

# FLETCHER JONES FACTORY AND GARDENS



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SOHE 2008



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H2101 fletcher jones  
warrnambool 18nov05 ac  
garden pond2



H2101 fletcher jones  
warrnambool 18nov05 ac  
garden canteen



H2101 fletcher jones  
warrnambool 18nov05 ac  
round room



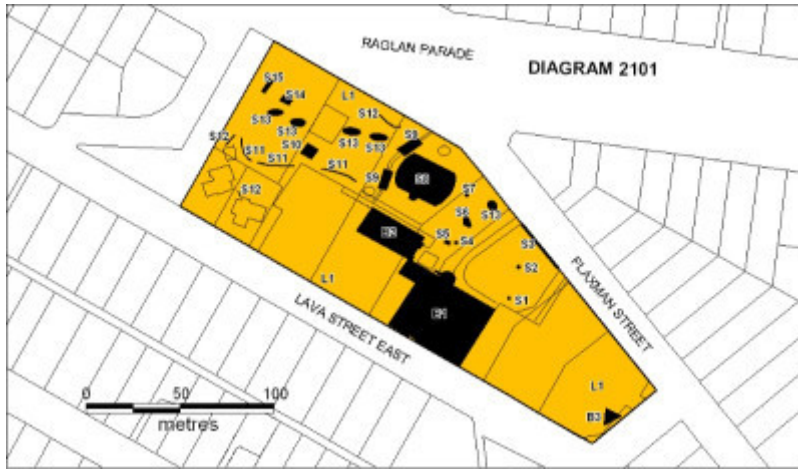
H2101 fletcher jones  
warrnambool 18nov05 ac  
RVIA 1



H2101 fletcher jones  
warrnambool 18nov05 ac  
pergola walk4



H2101 fletcher jones  
warrnambool 18nov05 ac  
water tower



H2101 fletcher jones warrnambool HCplan

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## Location

61-81 FLAXMAN STREET WARRNAMBOOL, WARRNAMBOOL CITY

## Municipality

WARRNAMBOOL CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2101

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO227

## VHR Registration

August 3, 2006

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 19, 2023

## What is significant?

The Fletcher Jones Factory and Gardens were established in 1948 by David Fletcher Jones in Warrnambool. His "Modern New Decentralised Garden Factory" was a result of growing demand and advanced views of employee satisfaction and engagement. The company became renowned not only for the quality of its clothing - an iconic Australian brand - but also for Fletcher Jones' progressive approach to employer/employee relations and an innovative shareholding scheme.

The development of manufacturing industries in regional centres occurred through decentralisation initiatives following the Second World War. Due to post-war shortages of building materials, Fletcher Jones bought a number of war surplus structures from the Army camp at Darley. Forming the basis of the new factory, these buildings were used as cutting rooms, sewing rooms, and a canteen. Fletcher Jones also purchased aeroplane anchors and heavy airways concrete blocks to be used as fencing and garden borders/features. In 1949 a Quonset hut was acquired and used to house a dry cleaning plant and alterations department. In 1951 a Bristol building was erected on the site adjacent to the original canteen and housed the mail order and accounts departments.

In 1947 Fletcher Jones commissioned W.J.T. (Tag) Walter to create a modernist facade to the series of Darley buildings. Common features which were repeatedly used as advertising symbols were the Fletcher Jones (FJ) man and the roundel. The roundel had been used since the 1930s, and this feature exists on a pillar of the concrete anchor fence and the Lava Street elevation of the sewing room. A central tower featuring the FJ man and the roundel was built between the canteen and the cutting room, which was the location of Fletcher Jones' office. An illuminated advertising sign was placed adjacent to his office above the canteen and a curved glazed corner entry was installed between the tower and cutting room wing. However, this entry has been significantly altered and the tower above the first floor level has been removed, as has the signage.

