
PORTER PREFABRICATED IRON STORE ORIGINALLY IN GEELONG



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plan.JPG

Location

SOVEREIGN HILL, BRADSHAW STREET GOLDEN POINT, BALLARAT CITY

Municipality

BALLARAT CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2248

VHR Registration

July 8, 2010

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - July 29, 1999

What is significant?

The Porter prefabricated iron store was manufactured by John Henderson Porter of Birmingham. It was erected in 1854, complete with bluestone foundations and a cellar, at 71 Little Malop Street, in the central part of Geelong, for William Roope, a local merchant. Porter was the principal portable iron building manufacturer of the mid nineteenth century in Britain, and was an innovator in the manufacture of corrugated iron-clad buildings, including stores, schools and industrial buildings. The various manufacturers used different systems of prefabrication. Porter's buildings were supported by a cast and wrought iron frame and clad with corrugated iron. The cast iron wall stanchions had a characteristic cruciform cross-section, they could be bolted down at the base and also provided for the fixing of horizontal girts at three heights in the wall. They were stamped with the manufacturer's name: 'J H PORTER BIRMINGHAM'. The Little Malop Street site was later owned by the Cheetham Salt Works, who by 1970 needed the land for new offices, and donated the iron building to the Geelong Historical Society. It was dismantled and put into storage in 1971, with the hope that it would form part of a proposed museum, but this did not eventuate, and it was transferred to Sovereign Hill in Ballarat in 1984, where (in 2010) it is still stored. A detailed measured drawing and photographic record was undertaken prior to dismantling to facilitate future reconstruction.

The Porter store formerly at 71 Little Malop Street, Geelong, now dismantled, was a prefabricated corrugated iron-clad rectangular plan shed with a segmental arched roof. When erected it measured 21.0 x 9.1 metre (69 x 30 ft), was 4.6 metre (14 ft 9 ins) high to the top of the roof and had a wall height of 2.7 metre (9 ft). The wall and roof sheets were formed from 1.5 mm (1/16 in) galvanized corrugated iron with a 127 mm (5 in) pitch, with the corrugations running vertically. The load from the roof was transferred to the foundations via wrought iron top wall plates then to cast iron wall stanchions. The maker's name, 'J H PORTER BIRMINGHAM', can be seen on the wall stanchions. The corner and door stanchions are heavy cast iron angle sections. The windows were unglazed with inward opening corrugated iron casement shutters. Above the doors in each end wall were circular cast iron vents. Three conical skylights 1.5 m (5 ft) in diameter were located on the crown of the roof. On at least one of the wall girts is stamped the name 'Eagle', probably the name of the foundry where the members were made.

How is it significant?

The Porter prefabricated iron building formerly at 71 Little Malop Street in Geelong is of historical and technical significance to the state of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Porter prefabricated iron store is historically significant as a now rare example of the many prefabricated iron buildings which were imported into Victoria during the Victorian gold rushes. It is a reflection of the economic and social conditions in the early 1850s, when there was a great increase in population and a rush of labour to the gold fields, and both labour and building materials were scarce. It is an early example of the use of a building material, galvanised corrugated iron, which was to become closely linked with Australian building, especially for utilitarian buildings.

The Porter prefabricated iron store is technically significant as a now rare example of the early use of galvanised corrugated iron for the manufacture of prefabricated buildings, and of the prefabrication system of the major English manufacturer J H Porter. Most of the early manufacturers of corrugated iron buildings were British, and J H Porter was the principal portable iron building manufacturer of the mid 19th century in Britain. The structure is of critical importance in the history of technology in the nineteenth century. It is one of only two known surviving examples in the world of a prefabricated iron building manufactured by J H Porter (the other standing in the Yarra Municipal Depot at North Fitzroy, H2243).

Permit Exemptions

General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must [notify](#) the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

Specific Exemptions:

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan endorsed by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where

applicable. Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works may submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

Construction dates	1854,
Architect/Designer	Porter, John Henderson,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered object,
Other Names	FORMERLY AT 71 LITTLE MALOP STREET GEELONG, IRON STORE, PORTERS PREFABRICATED BUILDING, PORTER IRON STORE, PORTER'S PREFABRICATED BUILDING, PREFAB BUILDING,
Hermes Number	4439
Property Number	

History

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

In the early 1850s prefabricated buildings were imported into Victoria from various parts of the world: from Hobart, Sydney, New Zealand, London, Bristol, Gloucester, Liverpool, Leith, Glasgow, Jersey, Hamburg, Newhaven and Singapore.

South-eastern Australia has more surviving specimens of mid-nineteenth century prefabricated buildings than any other area of the world. Most of the prefabricated buildings brought to Australia were of wood, but portable corrugated iron buildings were also fairly numerous. Prefabricated iron buildings were manufactured in England from 1848. John Henderson Porter had a long history of manufacturing iron products, and was the first man to hold himself out on any scale as a prefabricator of corrugated iron buildings, which included warehouses, stores and schools (Lewis, 'The Diagnosis of Prefabricated Buildings', *Australian Historical Archaeology*, 3, 1985, p 17.1).

