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# Ford Motor Company

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## Location

455 Melbourne Road, NORTH GEELONG VIC 3215 - Property No 325525

## Municipality

GREATER GEELONG CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO1717

## Heritage Listing

Greater Geelong City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

A Listed - State Significance

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

*The significant parts of the Ford Motor Company complex at North Geelong are the 1920s sections only, including the Melbourne Road facade and landscaping. See the attached site plan for further verification.*

The Ford Motor Company complex on the Melbourne Road at North Geelong is aesthetically significant at a **NATIONAL** level. It demonstrates in an outstanding way original design qualities of the interwar stripped Classical style. These qualities on the original (1925) northern facade include the large brick and painted rendered concrete wall planes broken up by 5 vertically oriented, slightly-projecting pavilions, four horizontal bays including the off-centre entrance with a crowning recessed parapet and the 3 glazed colonnaded bays having brick vestigial pillars between the windows. Other intact qualities include the subtle stripped Classical detailing and in particular the roundel motifs above the vestigial pilasters on the vertical pavilions, rectilinear moulding and lines, and the rectangular parapet panels with decorative banded borders. The original (1925) southern Melbourne Road facade is also a distinctive stripped Classical composition with its simple gabled end supported by flanking giant terminal pylons. The later, remaining southern facade is sympathetic proportionally and stylistically to the original sections of the building. The six substantial palm trees and lawned areas fronting the

Melbourne Road, together with the fences and gates, contribute to the significance of the place.

The Ford Motor Company complex on the Melbourne Road at North Geelong is historically significant at a **NATIONAL** level. It is associated with the development of the Ford Motor Company in Australia, as a major contributor of employment and economic development on a national scale. The complex has associations with the American architect, Albert Kahn, who designed many of the Ford industrial plants in the U.S.A. It is also associated with the development of the first fully Australian motor vehicle, the Falcon, in the 1960s.

The Ford Motor Company complex on the Melbourne Road at North Geelong is **scientifically** significant at a **STATE** level. The complex steel truss roof systems, with panel points that enable the support of craneways and other machinery, illustrates a particular constructional and technological development in Victoria in the 1920s. The clerestorey lighting, with openable sashes operated by a pulley system, are also of technical interest.

The Ford Motor Company complex on the Melbourne Road at North Geelong is **socially** significant at a **STATE** level. It is recognised and valued by the wider community as a major employer in Victoria and as a substantial industrial manufacturer.

Overall, the Ford Motor Company complex on the Melbourne Road at North Geelong is of **NATIONAL** significance.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that a Conservation Management Plan be carried out. In particular, the clerestorey lighting on the original sections of the complex are substantially deteriorating, and the Plan should consider the conservation of at least one bay as an example of the original construction.

#### References

1. Wynd, So Fine A Country: A History of the Shire of Corio, pp.101-105.
2. G. Hildebrand, The Architecture of Albert Kahn, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1974.
3. Information from Peter Frick, Ford Motor Company, North Geelong.
4. D. Rowe, 'Building a National Image: The Architecture of John Smith Murdoch, Australia's First Commonwealth Government Architect', PhD (Architecture) Thesis, Deakin University, Geelong, 1997.
5. Draft Report, National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Industrial History Committee, National Trust of Australia (Victoria), Melbourne.
6. J. Gatley, 'Ford Thinking: The Former Ford Motor Company Building, Seaview', in J. Wilson (ed.), Zeal and Crusade: The Modern Movement in Wellington, Te Wailhora Press, Christchurch, 1996, in the collection of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria).

Heritage Study/Consultant      Greater Geelong - Greater Geelong Outer Areas Heritage Study Volumes 1, 2 & 4, Authentic Heritage Services Pty Ltd, 2000;

Hermes Number                22053

Property Number

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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.*

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