
Wiltshire Files



HO163(1) - Wiltshire Files,
213 Sunshine Road,
Tottenham.JPG



HO163(2) - Wiltshire Files,
213 Sunshine Road,
Tottenham.JPG

Location

213 Sunshine Road Tottenham, MARIBYRNONG CITY

Municipality

MARIBYRNONG CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO163

Heritage Listing

Maribyrnong City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is Significant?

The McPhersons factory complex in Sunshine Road, Sunshine, originally comprised two factories that were erected in 1939-40 for two subsidiary companies associated with McPhersons, the prominent hardware and machinery enterprise founded by Thomas McPherson in 1860. The first factory, built for the Wiltshire File Company (1938-39), was a utilitarian sawtooth-roofed building clad in cement sheeting, with an elongated facade

to Sunshine Road, enlivened with horizontal mouldings. The second factory, for the Ajax Pumps Company (1939-40) was more architectural considered, with red brick facades in the streamlined Moderne style that incorporated a curved bay and clock tower, typical of the idiom. Both buildings were designed by noted Moderne architect Stuart Calder in association with Reid & Pearson, who enjoyed a long and fruitful association with the various branches of McPherson's company.

How is it significant?

The complex is of aesthetic, architectural and historical significance to the City of Maribyrnong.

Why is it significant?

Historically, the factory complex is significant for its associations with this important and long-running Australian company, and, more specifically, with the expansion of its manufacturing activities in the 1930s - a significant initiative of then director William Edward McPherson, who anticipated the start of the War and consequently sought to develop Australia's self-sufficiency by making tools and equipment that had been previously imported.

More broadly, the factory complex provides evidence of the industrial development of the western suburbs - a strong and recurring theme in that area since the late nineteenth century. The factory demonstrates, in particular, the intense industrial boom of the inter-war period that saw numerous factories erected in Sunshine and environs (and, indeed, along this part of Sunshine Road)

Aesthetically, the Ajax factory is significant as a fine example of the streamlined Modertne style as applied to an industrial complex. Although the building has been altered, and subject to vandalism and neglect, it nevertheless demonstrates much of the typical progressive character of a late 1930s factory, most notably by the its horizontal composition, its use of face bricks with rendered trim, and its curved entrance bay and squat tower with ubiquitous numberless clock.

Architecturally, the McPhersons factory complex is significant for its associations with architect Stuart Calder, a progressive designer who was one of the leading exponents of the Moderne style in Melbourne in the 1930s. Even in its currently poor condition, the Ajax Pumps building - with its streamlined form, curved bay and clock tower - can be considered as one of Calder's most distinguished and published projects, along with the McPherson's head office in Collins Street (1936) and the celebrated grandstand at the Hawthorn Football ground (1938).

Other Names McPhersons Pty, Ajax Pumps Pty Ltd,

Hermes Number 124958

Property Number

Physical Description 1

This site actually comprised two discrete but affiliated factories: that of the Wiltshire Files Company (fronting Sunshine Rd) and that of the Ajax Pumps Company (at the rear).

Until the recent demolition of certain portions, the former Ajax Pumps building was a sprawling single-storey complex that comprised the original sawtooth-roofed factory, enclosed on the north and west sides by red brick walling with rendered parapet capping, with later additions to the north, south and east. The original portion is now most easily interpreted on the western frontage. Here, the facade incorporates a curved bay (formerly containing the main entrance to the offices), a squat rectilinear tower (actually a water tower) and two vehicular doorways. The facade is enlivened by horizontal rendered trim above windows and doors, while the tower has similar fin-like elements that emphasise its verticality. It also includes a clock without numerals - a ubiquitous and

recurring element favoured by progressive Modernist architects in the late 1930s.

The additions to the south, completed in 1947 and 1965, echo the style and materials of the original building, having similar stark red brick walls and capped parapets, with matching rendered surrounds to tall rectangular windows. The 1947 addition incorporates a distinctive corner entrance (which presumably replaced the function of the original 1939 entry in the curved bay), comprising a multi-paned window wall that opens onto a porch sheltered by a perforated flat roof supported on a row of posts. The 1973 additions, to the north of the original factory, were completed in a more contemporary idiom, with fin-like brick piers creating bays with large windows and brick spandrels, and a flat roof with a prominent fascia clad in metal tray decking.

Physical Conditions

Portions of the complex are in poor condition. Some elements have been demolished, roof cladding has been removed, window glazing has been broken, and the interior otherwise subject to vandalism. Nevertheless, much of the original external fabric along the western frontage - including red brick walls, rendered trim, clock tower and office entrance porch - still remains in fair-to-good condition.

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/>