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# Former maltings complex

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## Location

22-28 Abinger Street & 37-45 Lyndhurst Street

## Municipality

## Level of significance

Rec for HO area indiv sig

## Heritage Listing

Yarra City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

### History

In 1838-9, eighty-eight allotments in what became the suburbs of Fitzroy, Collingwood and Richmond were made available as part the first land sales outside of the town reserve of Melbourne.[i] In the early 1850s, reserves were created for recreation, police purposes, a produce market, schools and a mechanics' institute, with a separate municipality of Richmond created in 1855.[ii] Early development in Richmond was concentrated in the north and west of the suburb, with the eastern part of the suburb remaining largely undeveloped.[iii] In this period, retail trade and services were established in Swan Street and Bridge Road.[iv] Although initially viewed a gentlemen's retreat suburb in the 1840s, Richmond came to be characterised as a working class suburb, particularly following the population boom which came after the 1850s gold rushes.[v] Development increased in the suburb during the 1870s and 1880s, as was the case in much of Melbourne. The 1890s economic depression had an impact on development, which essentially stagnated until Federation.[vi]

The current City of Yarra's suburbs, including Richmond, Collingwood and Abbotsford, attracted malting and brewery operations in the nineteenth century. The industry serviced the local hotel trade, with the numerous hotels in turn servicing the largely working class population.

The Southern Brewery, operated by Findlay and Sons, was established in Abinger Street in the mid-1870s, west of Lyndhurst Street (and west of the subject property); it was described as 'one of the largest in the suburbs'.[vii] In 1880, the company, which made 'Findlay's Ale', constructed a substantial brick malt house for £3000, to a design by John Flanagan.[viii] The architect had called for tenders for the 'building of a malt kiln' in September 1879.[ix]

This 1880 development was on the subject property, and is believed to be the large three-storey rectilinear gable-ended building at the corner of Abinger and Lyndhurst streets (37 Lyndhurst Street). The building's footprint is

shown on the 1890s MMBW plans reproduced above. These plans also show a larger building footprint immediately abutting to the east, also in brick, and occupying the remainder of the (then) site. This is different to the current arrangement in this part of the former maltings site, which includes the 1930s silos (see below) and the three-storey gable ended brick building to the east again (24 Abinger Street). The latter is similar in form and detailing to 37 Lyndhurst Street, although not identical; it has also been truncated in its southern half as part of the adaptation works (see below). There may also have been a third (central) gabled building or bay to Abinger Street, which has been demolished. This would be consistent with the building footprint shown on the 1890s MMBW plans.

John Flanagan designed a number of industrial buildings in the inner suburbs in the 1870s and 1880s, including alterations to Findlay's Southern Brewery in 1879.[x] The Abinger Street malt works were initially leased to James Hood, but the following year were being run by T Daly. James Hood was also associated with the maltings (with later silos) in Islington Street, Collingwood. By 1890, the subject malt works were being run by Michael J Daly who continued to operate the business until his retirement in 1913.[xi] The Southern Brewery was operated by Edward Latham by 1900, and in the 1920s was a cordial factory run by James Dickson.[xii]

Malt houses were used for the conversion of barley to malt, which in turn was used in the brewing process. From the 1860s, malting tended to be constructed as separate and independent operations from the brewery sites. The malting industry in Victoria was also assisted by state government import tariffs, and by 1921, there were 21 registered maltings in the state.[xiii] As noted above, brewing and malting were important local industries, and Richmond was home to a number of malting works including the Cremorne Maltings in Gough Street and the Burnley Maltings, established in 1892.[xiv] By 1911, the two companies of Barrett Bros and Samuel Burston owned many maltings in Victoria, and the following year the two companies merged.[xv]

In 1913, M J Daly came to an arrangement with Barrett Bros. and Burston and Co, for the recently merged company to 'carry on' his business in Abinger Street from February that year. A report in the *Sydney Morning Herald* noted that this arrangement would 'limit the amount of competition' in the industry.[xvi]

In 1937, concrete silos were added to the property.[xvii] These are the current silos which dominate Abinger Street, and were converted to residential use in the mid-1990s.[xviii] Barrett and Burston continued to operate the malt works into the 1970s, having also acquired the Gough Street malting works in 1972.[xix]

The subject maltings also expanded, in the first half of the twentieth century, to the south and south-east of the original development. This included construction of the large rectilinear brick building of two-three levels, the west end of which faces Lyndhurst Street (45 Lyndhurst Street).