Between 1951 and 1974 the factory had numerous alterations and extensions. Two significant features were the Round Room and the water tower. The Round Room was a prominent feature of the main facade, built in 1951 as an addition to the original canteen. The 40 metre high water tower was built for fire protection and as a booster system in 1967. The tower's massive concrete foundations extend through the building and the elevated steel tripod and steel spherical tank tower over the complex.

Fletcher Jones established an attractive ornamental garden setting for his employees. Work commenced in 1949 and the gardens were extended to the west in 1951. The gardens quickly became popular among employees, local residents and tourists. The highly manicured landscape consists of flower beds, lawn, rockeries, pergolas, a sunken garden and pond and several large floral baskets. Also located in the garden are a variety of sculptures, including a basalt sculpture designed by Warrnambool artist Robert Ulmann as a memorial to Fletcher Jones. Other sculptures include the Fletcher Jones man, a bas relief sculpture of a man clad in permanent press trousers and shirt, and the Sphere and Trilon sculpture, copied from the 1939 New York World Fair, which Fletcher Jones regarded as a symbol of progress.

Even though the company expanded its operations to other sites, the Warrnambool complex remained the administrative and production hub of the company for many years. Fletcher Jones was knighted in 1974 for his services to decentralisation and the community.

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

Fletcher Jones Factory and Gardens are of historical, social and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria.

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

Fletcher Jones Factory and Gardens are of historical and social significance because of Fletcher Jones' progressive approach to employee benefits and the firm he founded, Fletcher Jones & Staff Pty Ltd. He introduced an innovative scheme of shareholding and other progressive initiatives and services based on co-operative and consultative principles - termed the 'FJ Family' by the company. The degree of staff involvement in the company is unusual in the history of Australian business. The company's distinctive ethos is reflected in the extensive and ornamental garden established for the enjoyment of staff and local residents.

The Fletcher Jones Factory is of historical and social significance as one of the largest clothing manufacturers in Australia; its iconic Australian brand; its contribution to the 20th century manufacturing industry in Australia; and for the unusual and successful integration of surplus military structures, buildings and modernist facade in a factory setting. They reflect the resourcefulness and dynamism of Fletcher Jones in the use of war surplus structures and objects during a time of building material shortages. Throughout the complex are reflections of the post-war growth in population and in the manufacturing industry, and the Federal Government's support of decentralisation.

The 1967 water tower is of social significance as a distinctive and visible feature, the design of which transforms a structure performing a utilitarian function into a structure of landmark prominence. The tower represents a clever use of a restricted site which did not allow for a traditional four-legged base.

The Gardens are of aesthetic significance as a rare and outstanding example of a mid-twentieth century ornamental garden created in an industrial setting. The manicured lawns complement the sculptures, landscape

structures, water features, rockeries, pergolas, urns, 'Monier' seats, flower baskets and beds with colourful and intricate displays of annual bedding plants. The planting features contrasting forms, foliage and colour with the use of uncommon vegetation such as Kentia Palms, strap leaves and weeping plants. Other distinctive features are the plants which are clipped into hedges, squares and balls. The planting was intricate and colourful, and maintained to the highest horticultural standards where neatness and control ruled. This style became a model for many small, post-war suburban gardens.

## 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:

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. Note: All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan endorsed by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable. Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works may submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

Non-registered buildings and structures:

All works, including demolition and internal modification, but excluding exterior additions.

Exterior:

Minor repairs and maintenance.

Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.

Installation and repairing of damp proofing by either injection method or grout pocket method.

Installation or removal of external fixtures and fittings such as, hot water services and taps.

Interior:

Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of any original paint or other decorative scheme.

Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.

Installation, removal or replacement of curtain tracks, rods and blinds.

Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted art.

Demolition or removal of non-original stud/partition walls, suspended ceilings or non-original wall linings (including plasterboard, laminate and Masonite), bathroom partitions and tiling, sanitary fixtures and fittings, kitchen wall tiling and equipment, lights, built-in cupboards, cubicle partitions, computer and office fitout and the like.

