

# SKIPPING GIRL NEON SIGN



h02083 1 skipping girl 001 may2005 mz



h02083 skipping girl 002 may2005 mz



h02083 skipping girl 004 may2005 mz



h02083 skipping girl illuminated



h02083 skipping girl original 01



h02083 skipping girl original 02



h02083 skipping girl plan june2005 mz

## Location

651-653 VICTORIA STREET ABBOTSFORD, YARRA CITY

## Municipality

YARRA CITY

## **Level of significance**

Registered

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

H2083

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO353

## **VHR Registration**

January 5, 2006

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - January 9, 2006

### **What is Significant?**

The Skipping Girl Vinegar sign is an animated neon sign consisting of a flat painted silhouette background with neon highlighting and backless neon tube on steel support substructure that simulates the figure of a girl, known as 'Little Audrey' skipping over a skipping rope with painted letters spelling 'Vinegar' highlighted with neon at the base of the sign.

The current sign erected in 1970 is not the original sign. The original was erected in 1936 and is believed to be the first animated neon sign in Melbourne. The original sign was situated above the Skipping Girl Vinegar Factory at 627 Victoria Street Abbotsford and remained there until 1968 when the company moved premises to Altona. The sign was not re-erected at the company's new site.

For the thirty-two years that the Skipping Girl sign stood above the vinegar factory it was regarded as a local landmark and a public outcry followed its removal. In response to this a campaign was undertaken to reinstate it. With the involvement of businessman John Benjamin, a new Skipping Girl Vinegar sign was reinstated on the roof of Benjamin's Crusader Plate Company, a short distance from its original location.

The new Skipping Girl Vinegar sign varies a little from the original, being slightly smaller, the girl having slightly longer hair and with her dress flying up higher at the back. Its new location is at a lower height which has reduced the prominence and visibility of the sign.

### **How is it Significant?**

The Skipping Girl Sign is of social and historical significance to the State of Victoria

### **Why is it Significant?**

The Skipping Girl Vinegar sign is of historical significance as one of an important collection of signs marking Victoria's industrial heritage in Richmond. Richmond has the greatest concentration of surviving sky-signs in the state, which includes the Nylex, Victoria Bitter, Slade Knitwear and Pelaco signs. The signs have strong associations with the industrial base of the former City of Richmond. These electric sky-signs were once a

prominent feature of the Melbourne skyline and are diminishing in number.

The Skipping Girl Vinegar sign is of historical significance for its associations with the original sign, which is believed to be the first animated neon sign in Melbourne.

The Skipping Girl sign is of social significance as a popular landmark which is referred to in popular culture, and is often included in lists of Melbourne landmarks and icons. The community response to the removal of the original sign is an indication of its social significance.

## 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. 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](https://www.heritage.vic.gov.au/permits-and-approvals/heritage-permit-exemptions).

**Specific Exemptions:**

**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 or object.
- 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 the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
- General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved 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 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.
- Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director 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 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.

**Painting**

Painting will not require permit approval if the painting:

- does not involve the disturbance or removal of earlier paint layers other than that which has failed by chalking, flaking, peeling or blistering;
- involves over-coating with an appropriate surface as an isolating layer to provide a means of protection for significant earlier layers or to provide a stable basis for repainting;
- employs the same colour scheme and paint type as an earlier scheme if they are appropriate to the substrate and do not endanger the survival of earlier paint layers.

If the painting employs a different colour scheme and paint type from an earlier scheme a permit will not be required if

- the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed colour scheme, paint type, details of surface preparation and paint removal will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the item;
- the person proposing to undertake the painting has received a notice advising that the Executive Director is satisfied. Any proposal to undertake such work should be submitted to the Executive Director, detailing the proposed colour scheme, paint type, details of surface preparation and paint removal involved in the repainting, for approval.

**General Maintenance**

- Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- Replacement and repair of power supply and electrical circuitry.
- Maintenance and repair of Neon tubing.
- Maintenance and repair of the metal lettering.
- Maintenance of the background assembly of the figure of the girl.
- Maintenance and repair of support structure.

**All electrical repair works provided that the animation sequencing is retained.**

- Replacement and patching of

minor areas of metal work in the existing sign.

-Engineering repairs and painting of the existing support structure, however any changes to the support structure or any additional structure or structural elements will require either a permit or the written approval of the Executive Director.

-Changes to the existing external fabric of the supporting building, internal works to the building and works to the structure of the building not directly related to the support of the sign are permit exempt.

Construction dates        1970,  
Heritage Act Categories   Registered place,  
Other Names                AUDREY,  
Hermes Number            13810  
Property Number

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### **Extent of Registration**

1. All of the feature known as The Skipping Girl Sign, Victoria Street, Abbotsford and shown as F1 on Diagram 2083 held by the Executive Director
2. All of the land shown L1 on Diagram 2083 held by the Executive Director.

*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/>*