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## 224 Heidelberg Road



IMG\_1229 224 Heidelberg Rd.JPG



IMG\_1230 224 Heidelberg Rd.JPG



IMG\_1231 224 Heidelberg Rd.JPG



IMG\_1232 224 Heidelberg Rd.JPG



IMG\_1233 224 Heidelberg.JPG



IMG\_1234 224 Heidelberg Rd.JPG



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### Location

224 HEIDELBERG ROAD FAIRFIELD, YARRA CITY

## Municipality

YARRA CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO421

## Heritage Listing

Yarra City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - July 6, 2023

### What is significant?

The Porta factory at 224 Heidelberg Road, Fairfield, is a timber mill and timber components manufacturing site. The c.1920s overpainted brick building at the west end of the Heidelberg Road frontage has a stepped parapet facade and a base in brick coursing chamfered out from the main wall. The wall is capped by a cornice in concave moulded brick supported by paired corbels formed from three brick headers. The large steel-framed windows have cement-dressed lintels. At the west end of the facade, the vertically planked loading bay doors are long standing. The roof consists of three north-south running gable forms, with a flat roof section along the west side, all clad in corrugated galvanised steel. To the rear of this building is a tall corniced chimney stack in exposed face brick, with cream bricks spelling 'PORTA'; the stack has been strengthened by iron hoops (bands).

### How is it significant?

The Porta factory at 224 Heidelberg Road, Fairfield, is of local historical and aesthetic/architectural significance.

### Why is it significant?

The Porta factory is of local historical significance. It was established by bellow manufacturers, J Porta and Sons, in 1921, after relocating from their Little Lonsdale Street premises where the company had been since 1868. The move to Fairfield is reflective of the early twentieth century pattern of industrial development in the area, when timber-related operations were established near the Yarra River. Despite setbacks, including a major fire in 1929 which required the construction of new mill buildings in the 1930s, the Porta company continued to evolve on the site. The product range included meat skewers, wooden tool handles, kindling, building timber and laths, through to timber mouldings. The long and ongoing association with the Porta company is also a distinguishing factor of the property. The property is additionally of local aesthetic/architectural significance. The c.1920s building to Heidelberg Road, although overpainted, has a comparatively intact frontage which is distinguished by the stepped parapet facade, capped by a cornice supported on paired corbels. The chimney stack is a prominent and highly visible element, which when seen from the main road frontages in association with the c.1920s building, enhances the industrial character of the site and draws attention to the historic timber mill operation. The stack is corniced, strengthened by iron hoops, and is inscribed in cream bricks with the company name ('PORTA').

## Theme

5. Building Victoria's industries and workforce

Heritage Study/Consultant	Yarra - Heritage Gap Study, Graeme Butler & Associates, 2007; Yarra - City of Yarra Heritage Gaps Study 2012 (Heritage Gaps Amendment two), Lovell Chen, 2012;
Other Names	Porta Factory, Porta, JW & Sons,
Hermes Number	176144
Property Number	

## Physical Description 1

brick chimney and street facade, timber framed corrugated iron clad buildings, long term industrial site (Porta website)

Established in 1868 and still going strong!

From the very start, Porta was a true family affair. J. Porta & Sons was established in 1868 by Joseph Porta at 146 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. It was the first industrial bellows making business of its kind in Victoria. By 1920, as business evolved, timber mouldings and other products were also manufactured and traded.

Whilst his elder son continued running the city business, Joseph bought land at Fairfield and established a second manufacturing business with his younger son John. John's sons, Jack and Leslie, developed the Fairfield works in the 1930s during which time dowels and other timber mouldings were manufactured.

In the mid 1930s, Jack and Les parted company and Les opened up a similar business in Sandringham. Jack continued to operate from Fairfield, developing the business through the acquisition of a sawmill at Tanjil Bren in Country Victoria. Jack Porta's only daughter married Norman Pizzey during World War II. On his return in 1945, he joined the company which subsequently became incorporated as J.W. Porta & Sons Pty Ltd in 1952.

Post-war Australia experienced a housing boom in the 1950s and 1960s. In order to provide properly prepared raw material for the rapidly growing timber mouldings market, the company built a sawmill at Heyfield in Gippsland.

This sawmill became a major conversion centre for logs harvested from the Central Highlands. Later on, additional sawmills were established near Warburton at Powelltown and also at Benambra, in the north east of Victoria. During the 50s 60s and 70s the company established itself as a major supplier of hardwood moulding to the Australian building industry, primarily in Victoria itself, but also through Australia via agents.

In 1979, Norman's son, John, took over the running of the business continuing to supply the building trade with hardwood mouldings. The Victorian hardwood mill resources were sold off in the 1980s and these resources were re-established in Tasmania, where they are still operational and being expanded, today.

In 1990 Porta redefined its marketing strategies. The production of commodity mouldings for new housing was abandoned in favour of entering the brave new world of merchandising quality hardwood mouldings for the growing DIY market. Porta's mouldings were literally brought in from the cold of the timber yard. Now they are an integral part of any DIY store, a market leader supported by strong merchandising and appealing point of sale literature.

Porta re-badged in 2000, a reflection of its current focus on the needs of the consumer. With substantial experience, entrepreneurial confidence and skills, Porta is broadening its product offerings to meet changing market demands and new markets.

This growth has been supported through the acquisition in 2004 of Goodwood Industries in New Zealand, the expansion of the mill in Tasmania and continued development of reliable overseas business partnerships. '

## Integrity

[The focus of the following description is on the brick gable-roofed building on the north-west of the property, with a zero-setback frontage to Heidelberg Road, and the brick chimney stack to the rear of this building. These elements are evident in the 1945 aerial image, while the majority of the rest of the property was constructed after 1945. The more recent steel-clad gable-ended building abutting the west side of the brick building is excluded, as are the building components to the south of the stack.]

The property at 224 Heidelberg Road, Fairfield, is a timber mill and timber components manufacturing site, which still produces timber mouldings. It occupies a large approximately triangular shaped allotment on the south side of Heidelberg Road, at the corner of Yarra Bend Road; Fairfield Oval is to the rear. The complex comprises a series of buildings dating from the first half of the twentieth century through to late century.

The building to the west end of the Heidelberg Road frontage is a c.1920s overpainted brick building with a stepped parapet facade and a base in brick coursing chamfered out from the main wall. The wall is capped by a cornice in concave moulded brick supported by paired corbels formed from three brick headers, with the bottom headers having convex lower side curving. The large steel-framed windows have cement-dressed lintels. At the west end, the vertically planked loading bay doors are long standing. The roof consists of three north-south running gable forms, with a flat roof section along the west side, all clad in corrugated galvanised steel.

To the rear of the building is a tall corniced chimney stack in exposed face brick, with cream bricks spelling 'PORTA'; the stack has been strengthened by iron hoops (bands). The chimney is also visible from Heidelberg Road although the 'PORTA' sign is only visible from the west.

## **Intactness**

Good

*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/>*