cover routine maintenance and upkeep issues faced by owners as well as minor works or works to the elements of the place or object that are not significant. They may include appropriate works that are specified in a conservation management plan. Permit exemptions can be granted at the time of registration (under section 38 of the Act) or after registration (under section 92 of the Act). It should be noted that the addition of new buildings to the registered place, as well as alterations to the interior and exterior of existing buildings requires a permit, unless a specific permit exemption is granted.

#### **Disrepair of registered place or registered object**

Under section 152 of the Act, the owner of a registered place or registered object must not allow that place or object to fall into disrepair.

#### **Failure to maintain registered place or registered object**

Under section 153 of the Act, the owner of a registered place or registered object must not fail to maintain that place or object to the extent that its conservation is threatened.

## **Conservation management plans**

Helen Lardner Conservation and Design (HLCD) developed a comprehensive Conservation Management Plan for the place in 1999. Although there has been substantial change to the place since the CMP was finalised it contains valuable information that will inform future decision making about the place. The CMP should be updated to ensure it remains relevant.

## **Archaeology**

Ground disturbance may affect the archaeological significance of the place and, subject to the exemptions stated in this document, requires a permit.

## **Aboriginal cultural heritage**

To establish whether this place is registered under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 please contact First Peoples – State Relations in the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The Heritage Act 2017 and the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 are separate pieces of legislation. Please be aware that both Acts are required to be satisfied and satisfying the requirements of one Act may not satisfy the requirements of the other.

If any Aboriginal cultural heritage is discovered or exposed at any time it is necessary to immediately contact First Peoples – State Relations in the Department of Premier and Cabinet to ascertain requirements under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. If works are proposed which have the potential to disturb or have an impact on Aboriginal cultural heritage it is necessary to contact First Peoples – State Relations in the Department of Premier and Cabinet to ascertain any requirements under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.

## **Other approvals**

Please be aware that approval from other authorities (such as local government) may be required to undertake works.

## **Notes**

- All works should ideally be informed by a Conservation Management Plan prepared for the place. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan, and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.
- Nothing in this determination prevents the Heritage Council from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.
- Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits where applicable.

## **General Conditions**

- All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place.
- Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place are revealed which relate to the significance of the place, then the exemption covering such works must cease and Heritage Victoria must be notified as soon as possible.

## **Permit Exemptions**

The following permit exemptions are not considered to cause harm to the cultural heritage significance of the Former Hoffman Brickworks.

## **General**

- Minor repairs and maintenance which replaces like with like. Repairs and maintenance must maximise protection and retention of significant fabric and include the conservation of existing details or elements. Any repairs and maintenance must not exacerbate the decay of fabric due to chemical incompatibility of new materials, obscure fabric or limit access to such fabric for future maintenance.
- Maintenance, repair and replacement of existing external services such as plumbing, electrical cabling, surveillance systems, pipes or fire services which does not involve changes in location or scale, or additional trenching.
- Repair to, or removal of items such as antennae; aerials; and air conditioners and associated pipe work, ducting and wiring.
- Painting of previously painted external and internal surfaces in the same colour, finish and product type provided that preparation or painting does not remove all evidence of earlier paint finishes or schemes.
- Cleaning including the removal of surface deposits by the use of low-pressure water (to maximum of 300 psi at the surface being cleaned) and neutral detergents and mild brushing and scrubbing with plastic (not wire) brushes.

## **Two Hoffman Kilns (adapted for residential use) and apartment and cafe building on corner of Dawson Street and Pottery Court**

- All non-structural internal alterations.

## **Landscape**

### **Gardening, trees and plants**

- The process of gardening, including mowing, hedge clipping, bedding displays, removal of dead shrubs and replanting, disease and weed control, and maintenance to care for existing plants.
- Removal of vegetation to maintain fire safety and to conserve significant buildings and structures.
- Management and maintenance of trees including formative and remedial pruning, removal of deadwood and pest and disease control.
- Removal of environmental and noxious weeds via means such as spraying that does not involve sub-surface disturbance.

### **Hard landscape elements**

- Subsurface works to existing watering and drainage systems provided these do not involve trenching in new locations. Existing lawns, gardens and hard landscaping, including paving, paths and roadways are to be returned to the original configuration and appearance on completion of works.
- Like for like repair and maintenance of existing hard landscaping including carparks, paving, footpaths and driveways where the materials, scale, form and design is unchanged.
- Installation of physical barriers or traps to enable vegetation protection and management of vermin such as rats, mice and possums.

### **Public Safety and Security**

- The erection of temporary security fencing, scaffolding, hoardings or surveillance systems to prevent unauthorised access or secure public safety where they are freestanding and not secured by means that require ground disturbance.

