
Former Albion Explosives Factory



B7154 Black Powder Mill

Location

off Station Road, north bank of Kororoit Creek,, DEER PARK VIC 3023 - Property No B7154

Municipality

BRIMBANK CITY

Level of significance

National

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2029

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 4, 2007

The Black Powder Mill is of historical, social and scientific significance at the national level as the only surviving component of a gunpowder manufacturing facility on its original site in Australia. It is also of significance internationally as part of one of very few twentieth century gunpowder manufacturing plants in the world and is probably the last such building erected for production of gunpowder for military use.

The mill is of historical significance for its role in munitions production during World War Two as part of the Munitions Annexe Number 5, later Albion Explosives Factory. This was Australia's main producer of propellant and high explosives during World War Two and remained one of the three primary military explosives and propellant factories up to the 1980s.

It is of scientific significance as it demonstrates the technological and manufacturing processes required for meeting Australia's defence needs and in particular the requirement for reliable powders. The edge-runner incorporating mill demonstrates the principal process in gunpowder manufacturing, which has its origin in stone mills of the 16th century and earlier and reached its peak of technological development in the second half of the nineteenth century. The plant as reflected at Albion is little changed in principal, operation or appearance from that of the 1880s. As such it is possibly the only original plant and building in Australia which can effectively convey the key process in the of gunpowder manufacture.

The Black Powder Mill is of social significance as the last building of the more than 700 structures that made up the Albion Explosives Factory that was pivotal in munitions supply during World War Two. The building graphically demonstrates the dangers associated with working in the munitions and explosives industry in its design philosophy of controlled destruction and safety zones, which allowed operators to monitor the process remotely and to escape or find protection in the event of the almost inevitable explosions. The munitions industries in Melbourne's West became the largest single employment sector for several years. At the peak of production 1942-5 literally tens of thousands of workers were employed at the major explosives and ammunitions factories - Explosives Factory Maribyrnong (EFM), Ammunition Factory Footscray (AFF), Ordnance Factory Maribyrnong (OFM) and Albion Explosives Factory (AEF). Thousands of others worked in defence related industries in either private companies or the annexes, including the adjacent ICI site at Deer Park.

Classified: 12/11/2001

Other Names Black Powder Mill, Building number 745,

Hermes Number 65268

Property Number

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/>