The property overall was converted to residential use in the mid-1990s, by architect Nonda Katsalidis. This was one of the first, and highly regarded such redevelopments of a substantial former industrial/manufacturing site in Melbourne.

## Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes

Theme 5: Building Victoria's industries and workforce; sub-theme 5.2: Developing a manufacturing capacity.

### Description & Integrity

The property at 22-28 Abinger Street and 37-45 Lyndhurst Street, Richmond, incorporates a mix of former maltings buildings and concrete silos which were adapted in the mid-1990s to residential use. The adapted buildings incorporate modern fabric and additions.

The buildings comprise two malt buildings with gable ends to Abinger Street (37 Lyndhurst Street and 24 Abinger Street, 1880-late nineteenth century); four linked reinforced concrete silos in the centre of the site (22 Abinger Street, 1930s); a large rectilinear brick building of two-three levels which faces Lyndhurst Street at the south of the site (45 Lyndhurst Street, pre-1945); a modern five-storey block with a gabled roof located at the south end of the 1880 malt building (39 Lyndhurst Street); forecourt to the north side of the silos; and a yard concealed behind an older brick wall to Lyndhurst Street.

The oldest buildings, being the two former malt houses fronting Abinger Street (37 Lyndhurst Street and 24 Abinger Street) have gable ends with brick cornices, bluestone footings and brick walling in English bond, with segmentally arched windows. Some of the windows to the main street frontages have been infilled or modified; some have also been modified to create door or vehicle openings. The brickwork has been overpainted, but this

has been removed on the Abinger and Lyndhurst Street frontages to reveal the original surfaces. Both buildings have recent corrugated galvanised steel roof cladding with skylights, to the gabled roofs. Both buildings have also had varying levels of intervention and removal of fabric, as part of the residential conversion works.

No. 22 Abinger Street includes the area between the two historic malt buildings, being the forecourt for the refurbished silos; the forecourt includes a new general entry gate for the complex. The 1937 silos are a set of four linked concrete silos, which have been significantly adapted to residential use, including windows punched into the silo walls. Alterations include a penthouse level to the top, and on the north side of the silos an angled glass, pre-rusted steel and concrete block with porthole windows, and 'ship's prow' balconies.

No. 45 Lyndhurst Street, which dates from the first half of the twentieth century, is a large two-three storey plain face brick building, with an upper level added or refurbished at a later stage, and with modified or new openings. It has a long east-west rectilinear footprint, and as with the earlier malt buildings, has had intervention and removal of fabric, as part of the residential conversion works.

### Comparative Analysis

The subject property in Abinger and Lyndhurst streets, Richmond, as a former maltings complex, has comparative examples elsewhere in the City of Yarra. These include the more substantial and intact Barrett Burston Richmond Maltings site, in Gough Street, Cremorne, which has a broader mix of malting buildings and silos, the earliest of which also date back to the 1880s.[xx] Others include the former James Hood & Co malting in Islington Street, Collingwood (1878), which is currently undergoing a redevelopment and conversion program, as per the subject property; and the Barrett Burston Gibdon Street maltings in Burnley (1892).

In terms of conversions, the adaptation of silos to apartments gained publicity with *La Pedrera* ('the quarry', c 1972-5) in Barcelona, where Ricardo Bofill and Taller d'Arquitectura converted a group of cement-storage silos to circular-plan apartments, lit by small windows and concrete balconies inserted into the sides of each silo.[xxi] Other components of that site were also retained. This project gained publicity in Australia through its coverage in *Architectural Design*, and through Bofill's increasing international prominence. For maltings conversions, a celebrated example was that of Pebble Mill in Britain, where television studios were created.[xxii]

The Nonda Katsalidis designed conversion of this property, including the adaptation of the silos, followed his already renowned city buildings at 170 La Trobe Street (1991) and 300 La Trobe Street (the Argus Centre, 1991); and the Melbourne Apartments in Franklin Street (1994).[xxiii] The maltings development is also among his best-known projects, not least in part due to the prominence of the development in the inner city context, and the pioneering approach to the silos. The use of pre-rusted steel was also innovative, and reappeared on his later Asian Studies Centre at the University of Melbourne (2001),[xxiv] and his apartment conversion of the former Russell Street Telephone Exchange in the Melbourne CBD (2002). The 'ships' prow' fronts also returned in Katsalidis Republic Tower, at the corner of La Trobe and Queen streets (1997-2000).[xxv] Philip Goad has described the Richmond building as 'totemic', and 'a brutish totemic tower of inner-city living', adorned by a 'crown of thorns' upper eave.[xxvi]