Iron buildings imported to Victoria ranged from tiny one-room corrugated-iron cottages with earth floors to generous villas and public buildings of plate iron, like Tintern, Toorak, by W. & P. McLellan of Glasgow, and the churches and other structures of C.D. Young, also of Glasgow. Corrugated-iron buildings, which at first were not necessarily galvanised, came also from C.D. Young, but more commonly from Samuel Hemming's giant factory at Bedminster, Bristol (houses, churches and shops), from E.T. Bellhouse of Manchester, whose patent cast-iron stanchions were shaped to fit the corrugations (houses, warehouses and G.S. Coppin's Olympic Theatre), from Francis Morton of Liverpool and London (especially schools), from G.H. Porter of Birmingham (schools and industrial buildings), and from Edwin Maw of Liverpool (classically pilastered churches and warehouses). (Miles Lewis, entry for 'Prefabrication' in *The Encyclopedia of Melbourne* online at <http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM01181b.htm>)

HISTORY OF PLACE

Joseph Henderson Porter of Birmingham was one of the first exporters of iron goods to the Australian colonies, and in 1839 was advertising everything from iron chairs to pheasantries, but not buildings. In 1843 he seems to have been involved in the establishment of one of the first galvanising works in England. By 1852 he was exporting iron buildings and briefly, about 1853, he seems to have been in a partnership as Porter Brothers and Stuart, which exported buildings to Melbourne (including the one now in the Yarra Council Municipal Depot at North Fitzroy, VHR H2243). Porter seems to have concentrated on industrial buildings and signed his buildings

by casting his name into his characteristic iron stanchions. The building formerly at 71 Little Malop Street, Geelong, has the characteristic stanchions with the Porter signature, with the characteristic cruciform plan, and provided for bolting down at the base and for the fixing of horizontal girts at three heights in the wall. The Porter building in the Yarra Municipal Depot has multi-paned cast iron windows with distinctive shutters covered with flat sheet iron. At Little Malop Street shutters alone were used, with no glazing behind, and they were sheeted in corrugated iron. The openings also had segmental arched tops and circular ventilators in the gable ends. The Little Malop Street building had three distinctive skylights in the form of sixteen-sided glazed cones, with a small conical metal top which could be lifted by pulling a rope below, to provide ventilation. (Lewis, 'The Diagnosis of Prefabricated Iron Buildings', *Australian Historical Archaeology*, 3, 1985, p 63.)

The Porter building formerly at Geelong was imported and erected in the central part of Geelong in 1854 for William Roope, a merchant. Notes in the HV file 607041 by Peter Alsop note that

In the *Geelong Advertiser* of 17/5/1854 the Geelong architects Snell and Kawerau called for tenders for building bluestone foundations and a cellar for an iron store for W Roope, Lt Malope St. On 7/7/1854 Snell and Prowse called for tenders for carpentry work required at Mr Roope's new store in Lt Malop St. This latter notice seems to imply that the main structure of the building was complete at that date. Whether that was so I cannot say nor have I found any notice calling for the erection of the iron work. On 9/2/1855 the Geelong architect John Young called for tenders for the erection of a dwelling house and store in Lt Malop St for Mr Roope. A year later on 18/1/1856 another tender is called for on behalf of Mr Roope at the same site, again by John Young. There is perhaps a possibility that the two interior cast iron columns of this building date from this time. On 17/2/1856 John Young called for tenders for the construction of a cellar and offices for W Roope, Lt Malop St. . The Geelong City Council rate book for 1854/55 lists the site as No 118 Lt Malop St and describes the structures thereon as weatherboard buildings and at the rear a stone cellar and galvanised iron store. The assessed annual value was £600. The site was occupied by William Roope who is described as "commission merchant". Roope subsequently migrated to Queensland where he became a member of the Legislative Council.

In 1970 the owner of the building, Cheetham Salt Company, decided to build new engineering and administrative offices, the realization of which required the removal of the iron store. The company generously donated the building to the Geelong Historical Society which arranged its dismantling and storage in January 1971.

It was hoped that a museum would be built in Geelong of which the iron store would form a part, but this did not eventuate. The dismantled building was transferred to Sovereign Hill in Ballarat in 1984. Since then the parts have been stored outdoors, and while the cast and wrought iron elements are in reasonable condition, the corrugated iron has rusted badly.

Assessment Against Criteria

a. Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history

The Porter prefabricated iron store is a now rare example of the many prefabricated iron buildings which were imported into Victoria during the Victorian gold rushes. It is a reflection of the economic and social conditions in the early 1850s, when there was a great increase in population and a rush of labour to the goldfields, and both labour and building materials were scarce.

b. Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

The Porter prefabricated iron store is a now rare example of the early use of galvanised corrugated iron for the manufacture of prefabricated buildings, and of the prefabrication system of the major English manufacturer J H Porter. Most of the early manufacturers of corrugated iron buildings were British, and J H Porter was an early innovator of such buildings, and probably the first prefabricator. The Porter prefabricated iron store formerly at 71 Little Malop Street, Geelong, is now one of only two prefabricated iron building manufactured by J H Porter known to survive in the world.

c. Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.

d. Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or environments.

The Porter prefabricated iron store is an early example of the use of a building material, galvanised corrugated iron, which was to become closely linked with Australian building, especially for utilitarian buildings.

e. Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

f. Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

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.

h. Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

Plaque Citation

Made in Birmingham c1853 by the major manufacturer J H Porter, this is a now rare example of the many prefabricated buildings brought to Victoria during the gold rushes, and is one of only two known Porter buildings to survive.

Extent of Registration

All of the component parts of the object known as the Porter Prefabricated Iron Store, formerly at 71 Little Malop Street, Geelong, and now dismantled and stored at Sovereign Hill, Ballarat.

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/>