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# Ordnance Factory Maribyrnong

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## Location

West's Road MARIBYRNONG, Maribyrnong City

## Municipality

MARIBYRNONG CITY

## Level of significance

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## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1098

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO72

## Heritage Listing

Vic. War Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

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The remaining RAFA and Ordnance Factory buildings are of State Historical, Architectural and Social significance as representative of the development of the Commonwealth defence forces and munitions industry in Maribyrnong at the beginning of last century.

The RAFA buildings are architecturally noteworthy for their eclectic style and monumental form which express the perceived importance of the original military establishment. (Criteria A3 A4) They demonstrate the beginnings of the Commonwealth Artillery forces and the significant place of Victoria and Maribyrnong in the development of a self sufficient defence force in Australia. (Criterion D2) The loss of the No. 1 Forge and the Gun and Carriage shop, and to a lesser extent the many other buildings, is a severe loss to the heritage of munitions industry. However the PWD (D. C.Ward) designed Administration Office demonstrates the former scale of the factory in its commensurate grandeur. (Criteria F1 & H1) Socially the factory is significant for its importance in wartime production, as a major employer in both war and peace time, and as a catalyst to other metalwork and

manufacturing industries which were located in the area. The establishment of defence industries was a critical component of the Federation of the Australian Colonies and the creation of the nation, and the therefore the consequent activities of the armed forces. (Criterion C2)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Maribyrnong - Maribyrnong Heritage Review, Jill Barnard, Graeme Butler, Francine Gilfedder & Gary Vines, 2000;
Construction dates	1923,
Other Names	Royal Australian Field Artillery depot,
Hermes Number	125601
Property Number	

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## Physical Description 1

The surviving buildings comprise the former RAFA barracks, Ordnance Factory Administrative Office, guardhouse/gatehouse, depot buildings, stables, garage sheds and other manufacturing complex and formerly incorporating several large erection and machine shops, administration buildings, stores, and ancillary buildings. All but the head office building (no 101) of the Ordnance Factory period have been demolished. Most of the RAFA era buildings have survived. They are typically solid brick in Flemish bond, with rendered trim, slate roofs, and prominent timber joinery. The later Ordnance Factory buildings are of red brick and concrete.

The RAFA barracks (Buildings 28 and 35) comprises two substantial two-storey red brick buildings. These are in an eclectic style incorporating elements of the classical, mannerist and Arts & Crafts styles. They are T-shaped in plan and sited back to back and connected by covered walkways. They are typical of the monumental style favoured by Chief Commonwealth Architect J.S. Murdoch with their classical references such as rusticated brickwork, paired Doric columns, and stucco details such as prominent frieze mouldings, cornices and raised parapets. The wrought iron railings, wide eaves with prominent brackets and large panelled doors continue the theme.

The stables area included two separate stable wings built around a central courtyard and included feed troughs and dung pit, separate buildings were provided for the saddler, and wheelwright, forage store, hay shed, forge, shoeing shed, pharmacy and sick boxes for horses.

Of particular importance to the Ordnance Factory complex were the No 1 Forge, and gun and carriage section of the No 1 machine shop both vast classically treated brick industrial buildings. These were, however demolished to make way for the new housing development.

## Physical Conditions

In fair condition, maintenance having been neglected for years, some restoration and adaption is underway.

## Integrity

Currently under redevelopment and alterations to many buildings. Some of this work is seriously effecting the building integrity.

## Physical Description 2

The group set on Wests Road retain a visual context in the otherwise redeveloped mock-heritage styled housing of the Waterford Green estate. Another separate group of buildings from the former Ordnance complex survives to the north - the Central Drawing Office and Inspection Department. (qv.)

## Historical Australian Themes

### Thematic context

**Australian Principal Theme** Providing for the common defence

**PAHT Subtheme:** Going to war

**Local Theme** Maribyrnong Ordnance Factory

## Physical Description 3

**Creation date(s):** 1923

**Heritage Significance** *state*

**Map (Melway)** 27 J9

### Boundary description

the extent of the surviving buildings on Wests Road, within the allotment created by the new Blair Street to the west.

**Local Government Area:** City of Maribyrnong

**Ownership Type** Private

## Veterans Description for Public

The Ordnance Factory Maribyrnong, on Wests Road, was established in 1923 in two converted buildings; the carriage shop built in 1925 and the tool room set up in a converted stable in the same year. The Forge Building (now demolished) was erected in 1925 as the central core of the factory. Steady expansion occurred until the Second World War, when the floor area was increased to 80,000 square metres and employment rose to 6500 people. To administer the expanded factory a new 3 storey block was constructed in the then fashionable Dutch Modern or International Style after the influential work of Dutch Architect William Dudock.

The manufacturing processes of the Ordnance Factory Maribyrnong were not as distinctive as the Explosives Factory. Apart from the scale of operations and the nature of the particular products, the forging, machining and fitting tasks were typical of many heavy metalwork industries. The factory closed in the early 1990s and most buildings have been demolished. Redevelopment is underway, and some of the surviving RAFA buildings are being converted for other uses.

*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/>*