
Albion Woollen & Worsted Mills (former) Factory

Location

512 Latrobe Terrace, NEWTOWN VIC 3220 - Property No 202440

Municipality

GREATER GEELONG CITY

Level of significance

Incl in HO area indiv sig

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO1618

HO1306

Heritage Listing

Greater Geelong City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

B Listed - Regional Significance

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The remaining building of the former Albion Woollen and Worsted Mills has historical significance as one of Geelong's major woollen mills. The venture has operated on the same site for more than a century.

The Albion Woollen Mill was one of the four key sites - with Victoria, Barwon and Union Mills - that was established in the late 1860s to mid 1870s. These mills were in constant operation on the west side of the Barwon Bridge over the last century and led to Geelong's fame as a milling and scouring locality. The Albion Mill was probably the most successful survivor of the early private company operations. It was regarded as a model mill in the late 1880s and was, from all accounts, well-planned and organised with machinery on a par with the great mills of England. It produced high quality tweeds.

Together with the (now demolished) Union Mill it was regarded as the borough's principle industry over the 1870-1900 period and was one of Australia's most significant producers of tweed by 1900. These two mills were more successful, competitive and long lived than the Barwon and Victoria Mills.

The remaining building form is an important reminder of the private ventures of both the Albion and Union Mills and represents a key site of spinning, carding and finishing (in the upper section) and scouring and dyeing (in the lower section near to the river).

The loss of the adjacent former Union Mill is unfortunate because the complex, together with the former Collins Union Mill office building, was an important reminder of the success of these industries and the reputation they earned for the Geelong region as a centre for quality textile products.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Greater Geelong - Geelong Region Historic Buildings and Objects Study, Allan Willingham, 1986; Greater Geelong - City of Newtown Urban Conservation Study, Context Pty Ltd, 1991;
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	15781
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

Occupying a prominent site in Latrobe Terrace, overlooking the Barwon River sits a long, two-storey red brick structure with stone foundations. The former Albion (West) Woollen and Worsted Mills is a functional structure which has been built in stages, possibly dating from the 1880s, with the earliest sections near to the river.

Early descriptions outline the lasting (plain) character with lighted roof structures, large wide windows and good ventilation. The mill was very successful and it is likely that it underwent many minor modifications and some rebuilding. The oldest section, near to the river, has substantial bluestone footings with sandstone sills (now incorporated in brick walling) with 'hawthorn' brickwork still visible on lower sections. The lowest level rooms show the remains of 'switch gear' electric insulators and overhead machinery for moving generator plant.

The lower section of the mill building is still true to the original structural form with substantial roof trusses supporting a saw tooth roof system. The upper section has been designed to reflect the earlier form and was probably part of the turn-of-the-century additions that are referred to in the history.

The wide windows have long since been bricked-in, but the sizes are still obvious in some sections of newer brickwork. Few external signs remain however of former entrances and accessways.

Internally, vast areas of floor space are the only signs of layout and function. Nothing remains of the extensive equipment and it is difficult to trace previous usage of space. It is known that scouring, washing, dyeing, drying and burring machinery operated in one section of the site, with milling and weaving equipment located in another area.

The building is impressive in its scale and character. The internally visible roof system is remarkably intact. Regular additions, improvements and external wall alterations have done little to diminish the quality of the structure. There are signs of current problems with roof plumbing - particularly valley gutter failure - which need some attention.

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/>