
FORMER MOYNE STEAM FLOUR MILL SITE

Location

23-27 GIPPS STREET PORT FAIRY, MOYNE SHIRE

Municipality

MOYNE SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7321-0078

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO13

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Interpretation of Site

The original flour mill is still standing, but has been heavily modified. Built as a 5 storey building the top two floors were gradually removed during the 20th century while the attached storage buildings were also demolished. The extant building has been substantially renovated in the last decade.

The archaeological significance of the Moyne Flour Mill site lies in the ability of the remains to inform about the workings of the mill, in particular the arrangement of ancillary structure associated with the industry, such as the steam engine. Such information would provide some insight on the efficiency and scale of the operation in the decade in which it operated. Such information would compare well with the longer lasting and more successful Goble Flour Mill 500 metres upstream of this site.

Archaeological Significance

Despite the modifications to the Mill building over time, there is a possibility for localised underfloor deposits to be present within the footprint of the building. The recent construction of buildings along the riverfront portion of the site has severely impacted any such archaeological remains - footings of ancillary buildings, surface drains, external surfaces, refuse/cess pits - that would be present. However, any such remains in the car park and lawn fronting Gipps Street would be more extensive and cohesive. Pile stumps of earlier wharves and accumulated cultural deposits within the river sediments close to the seawall are likely to be present.

Site may contain remains relating to the 1863 store.

Historical Significance

The Moyne Flour Mill was one of a few such mills operating in Port Fairy in the middle years of the 19th century. It was not successful compared to others. The site represents the function of ports as processing areas for raw produce grown in the hinterland around the town.

Other Names

MOYNE MILLS, BELFAST AND KORBIT STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY,

Hermes Number

149827

Property Number

History

The Moyne Steam Flour Mill was constructed by Dr Alexander Russell during the mid to late 1850s. Dr Russell purchased the riverfront allotment near the southern end of Gipps Street in 1853 as an investment property. With the intention of constructing a steam flour mill, Russell subsequently travelled to England to purchase the required equipment.

In 1860, the mill was complete, comprising a large five storey bluestone structure with wharf facilities. Russell subsequently formed a partnership with Mr John Bland. The agreement stated that Bland would rent the mill for three years, managing its operation and expanding the facilities, including the construction of a flour store. In return, at the end of the three years, Bland would be given the right to purchase the property at an agreed price.

However, by 1863, although Bland had established improvements to the site, including a stone flour store, he was bankrupt and could not afford to purchase the site. The property was mortgaged, with Bland continuing as manager, but the business continued to struggle. In 1867, Dr Russell died and the operating lease for the mill was sold to Mr George Butchart the following year. Butchart operated the mill until the freehold was sold to Mr Robert Whitehead in 1871, by which time the mill was in substantial difficulty. The lease was again offered for sale but without success. Milling ceased, and the building was used for various entertainments throughout the 1870s.

The site was occupied by the Belfast and Koroit Steam Navigation Company, who used it for storage until 1883. The site was then unoccupied for many years.

The mill building was falling into disrepair in the mid-twentieth century, and the upper levels were progressively removed during the 1950s. The stone was used to construct the tower of St John's Church in Barclay Street, Port

Fairy. The stone storage buildings were demolished. The lower storeys of the original mill remain intact, and the building has recently been converted into apartment accommodation.

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/>