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# FORMER SACHS BROTHERS COACH FACTORY

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## Location

712-764 ELIZABETH STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

## Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7822-2436

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 22, 2024

### What is significant?

The Former Sachs Brothers' Coach Factory comprises the location of a former coach factory, which was established in 1859 and operated until 1947 under various phases of ownership. Historical documents, plans and aerial photographs indicate that the site encompassed several architectural components, including a main wheelwright's workshop, forges, stables and a water closet.

### How is it significant?

The Former Sachs Brothers' Coach Factory is of local historical, scientific and archaeological significance.

### Why is it significant?

The site is of historical significance due to it representing an early industrial site in the northern end of the settlement of Melbourne. The establishment of the Coach Factory in 1859 corresponds with the opening of the Melbourne Hay Market in the late 1850s, making it a prime example of the market-adjacent industries which came to characterise the inner northern suburbs of Melbourne in the mid to late 19th century.

The site is of scientific significance due to its potential to provide insight into industrial technological developments between the mid 19th and mid 20th centuries. As the site functioned as a Coach Factory/workshop for an 88-year period between 1859 and 1947, any architectural features or archaeological deposits are likely to shed light on changes in blacksmithing and wheelwright techniques and technology over this timeframe.

The site is of archaeological significance due to the likelihood of archaeological deposits remaining at the site. The probability of archaeological deposits ranges from 'low' to 'high' across the site (Figure 26), being lowest towards the deepest sections of the 1980s cut and 'moderate' in sections where the modern ground surface is level with the adjacent street level or where it follows the natural hillslope. The location of the water closet on the 1896 MMBW map has been marked as 'high', due to the potential of cesspit deposits being located in this area. Any archaeological deposits or features are anticipated to shed light on coachmaking activity undertaken onsite between the mid 19th century to mid 20th century, as well as potentially personal effects and recreational items associated with the workers employed at this site throughout this period.

Interpretation of Site

Mid to late 19th century land use of the site was industrial, with the earliest known European occupation of the site represented by the relocation of the Sachs Brothers' Coach Factory to this lot in February 1859. John Gottlieb Sachs managed this factory until his death in 1883. The primary activities likely undertaken within the site during its ownership by the Sachs Brothers (and later only J.G. Sachs) were various wheelwright and blacksmithing activities associated with the manufacture and repair of horse-drawn wagons and carriages. Additionally, the lot may have also originally doubled as a livery stable due to the provision of "numerous" stables upon its opening. The site is depicted in 1863 as featuring a single rectangular building in its north-western corner, which matches a description of the site layout in a subsequent 1888 auction advertisement. Late 19th to mid 20th century land use of the site remained purely industrial, with management of the coach factory taken up by William Schuster and Charles Glaser (1886-1898) and subsequently W. Schuster & Co. (1899-1947). During this time, it is likely that the main activities undertaken onsite were the manufacture and maintenance of coaches and wagons. Several buildings are depicted in an 1896 plan of the site, with a moderate-sized, L-shaped building at the eastern end of the site being subsequently demolished between 1931 and 1945. Mid-20th century land use of the site was industrial, with the site being acquired in 1947 by Stephen King Pty Ltd wine and distillery company and used as a storage lot until at least 1956. Mid to late 20th century land use was commercial, with all buildings within the site being demolished between 1956 and 1969 to make way for a ground level carpark. This carpark was in turn replaced between 1975 and 1985 to make way for a car showroom. Late 20th to early 21st century land use was primarily commercial. A car dealership and showroom were constructed between 1975 and 1985, with the construction of this building resulting in a cut into the underlying deposits within the south-eastern section of the site. Since 2018, the site has again served an industrial purpose, with the car showroom having been dismantled to make way for a laydown area and parking lot for several surrounding construction projects. The 2018 demolition of the car showroom does not appear to have involved much ground disturbance, with the footprint of the former showroom and an associated vehicle access road still being clearly visible.

