
502 ALBERT STREET EAST MELBOURNE

Location

502 ALBERT STREET, EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7822-2394

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 10, 2020

The Collingwood Sawmill and Timber yard site is considered to be of local significance for its evidence of early industry now absent from the Melbourne CBD and inner city and for evidence nineteenth century industrial processes. The site also represents the remains of a business that spanned Victoria's gold rush years and continued to operate through to the end of the twentieth century. It appears to have been a large and successful business complex.

The site may also be considered to hold some significance for its association with the operations of the Salvation Army printing works (which was part of a larger complex of Salvation Army holdings), but does not appear to have acted as a significant centre of worship, training or organisation.

Interpretation
of Site

The brief land use history presented above indicates that the post-contact history of the 502 Albert Street study area can be divided into three broad categories:

- Phase 1: The Collingwood Saw Mill and Timber Yards (1854-1900). This sawmilling and timber yard complex appears to have begun on the study area, and grown to take in properties to the north with Victoria Parade frontages. The earliest structure present in the study area during this phase of use is a brick or stone building located on the western side of the property and depicted on the Bibbs plan of the mid to late 1850s as the only structure then present on the property. By the early 1860s, the study area had been completely built over. The majority of the structures present on the property at that time appear to have consisted of large wooden sheds that held stores of timber but other, more substantial structures may have existed towards the northern end of the study area. Structures present within the larger sawmill complex (which continued to the north of the 502 Albert Street property) consisted of workshops, sheds, an engine house, stables and offices – the exact location of many of these buildings is unknown.
- Phase 2: The Salvation Army Printing Works (1901-c.1981). This phase of the history of the site involved the demolition of all or most of the sawmill era structures and the construction of the three-storey red-brick building that currently occupies the majority of the 502 Albert Street property. The separate two-storey brick building that occupies a portion of the northern part of the site also probably dates to this time, but this is at present unconfirmed. Photographs indicate that there has been some modification to the property through the twentieth century, namely the demolition of a small single-storey structure that was once attached to the northern side of the printing works building, and the removal of brick or stone walls from the yard at the rear of the property.
- Phase 3: Modern use as office/business space (c.1981-present). During the phase the three-storey red-brick Salvation Army-built building remained in place, as did the separate two-storey brick building to its north. While this phase likely involved internal modifications to the buildings necessitated by changes in use, modernization, and the installation of services, it does not appear that this involved any major structural changes to the property. Currently, the archaeological potential of the site is unknown/unassessed. The Salvation Army-associated buildings remains on the site and the areas to the rear (north) of these buildings is paved. The results of recent geotechnical testing were ambivalent – three boreholes excavated in the northern paved area each suggested that natural clay sits under 35-40cm of modern fill and that original natural ground surface (A-horizon soils) has been removed. If this is that case, then it is possible that shallower occupation deposits have been removed, but deeper footings, pits and deposits may still exist. Note that the southern part of the property has not been subject to geotech testing yet and may not have been cut down. Note also that geotechnical testing provides a very limited view of the condition of subsurface archaeology.

Hermes
Number 206953

Property
Number

History

The first rate book entry that can confidently be identified as pertaining to the study area dates to 1855, when a 'C J Smith' (in later years listed as C. and J. Smith) were owners and occupiers of the property, which was listed as containing 'timber yard, saw mill and sheds'. The Bibbs plan of Melbourne, which is generally believed to date from somewhere in the mid to late 1850s, and so dates from roughly around this time, indicates that a brick or stone building, measuring approximately 16m x 6m, occupied part of the western side of the property. Also shown on this plan, are fencelines indicating that a right of way that was to become present-day Evelyn Place had, by then, been formed, meaning that the building present on the property had direct access to a laneway to its west. C. and J. Smith-owned and operated a timber yard and sawmill on the study area property until the 1880s. Rate book entries, photographs and drawings provide an indication of the types and layout of structures present on the property. Examples of rate book descriptions are listed below:

- 1855 – 'timber yards and sawmills'
- 1858 – 'timber yards, steam saw mill with 2 site [not legible] Turning lathe and plane machine, 2 large sheds over floored and 3 rooms over gateway with offices and [tram/train?] roads'
- 1866 – 'yard and sawmills, 57x264 feet'
- 1870 –

'Steam sawmills, offices and workshops, brick and iron' • 1875 – 'Timber yard, workshop and machinery, 57x260 feet' • 1880 – 'Timber yard, office and [illegible], 51x230 feet' Dimensions provided in the rate book entries for some years confirm that by the mid 1860s, the timber yard stretched from Albert Street across to Victoria Parade, taking in the property to the north. Certainly the De Gruchy and Leigh drawing of Melbourne in 1866 indicates that by then the sheds of the timber yard and sawmill extended from Albert Street through to Victoria Parade, with the timber yard premises widening to the north on the Victoria Parade side. A major fire broke out on the site in 1884, damaging the engine house, carpenter's shop and turner's shop. The 1885 description of the property recorded in the rate books noted the presence of a timber yard, machinery, brick shed, and an office of two rooms on a property measuring 57 x 330 feet. In July 1900 the title to the property was transferred from William Turnbull to Herbert Booth and William Pearl, officers of the Salvation Army. Early in the following year the Salvation Army notified the City of Melbourne of its intention to construct a printing works and store on the Albert Street property. In November 1900 the Salvation Army notified the City of their intention to build a 'training home' on the northern portion of the former sawmill site which fronted Victoria Parade (Australian Architectural Index online), making the former sawmilling site into a large Salvation Army complex. Directory information suggests that the Salvation Army maintained ownership of the property and continued to operate it as a printing works through the mid twentieth century. Title records indicate that the property was sold by the Salvation Army in the early 1980s (vol 2883 fol 409). Since then it appears to have been used primarily as office space.

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/>