### Assessment Against Criteria

*Amended Heritage Victoria Criteria - Criteria adopted by the Heritage Council on 7 August 2008 pursuant to Sections 8(1)(c) and 8(2) of the Heritage Act 1995.*

*Criterion A - Importance to the course, or pattern, of the City of Yarra's cultural history.*

The former maltings at 22-28 Abinger Street and 37-45 Lyndhurst Street, Richmond, is of local historical significance. The maltings was established in 1880 by brewers, Findlay and Sons, then owners of the nearby (in Abinger Street) Southern Brewery which was one of the largest in Melbourne. The first malt buildings on the property were designed by architect John Flanagan, who was responsible for a number of industrial buildings in the inner suburbs in the 1870s and 1880s. Brewing and malting were important local industries, and Richmond was home to a number of malting works. The maltings also continued to develop in the first half of the twentieth century, including construction of the 1930s silos, and through expansion to the south and south-east of the original development. Noted maltsters Barrett and Burston took over the property in 1913, and continued to operate the malt works into the 1970s. The property is also significant as one of the first such former industrial complexes to be converted, in the mid-1990s, to residential use. Architect Nonda Katsalidis was lauded for his innovative approach to the conversion and adaptation of the silos.

*Criterion B - Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the City of Yarra's cultural history.*

N/A

*Criterion C - Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the City of Yarra's cultural history.*

N/A

*Criterion D - Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.*

N/A

*Criterion E - Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.*

The former maltings at 22-28 Abinger Street and 37-45 Lyndhurst Street, Richmond, is of local aesthetic/architectural significance. The property incorporates a mix of substantial historic former maltings buildings and concrete silos, dating from the 1880s through to the mid-twentieth century, which have variously been adapted to residential use. While the adaptations have incorporated modern fabric and elements, the historic maltings buildings are still discernible throughout the site, and retain a strong presence, and industrial heritage character, to Abinger and Lyndhurst streets. The conversion works of the mid-1990s are also of significance. The redevelopment, by architect Nonda Katsalidis, followed several earlier celebrated projects in Melbourne, and became one of his most lauded and best known developments. The approach to the silos conversion, including the 'ships' prow' fronts and the use of pre-rusted steel, was particularly eye-catching.

*Criterion F - Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.*

N/A

*Criterion G - Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.*

N/A

*Criterion H - Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in City of Yarra's history.*

N/A

## Statement of Significance

### *What is significant?*

The substantial property at 22-28 Abinger Street and 37-45 Lyndhurst Street, Richmond, incorporates a mix of former maltings buildings and concrete silos which have been adapted to residential use. The buildings comprise two malt buildings with gable ends to Abinger Street (1880-late nineteenth century); four linked reinforced concrete silos (1930s); a large rectilinear brick building of two-three levels which faces Lyndhurst Street at the south of the site (pre-1945); a modern five-storey block with a gabled roof located at the south end of the 1880 malt building; forecourt to the north side of the silos; and a yard concealed behind an older brick wall to Lyndhurst Street. The two former malt houses fronting Abinger Street have gable ends with brick cornices, bluestone footings and brick walling in English bond, with segmentally arched windows. Both buildings have been subjected to varying levels of intervention and removal of fabric, as part of their residential conversion. The 1937 silos are a set of four linked concrete silos, which have had windows punched into the silo walls and other alterations including the addition of the 'ship's prow' frontage. The large two-three storey plain face brick building on the south of the property has a long east-west rectilinear footprint; as with the earlier malt buildings, it has had intervention and removal of fabric as part of the residential conversion works.

### *How is it significant?*

The former maltings at 22-28 Abinger Street and 37-45 Lyndhurst Street, Richmond, is of local historical and aesthetic/architectural significance.