Other Names Schuster & Glaser, W. Schuster & Co., Stephen King Pty Ltd,

Hermes Number 212382

Property Number

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## History

SiteCard data copied on 22/08/2024: The area to the south of Grattan Street and west of the Carlton Gardens was surveyed by Robert Hoddle in 1852 (Chambers & Mayne 2004: 15). An undated subdivision plan (Figure 13) reveals the majority of the site extent corresponds with lot 5 selected by A.C. Allen on 23 November 1858, suggesting either that this lot was selected relatively later, or that it was further subdivided and resold several years after the original land selection. The establishment of the Melbourne Hay Market in the late 1850s encouraged many associated industries and amenities to develop in the surrounding suburbs, including livery stables, carriage makers and repairmen, as well as accommodation for carriage drivers (Meredith Gould Architects 2011: 14; Nigel Morris and Associates 1984: 23). In February 1859, the Sachs Brothers, John Gottlieb

Sachs and John Fried Sachs, relocated their successful Richmond wheelwright and blacksmith business to a new location at the northern end of Elizabeth Street, directly opposite the Hay Market weighbridge (The Argus 1859: 2). The 1859 rate book lists the business as comprising a “large wood wheelwright’s shop, 2 forges and a shoeing shed” (PROV 1859: VPRS 5703/P0000). The opening advertisement for the new workshop also specified that they had their new workshop fitted with numerous stables (The Argus 1859: 2), indicating that the business may have doubled as a livery stable (The Argus 1859: 2). On 26 April 1860, a spring-cart manufactured by the Sachs brothers valued at £30 was stolen from the workshop by career criminals Joseph Oliver and William Norman, with the two offenders being sentenced to a year’s hard labour for their crime (The Argus 1860: 6). On 1 May 1862, the partnership between Sachs Brothers was dissolved by mutual consent, with only John Gottlieb Sachs maintaining ownership of the business (The Argus 1862: 8). The following year, J. G. Sachs placed a job advertisement for a “first-class wheelwright” with prior experience manufacturing wagons (The Argus 1863: 1). J.G. Sachs’ Coach Factory is first depicted in an 1864 map by Commander H.L Cox, revealing a rectangular building at the north-western end of the site (Figure 14). The 1875 Sands & McDougall’s street directory lists the site as being occupied by a wheelwright and blacksmith operated by John G. Sachs (Sands & McDougall 1875: 113). J. G. Sachs died on 20 February 1883, having moved from Carlton to Ascot Vale in the final years of his life (The Argus 1883: 6). At the time of his death, J.G Sachs’ wheelwright shop was described as comprising two sheds made from wood and iron, with a brick storefront facing the Hay Market (PROV 1883: VPRS 28/P0002). Following the death of J.G. Sachs, operation of the coach factory was taken up by William Schuster and Charles Glaser, who marketed their business as ‘Schuster & Glaser’ (The Argus 1888: 2). The earliest reference to the coach factory under the ownership of Schuster & Glaser is found in an October 1886 job advertisement, which calls for a blacksmith with experience in dray and lorry work (The Age 1886: 7). Unusually, the coach factory was subject to a public auction by the executors of J.G. Sachs’s estate after Schuster and Glaser had already managed the site for several years, with Schuster and Glaser being specifically mentioned in the auction advertisement (The Argus 1888: 2). At the time of the sale, the workshop and smithy is noted as being at the rear end of the property, on Haymarket Street (The Argus 1888: 5). This description is consistent with the location of the workshop in a subsequent 1896 plan (Figure 15). Schuster and Glaser appear to have themselves purchased the lot during the 1888 auction for “a very high price” (The Argus 1892: 5). As a result, the duo were forced into insolvency four years later due to their inability to pay off the interest rates on the mortgage and a “dulness of trade” (The Argus 1892: 5). At the time of their insolvency, Schuster & Glaser was valued at £3,199 7s 5d, with the business partners owing a total of £6,207 0s 10d (The Argus 1892: 5). Schuster