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# Marnock Geelong (Former Phoenix Wool Scouring Works)

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## Location

55 Marnock/ Rivers-dale Roads (SE cnr), NEWTOWN VIC 3220 - Property No 204346

## Municipality

GREATER GEELONG CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO1334

## Heritage Listing

Greater Geelong City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

B listed - Regional Significance

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The industrial complex contains buildings which relate to the former Phoenix Wool Scouring Works and as such has historical significance for its associations with the development of the woolen industry in Geelong. The timber building adjacent to Riversdale Road contains evidence of plant use for scouring and carbonizing activity. There is information, which suggest that the Phoenix works was the first business in Victoria to make a separate industry of this kind of work. Historical associations with Brig. General Robert Smith, its founder, are also important in the region.

The scouring and carbonizing plant date from the 1930s and 1940s and were installed in the early 1970s on the site. Changes to machinery and updating components of plant is commonplace in the local Dyson foundry, with some equipment manufactured at Leeds, England and other components fabricated on site.

Other major wool-scouring works founded at the time were the Corio Wool Scouring Works, Marnock Vale Wool Scouring Works and the Austral Wool Scouring Works. The first of these are now demolished; the second site

houses some important plant within a more modern structure, and the Austral site has little evidence of its wool-scouring history that remains. The former Phoenix Wool Scouring Works, therefore is a valuable and intact survivor of an important phase in the development of Geelong's Woolen Industry.

Historically, Geelong stands pre-eminent as a wool scouring and milling town and key river sites which established this reputation warrant attention and conservation.

## POLICY/RECCOMENDATIONS

Existing Listings: None

Recommendations: RNE LPS Place

## REFERENCES

Geelong Water and Sewerage Detail Plan No 164

Newtown Rate Book 1919-20, South Ward, No 1224.

Glady's Seaton. Model Borough, City of Newtown, 1983, p95.

Ibid and Geelong Advertiser, 15 march, 1934.

Seaton, pp 94-95

Newtown Rate Book - 1925 - No 1416.

Ibid 9135, No 1552

There is a 'Barwon Soap Works' sign on the side of the shed. In 1903 the Barwon Soap Works, founded in 1871 and owned later by JC King had officer in Fyans Street, South Geelong. Cyclopedia of Victoria, 1903, Vol II, p. 159.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Greater Geelong - City of Newtown Urban Conservation Study, Context Pty Ltd, 1991;
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	16334
Property Number	

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## Physical Description 1

### DESCRIPTION

This group of buildings is made up of some structures that date from the early wool scouring activities of the Phoenix Wool Scouring Works. The scouring works (shown above) area has continued in operation since c1919 but none of the equipment from that earlier period of operations remains. The structure itself however is original, despite some modification, and is an important feature in this period.

The plant that remains, within this section of the works, was installed in the early 1970s and dates from the late 1930s and early 1940's. Interestingly, the plant was second hand when installed and parts came from elsewhere in Victoria and New South Wales; items making up the scouring and carbonizing lines were probably between thirty and forty years old (approximately) when brought from other works.

Most of the scouring line and carbonizing line plant (in situ) i.e. troughs ('bowls') are cast iron and steel products from the local foundry:- J Dyson and Sons Pty Ltd, Geelong - with the name appearing on the side of several items.

A few items bear the name of an English works:- J. F. Rhodes and Sons, Hope Foundary, Morely Leeds.

The plant is set up in 'lines' with the original structure determining layout and trough dimensions.

Usually, plant would most effectively operate within a single straight line sequence. Some twenty different steps/actions are easily recognized on this site today.

1. Wool storage and opening.
2. Hoppers, made up on site to suit location.
3. Scourer - sweat bowl, 60 degrees Celsius; cast iron.
4. Scourer - squeeze bowl, 45 degrees Celsius; cast-iron.
5. Scourer - wash bowl, cold water, cast iron.
7. Carbonising - removal of vegetable matter using cold water and 5% sulphuric acid; stainless steel.
8. Carbonising - drier, fans, 95 degrees Celsius, vegetable matter turns black and breaks down.
9. Carbonising = Baking, drier, 110 degrees.
10. Carbonising - rollers
11. Carbonising - baker drier
12. Carbonising - crusher rollers
13. Neutralising - makes alkaline after acid bath using soda ash and detergent.
14. Neutralising - second wash using detergent.
15. Bleaching - hydrogen peroxide and formic acid.
16. Final drier.
17. 'Dinosaur' - conveyor from end of line to press.
18. Grasshopper - mechanical presses to bales.
19. Baling.
20. Storage and transport from site.

From start to finish the process takes approximately one and a half hours and approximately 60 bales of 'clean' wool are produced at present.

Adjacent to the works area is the former boiler room and chimney stack. Whilst no longer in use these two items represent key components of the former site works. A number of allied features such as acid gutter (to the river) remain to the immediate south of the works buildings.

As a complex of structures and plant the site has historical and architectural significance. Dating from the 1920s, it has obvious historical associations with early wool scouring developments in this part of Geelong.

A galvanized iron shed, bearing the name 'Barwon Soap Works', just north of the former Phoenix works site has been dated to the early 1960s (after discussion with the current owner..Peter Parker of Geelong). No evidence of any earlier soap making activity remains inside or around the shed.

This site has many visible remains of its works history but there is likely to be further evidence of earlier works and ground-based systems of drainage, scouring, etc. with further sub-surface investigation.

*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/>*