Removal or replacement of non-original door and window furniture including, hinges, locks, knobsets and sash lifts.

Installation of stud walls, which are removable.

Refurbishment of existing bathrooms, toilets and kitchens including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.

Removal of tiling or concrete slabs in wet areas provided there is no damage to or alteration of original structure or fabric.

Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves and that the central plant is concealed.

Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring.

Installation, removal or replacement of electric clocks, public address systems, detectors, alarms, emergency lights, exit signs, luminaires and the like on plaster surfaces.

Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.

Installation of plant within the roof space.

Installation of new fire hydrant services including sprinklers, fire doors and elements affixed to plaster surfaces.

Landscape:

The process of gardening and maintenance, mowing, hedge clipping, bedding displays, removal of dead plants, disease and weed control, emergency and safety works to care for existing plants and planting themes.

Removal of vegetation that is not significant to maintain fire safety and to conserve significant buildings and structures.

The replanting of plant species to conserve the landscape character and planting themes.

Repairs, conservation and maintenance to hard landscape elements, buildings, structures, ornaments, roads and paths, drainage and irrigation system.

Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard; Pruning of amenity trees AS4373.

Removal of plants listed as noxious weeds in the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994.

Installation, removal or replacement of garden watering and drainage systems.

Non-structural works that occur at a distance greater than 5 metres from the canopy edge of a significant tree, plant or hedge, (structural works may require a permit if still on the registered land).

Non-commercial signage, lighting, fire safety and other safety requirements, provided no structural building occurs.

Resurfacing of existing paths and driveways.

Construction dates	1947,
Architect/Designer	Walter, WJT,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	QUONSET HUT, BRISTOL HUT,
Hermes Number	2409
Property Number	

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## History

The Fletcher Jones Factory and Gardens were established in Warrnambool in 1948 by David Fletcher Jones (1895-1977). The Bendigo-born Jones became a travelling draper after serving in the First World War and in 1924 opened a shop and tailor's workshop in Warrnambool. During the Second World War he supplied men's trousers for the Department of Supply. In 1946 the company opened a store in Melbourne and the company had to increase the production facilities at Warrnambool to meet the growing demand. The company became renowned for the quality of its clothing and for its progressive management and ownership.

In 1947 Fletcher Jones announced plans to build a "Modern New Decentralised Garden Factory" at Warrnambool. An old quarry site along Flaxman Street was purchased as were additional allotments stretching to Lava Street East and the huge task to clear the site began. The site was named Pleasant Hill and on 21 June 1948 the Hon. J.J. Dedman, MHR, Minister for Post War Reconstruction, laid the foundation stone.

Due to post-war shortages of building materials, Fletcher Jones bought a number of war surplus structures including a collection of 17 buildings from the Army camp at Darley, near Bacchus Marsh, which formed the basis of the new factory. The Post Office was used as a cutting room and the Officers' Mess with a sawtooth roof became the main sewing room with a canteen built in front of it. Aeroplane anchors and heavy airways concrete blocks were used for a fence running partly along Flaxman Street. In 1949 a Quonset hut was acquired and used to house a dry cleaning plant and alterations department. Quonset huts were lightweight prefabricated steel structures with a semicircular form produced by the United States Navy in the Second World War. In the early 1950s a prefabricated aluminium building by the Bristol Aeroplane Company was erected on the site.

W.J.T. (Tag) Walter, who in the 1930s worked as a carpenter for his father J.D.E. Walter, one of Warrnambool's most successful builders and land developers, was engaged By Fletcher Jones in 1947 to draw up plans for the design and appearance of the buildings on Pleasant Hill. He created a modernist facade to the series of Darley buildings which featured repeated use of the Fletcher Jones (FJ) man and the roundel as advertising symbols.

The roundel had been used since the 1930s and is featured on a pillar of the concrete anchor fence and the Lava Street elevation of the sewing room.