and Glaser were released from their insolvency in March 1893, having paid back their creditors 19 shillings for every pound owed (The Argus 1893: 7). The Coach Factory at the time of its ownership by Schuster & Glaser is depicted in an 1896 Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) plan (Figure 15). An elongated, staggered building running along the north-eastern edge of the site is labelled as the main factory building and may represent the same rectangular building as depicted in the 1864 map. An unmarked L-shaped building is also present at the western end of the site, while the southern side of the site is lined by verandas and a water closet. After their release from insolvency, the business continued to operate under the name ‘Schuster & Glaser’ until at least October 1898, when the last newspaper advertisement featuring this name was placed (The Age 1898: 2). Afterwards, the business was rebranded as ‘Schuster & Co.’ (The Age 1899: 6), likely indicating the departure of Charles Glaser from the partnership. The coach factory at 36-42 Sydney Road, Carlton, was subsequently listed as the W. Schuster & Co. wheelwrights in the 1905 and 1915 Sands and McDougall’s directories (Sands & McDougall 1905: 205; 1915: 203). W. Schuster & Co. operated from same location in 1935 and 1945, with the address now listed as 758-64 Elizabeth Street (Sands & McDougall 1935: 16; 1945: 19). The W. Schuster and Co. coach factory is depicted in aerial images taken in 1931 (Figure 16) and 1945 (Figure 17). The layout of the site in 1931 appears similar to that of the 1896 plan, with the north-western rectangular building and eastern L-shaped building both being visible. The site layout also remains largely consistent in the 1945 photograph to the 1896 plan, albeit with the removal of the eastern L-shaped building. W. Schuster and Co. sold the coach factory in 1947, with a public auction being held at the premises on December 15 1947 (The Age 1947: 14). The lot encompassing the coach factory was likely purchased at this auction by the Stephen King Pty Ltd wine and distillery company, who had voiced their desire to purchase the site the previous year in order to install manufacturing and bottling equipment (The Herald 1946: 12). The acquisition of the lot by Stephen King Pty Ltd is supported by advertisements for “Jubilee Whiskey” and “Lanoma Dry Gin” lining the Elizabeth Street facade in a subsequent 1954 Airspy aerial photograph (Figure 18) and a 1956-1965 ground-level photograph (Figure 19), as Lanoma Gin was a product distilled by Stephen King Pty Ltd in the 1950s (Webb’s 2024). The 1954 aerial photograph is also notable in that the buildings appear largely unchanged from 1945, despite the change in land use. The acquisition of the site by Stephen King Pty Ltd is confirmed by its listing in the 1955 Sands and McDougall directory, wherein it is identified as a storage lot for the company (Sands & McDougall 1955: 19). The site is subsequently depicted as a ground-level parking lot in aerial photographs taken in 1969 (Figure 20) and 1975 (Figure 21). As such, it can be demonstrated that the remaining historically significant buildings were demolished between 1956 and 1969. A car showroom is depicted as covering most of the southern half of the

site in a subsequent 1985 aerial photograph (Figure 22), demonstrating that the construction of this building and its associated cut was made between 1975 and 1985. The car showroom is depicted from the Elizabeth Street in a February 2009 Google Street View image (Figure 23) revealing that Haymarket Walk and the adjacent access road appearing as they did during the 2024 site inspection. As such, is likely that Haymarket Walk and adjacent vehicle access road were also established at the same time as the construction of the car showroom. The site is depicted shortly before the demolition of the car showroom and adjacent buildings in a February 2018 satellite image (Figure 24), revealing the same structures occupying the site as in 1985. Finally, the layout of the site following the late 2018 demolition works is depicted in a February 2024 satellite image, with the footprint of the former car showroom still being clearly visible (Figure 25).

*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/>*