*Why is it significant?*

The former maltings is of local historical significance. The maltings was established in 1880 by brewers, Findlay and Sons, then owners of the nearby (in Abinger Street) Southern Brewery which was one of the largest in Melbourne. The first malt buildings on the property were designed by architect John Flanagan, who was responsible for other industrial buildings in the inner suburbs in the 1870s and 1880s. Brewing and malting were important local industries, and Richmond was home to a number of malting works. Development in the first half of the twentieth century included construction of the 1930s silos, and other expansion to the south and south-east of the original development. Noted maltsters Barrett and Burston took over the property in 1913, and continued to operate the malt works into the 1970s. The property is also significant as one of the first large-scale former industrial complexes in Melbourne to be converted, in the mid-1990s, to residential use. The former maltings is additionally of local aesthetic/architectural significance. The property incorporates a mix of substantial historic former maltings buildings and concrete silos, dating from the 1880s through to the mid-twentieth century. While the adaptations to residential use have incorporated modern fabric and elements, the historic maltings buildings are still discernible throughout the site, and retain a strong presence, and industrial heritage character, to Abinger and Lyndhurst streets. Nonda Katsalidis' conversion works of the mid-1990s are also architecturally significant. The redevelopment followed several earlier celebrated Katsalidis projects in Melbourne, and became one of his most lauded and best known developments. The approach to the silos conversion, including the 'ships' prow' fronts and the use of pre-rusted steel, was particularly eye-catching.

[i] Fitzroy Urban Conservation Study Review 1992, Thematic History, p 4.1.

[ii] O'Connor, John et al, Richmond Conservation Study, Volume 1, 1985, p. 11.

[iii] *Map of Melbourne and its suburbs*, 1855, Lands Department map, surveyed by James Kearney.

[iv] O'Connor, John et al, Richmond Conservation Study, Volume 1, 1985, p. 11.

[v] *Copping it Sweet: Shared Memories of Richmond*, City of Richmond and Carringbush Regional Library, 1988, p. 5.

[vi] O'Connor, John et al, Richmond Conservation Study, Volume 1, 1985, p. 13.

[vii] *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, 30 June 1880, p. 4.

[viii] *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, 30 June 1880, p. 4.

[ix] Entries for architect John Flanagan, Miles Lewis, *Australian Architectural Index*, <http://www.mileslewis.net/australian-architectural.html>, accessed 11 July 2012.

[x] Entries for architect John Flanagan, Miles Lewis, *Australian Architectural Index*, <http://www.mileslewis.net/australian-architectural.html>, accessed 11 July 2012.

[xi] *Sands and McDougall Melbourne and suburban directory*, 1880-1910, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 January 1913, p. 11.

[xii] *Sands and McDougall Melbourne and suburban directory*, 1900, 1920, 1925.

[xiii] Lovell Chen, *Richmond Maltings Gough Street Richmond, Conservation Management Plan*, 2005, p. 9.

[xiv] Lovell Chen, *Richmond Maltings Gough Street Richmond, Conservation Management Plan*, 2005, pp. 24-29.

[xv] Lovell Chen, *Richmond Maltings Gough Street Richmond, Conservation Management Plan*, 2005, p. 10.

[xvi] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 January 1913, p. 11.

[xvii] H2050 Richmond Maltings, Victorian Heritage Database, <http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au>

[xviii] Philip Goad and others, *Melbourne Architecture*, Watermark, Sydney, 1999 (First edition) and 2009 (3rd edition), pp. 231.

[xix] Lovell Chen, *Richmond Maltings Gough Street Richmond, Conservation Management Plan*, 2005, p. 17.

[xx] Victorian Heritage Register citation for Richmond Maltings, VHR 2050.

[xxi] 'Chronology 1971-1975' at [www.ricardobofill.com/en/7360Architecture/Ricardo-Bofill-Taller-Architectura-in-Barcelona-htm](http://www.ricardobofill.com/en/7360Architecture/Ricardo-Bofill-Taller-Architectura-in-Barcelona-htm), accessed 18 July 2012.

[xxii] <http://billdargue.jimdo.com/placenames-gazetteer-a-to-y/places-p/pebble-mill> accessed 18 July, 2012.

[xxiii] Philip Goad and others, *Melbourne Architecture*, Watermark, Sydney, 1999 (First edition) and 2009 (3rd edition), pp. 222, 226.

[xxiv] Philip Goad and George Tibbits, *Architecture on Campus: A Guide to the University of Melbourne and Its Colleges*, University Press, Melbourne, 2003, pp. 104, 117.

[xxv] Goad, 3rd edition only, p. 242.

[xxvi] *Melbourne Architecture*, p. 231; Philip Goad and George Tibbits, p. 117.

Hermes Number 194515

Property Number

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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.*

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