A central tower featuring the FJ man and the roundel was built between the canteen and the cutting room and contained Fletcher Jones' office on the first floor. An illuminated advertising sign was placed adjacent to his office above the canteen. A curved glazed corner entry was inserted in between the tower and cutting room wing. This entry has been significantly altered and the tower above the first floor level has been removed, as has the signage.

In 1951 the company purchased additional land to the west of the site. Three houses for staff were built here in 1952 using designs from the R.V.I.A. Age Small Homes Service (Design numbers T316, T319 and T220), which had been set up by the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects in 1947 with Robin Boyd as its first Director. One of the houses (T316) was removed to make way for factory expansion in the late 1960s. The houses are timber framed and clad with conite.

The Round Room, a prominent feature of the main facade, was built in 1951 as an addition to the original canteen. Also in 1951 a Bristol building was erected adjacent to the original canteen and housed the mail order and accounts sections. In 1955 a canteen was built on the first floor to the west of the Round Room. In 1959 a first floor was built above the original canteen as additional sewing space. Between 1958 and 1974 the factory was extended extensively to the east and west of the original factory buildings. The 40 metre high water tower was built in 1967 for fire protection and a booster system. The tower's massive concrete foundations extend through the building and the elevated steel tripod and steel spherical tank tower over the complex.

Fletcher Jones set out to create an attractive garden setting for his factory and engaged his brother-in-law Darby Boucher to transform the quarry site with help from Tag Walter. Work started in 1949 and the gardens were extended to the west in 1951. The gardens became a popular tourist destination. The gardens comprise flower beds, lawn, rockeries, pergola, sunken garden and pond, large floral baskets made of Castlemaine slate added in 1955, and a number of sculptures, including a sculpture designed by Warrnambool artist Robert Ulmann as a memorial to Fletcher Jones, and the Fletcher Jones man, a bas relief sculpture of a man clad in permanent press trousers and shirt. In 1965 a peacock house was built in the western end of the site and altered in 1967 for use as a glasshouse.

Even though the company expanded its operations to other sites, the Warrnambool complex remained the administrative and production hub of the company for many years. Fletcher Jones was knighted in 1974 for his services to decentralisation and the community. Warrnambool City Council purchased the site in 1992 and the company gradually wound down its operations at the complex until its closure in December 2005.

## **Plaque Citation**

Fletcher Jones Factory was established in 1948 by David Fletcher Jones whose clothing company was renowned for its quality and progressive employee relations. The ornamental gardens became a popular tourist destination.

## **Extent of Registration**

1. All of the following buildings and structures marked B1-B3 and S1-S19 on Diagram 2101 held by the Executive Director:

B1 Factory including original canteen, central tower (remnant), original sewing room, round room and stairs (1951), first floor canteen (1955) and Bristol building

B2 Quonset hut

B3 Water tower (1967)

S1 Sphere and Trilon

S2 Robert Ulmann sculpture

S3 Aircraft anchor fence

S4 Turtle

S5 Ship *Eliza* bell

S6 Fountain

S7 Wishing well

S8 Sunken garden and pond

S9 Pergolas (x2)

S10 Ivy house

S11 Low stone wall

S12 Concrete screen walls (x3)

S13 Flower baskets (x5)

S14 Fletcher Jones man

S15 Rock Sculpture

S16 Lamps (x20) (not marked on Diagram 2101)

S17 Concrete and timber seats (x24) (not marked on Diagram 2101)

S18 Urns (x17) (not marked on Diagram 2101)

S19 Chain poles (x2) (not marked on Diagram 2101)

2. All of the land described in Certificates of Title Volume 7762 Folio 088, Volume 5710 Folio 834, Volume 5793 Folio 567, Volume 7370 Folio 851, Volume 7046 Folio 108, Volume 7297 Folio 308, Volume 5462 Folio 289 and Volume 5462 Folio 290 marked L1 on Diagram 2101 held by the 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/>*