### **Signage**

- Repair, removal and replacement of existing signage where it of the same scale and in the same location.

## Objects integral

- Activities required for the ongoing care and conservation of objects provided they are carried out with supervision by a qualified conservator, heritage consultant or similar qualified person at the registered place. If items are required to be removed to a different site for treatment, a permit or permit exemption will be required.

## Theme

### 4. Transforming and managing the land

Construction dates	1884,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place, Registered archaeological place, Registered object integral to a registered place,
Other Names	HOFFMAN'S BRICKWORKS, HOFFMANS BRICKWORKS,
Hermes Number	172
Property Number	

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## History

HISTORY (February 2014)

### Contextual History

Two main brick making areas developed in outlying areas of Melbourne in the nineteenth century; one to the north of the city and one to the south-east. To the north, Brunswick's clay industry developed from the 1840s and by 1870 there were over 40 brickworks located in the area. Hence the manufacturing of bricks, and other clay products, was an important industry in the Brunswick area from the mid-nineteenth century. Similarly, high quality clays were identified in the Nunawading area to the south-east of Melbourne in the 1850s and the industry developed from this time.

The clay industries continued to thrive into the 1960s, however the majority of brickworks were demolished after this period and the industrial sites redeveloped. Exceptions to this were the Hoffman Brickworks at Brunswick, north of the city, and the Box Hill Brickworks, later the Standard Brickworks, at Box Hill, south east of the city. Both have since ceased operation.

From its establishment in 1870, the Hoffman Brickworks, Brunswick provided employment for many local residents and many company principals were local landowners and businessmen. From the mid-1880s to the 1930s the *Hoffman Land & Investment Company* made extensive purchases of land in West Brunswick, much of which it subdivided and sold. A large number of streets near the Hoffman Brickworks site in Dawson Street are known to have been partly or wholly subdivided by the company and a number were named after company members.

### History of Place

The Hoffman Patent Brick & Tile Company was formed in 1870 by Jenkin Collier, David Mackenzie and Barry and William Owen, and brickworks were established on 12 acres (4.9 hectares) in Albert Street, Brunswick. This original site, known as the No 1 works, was situated to the north of the second brickworks which the company developed some 15 years later in Dawson Street.



In 1870 the brick making process in Victoria operated on a small scale in a relatively primitive manner, and the establishment of these works introduced large scale brick making to Victoria. The intention of this company to modernise and industrialise the brickmaking process was evident from its inception.

Central to this modernisation was the Hoffman kiln, developed by Friedrich Hoffman in Prussia in 1859, for which the newly formed company had patent rights. This kiln type revolutionised the brick making process by allowing a continual process of loading 'green' bricks and using fuel more economically. The kiln operated on the principle of continuous burning around a central tunnel, with waste heat used to dry the green bricks. These kilns revolutionised the brick making process, replacing clamp burnt kilns and open draught and down draught kilns. A 12 chamber circular Hoffman kiln was initially erected in 1870 at the Albert Street works and two large elliptical 24 chamber kilns were added in 1871 and 1875. The addition of technologically advanced mechanised steam powered brick presses, based on English Bradley and Craven presses, to the Hoffman Brickworks in the 1870s probably marked the first full industrialisation of the brick making process in Australia.

In 1884 the company restructured as the 'Hoffman Patent Steam Brick Company' and purchased an additional 36 acres (14.6 hectares) of adjacent land to the south. This enabled an increase in production in response to an increase in demand as building boomed in Melbourne. On this land the company opened their No 2 works, fronting Dawson Street, and constructed a Hoffman kiln. The following year an early Foster tunnel kiln was added to the No 2 works, a Bradley and Craven brick press was added to the No 2 works in 1887 and a second Hoffman kiln in 1888. An incline haulage transported clay from a clay hole at the north-west of the site to a brick making and pressing building located in Dawson Street, at the west of the site.

By the late 1880s the Hoffman Company had reportedly established itself as the largest brick manufacturer in Victoria and it began to diversify the range of products by initially producing terracotta pipes and sanitary ware in 1886, meeting the demand created by the sewerage of Melbourne from the 1890s. Pottery works for this production were established at the eastern end of the No 2 works in Dawson Street. This rapidly grew to become a large part of the company's operations and by 1900 they were producing a wide range of products including pedestal pans, urinals, bathroom basins, demi-johns, baking dishes, preserving jars and bottles, paving and garden edging tiles, greasetraps and fire bricks. Contracts at this time with the Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works ensured the company's production of drainage pipes. By 1902 the company's pottery works were reportedly the largest in the state.

A Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Plan of 1894 clearly shows the structures present at both the No 1 and No 2 brickwork sites at this time. At the No 2 works these included three kilns, two of the oval Hoffman type and a Foster (or tunnel) kiln, a brick grinding and pressing building to the west, an extensive pottery works, with 11 small kilns, to the east and a pug mill and two small buildings in Dawson Street. Also shown are three tramway which transported bricks off the site. These connected with the main Coburg line.

The No 2 works ceased production during the depression of the 1890s, with limited production recommencing after 1900. In 1908 the Foster kiln was demolished and replaced with a third Hoffman kiln. The Dawson Street site began to expand and develop in the early twentieth century and a building housing a new 'Special Brick department' was constructed to the west of the site by 1913. The grinding and pressing building was expanded in several stages and the pottery works continued to expand. Production of tessellated tiles (in 1908) and terracotta items, such as finials, dragons, chimney pots and garden vases commenced and the production of Marseilles roofing tiles followed in 1917. Household pottery wares were produced from about 1912 and Bristol ware, Langley ware, and the most well known Melrose ware, were produced in the twentieth century by the Hoffman Company. The 'Mel-rose' trademark was registered in 1932 and Melrose ware featured distinctive Australian motifs.

A site plan produced in 1929 would appear to show the No 2 works at their greatest extent, however the depression of the 1930s again halted production. The No 1 works were closed in 1941 (demolished 1975-76) and production continued at the Dawson Street site.

The post World War II period saw the development of new, cheaper kiln technology, with a shift away from the Hoffman mode of operation, however Hoffman's apparent reluctance to adopt new technology resulted in it falling behind other companies. In 1960 Clifton Holdings took over the Hoffman Brickworks, with the drain pipe division closing in 1962 and the other pottery works in 1969. By 1963 the Special Brick Department and the principal pottery and terracotta works had been demolished with most of the pottery land subsequently subdivided and sold. The Hoffman kilns were converted to oil firing in the 1960s and natural gas in the 1970s. Nubrik purchased the site in 1986 and ceased brick making operations in 1993. They sold the site to the Sungrove Corporation in 1996 and the site has been extensively redeveloped since this time.

Part of the former Hoffman Brickworks No 2 site was added to the Victorian Heritage Register in 1989 (VHR H0703). At this time the site included three Hoffman kilns, brick press building, engine house, grinding shed (open structure since demolished), former works manager's office on the Dawson Street frontage (possibly pre-1929 but since demolished) and an external area of the pottery works. The earliest kiln at the site (1884) was demolished c2002, but the chimney has been retained.

## KEY REFERENCES

B J O'Neill & R B Sandie, 'The Hoffman Brick and Tile Company Melbourne, Australia', *Transactions of Multi-disciplinary Engineering, Australia*, v GE26, 2002, pp71-79

Allom Lovell & Assoc Pty Ltd. 'Former Hoffman Brickworks, Brunswick, Conservation Analysis', Nov 1995

Allom Lovell & Assoc Pty Ltd. 'Former Hoffman Brickworks Conservation Management Plan', Nov 1997

HLCD Pty Ltd. Hoffman Brickworks, Dawson Street, Brunswick. Conservation Management Plan, 1999

HLCD Pty Ltd. 'Additional Research, Hoffman Brickworks, Dawson Street, Brunswick', Jan 2000

Peter Davies 'Hoffman Brickworks: Catalogue of Movable Cultural Heritage', 2001

Iain Stuart, 'Why did the Hoffman Brick and Pottery Works Stop Making Bricks?', *Australian Historical Archaeology*, 7, 1989

Iain Stuart, 'The Former Hoffman Brick and Pottery Works', Internal Working Document Victoria Archaeological Survey, July 1988

D Maloney, 'How Hoffman's built Brunswick', *Trust News*, September 1988, pp 23-24

MMBW Detail Plan, 60' to 1", 1894

## Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion  
February 2014

The Former Hoffman Brickworks, Brunswick is of archaeological, architectural, historical and scientific significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion A Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history  
Criterion B Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history  
Criterion C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history  
Criterion D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects  
Criterion F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

## Extent of Registration

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act 2017, I give notice under section 53 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by modifying a place in the Heritage Register:

Number: H0703

Category: Registered Place, Registered Objects Integral to a Registered Place; Registered Archaeological Place

Place: Former Hoffman Brickworks

Location: 72–106 Dawson Street, Brunswick

Municipality: Moreland City

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 703 held by the Executive Director encompassing all lots and common property on Plan of Subdivision 631815, part of the road reserve of Pottery Court and the objects

integral to the place which are listed in an inventory held by the Executive Director.

Dated 10 February 2022  
STEVEN AVERY  
Executive Director

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*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/>*