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## W. JAMES & CO. SACK MERCHANTS (FORMER)



RICHMOND ABINGER  
STREET 86.jpg



Former W James & Co  
Sack Merchants factory

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### Location

82, 84 & 86 ABINGER STREET,, RICHMOND VIC 3121 - Property No 294265

### Municipality

YARRA CITY

### Level of significance

Recommended for Heritage Overlay

### Heritage Overlay Numbers

### Heritage Listing

Yarra City

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 25, 2015

#### What is significant?

The former W. James & Co. Sack Merchants factory at 82-84 Abinger Street, Richmond is significant. The site was first occupied by the Clark Bros. blind factory from prior to 1890. In 1929 that building was replaced with the present one for lease to a tinsmith, who was followed by Richmond Rubber Products in the early 1930s. W. James & Co. took occupancy in 1934, and purchased the property outright in 1956.

The factory is two-storeys tall and is clad in vertical sheets of corrugated iron. The gabled roof terminates in a large flat parapet with a semi-circular pediment bearing the painted sign: *JB 2841 / W. James and Co. Ltd / Sack Merchants / Bags Bought & Sold / Est. 1934*. Windows are timber with four panes, with single fixed windows to the first floor and a fixed pane above a hopper at the ground floor.

The factory was recently adapted and extended for residential use with new insertions expressed in sympathetic aesthetic using horizontal steel cladding and steel mesh to mark the entries. The non-original alterations and new units situated beyond the original footprint of the factory are not of heritage significance.

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

The former W. James & Co. Sack Merchants factory at 82-84 Abinger Street, Richmond is of local historic significance to the City of Yarra.

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

Historically, the former factory is a tangible illustration of the importance of industry in Richmond and the characteristic blend of housing and industry on the streets of the suburb. While Richmond Council zoned three areas for industry in 1922, permits could still be issued at the discretion of Council for factories outside of these areas. This site had been used for manufacturing since at least 1890, and this use carried on until after 1960. Its painted parapet sign adds to the interpretation of its former use. (Criterion A) In addition, it is a very rare surviving example of corrugated iron clad manufacturing building. Due to their lightweight construction and more utilitarian nature, this type of manufacturing building has almost disappeared from the City of Yarra, leaving almost only brick (and a few bluestone) examples. (Criterion B)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Yarra - Heritage Gap Study: Review of Central Richmond 2014, Context P/L, 2014; Yarra - Heritage Gap Study, Graeme Butler & Associates, 2007;
Construction dates	1934,
Other Names	Apartments,
Hermes Number	174522
Property Number	

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### **Physical Description 1**

D-Grade Richmond Conservation study (1984) notes "This industrial building retains a curved parapet".

Peterson Statement of Significance: A corrugated steel- clad warehouse, now altered, of local architectural interest; now has added apartment level; with changes to ground level- distinctive 2 storey corrugated iron clad form.

Built in 1934 as W. James and Co. Pty. Ltd., Sack Merchants

### **Physical Description 2**

The former factory stands on the south-west corner of Abinger and Lord streets with a zero setback from both boundaries. For this reason, it has flush eaves. It is two-storeys tall and originally had a gable-fronted roof hidden behind a large flat parapet with a semi-circular pediment bearing the painted sign: *JB 2841 / W. James and Co. Ltd / Sack Merchants / Bags Bought & Sold / Est. 1934*. The walls (and roof) are clad in galvanised corrugated iron, comprising sheets of medium length, vertically laid. The sheets are secured by a combination of slot-headed screws and washers and umbrella-head nails.

The two street elevations retain both early corrugated iron sheets as well as timber windows. At the ground floor level are four-over-four windows (with the lower sash a hopper) and small fixed four-pane windows to the upper level, just below the eaves.

The building has been recently converted to residential use and rendered units have been constructed to the south and west of the former factory. The factory itself has been adapted in a mainly sympathetic fashion using contemporary metal cladding materials. This involved the creation of a large continuous dormer to the roof, reconstruction of most of the west wall with horizontal metal cladding, and an applied panel of metal mesh marking the entries on the two streets. Undoubtedly much the timber framing of the building has been replaced as well.

In regard to condition, the painted sign is peeling. The building itself appears to be in excellent condition, following its recent refurbishment.

*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/>*