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# Melbourne Woollen Mills



HO81 (2) - Melbourne Woollen Mills, 2 Banool Avenue, Yarraville.JPG



HO81 (1) - Melbourne Woollen Mills, 2 Banool Avenue, Yarraville.JPG

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## Location

2 Banool Avenue, YARRAVILLE VIC 3013 - Property No 4007002000

## Municipality

MARIBYRNONG CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO81

## Heritage Listing

Maribyrnong City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - February 27, 2000

The Melbourne Woollen Mills/Morlynn Ceramics P/L. site is significant as a rare and substantially intact example of mid nineteenth century industrial building specifically adapted to the needs of a woollen mill. (Criterion C2)

The building is historically significant as one of the earliest woollen mills in Australia, the first woollen mill in Melbourne (Criterion A4) and for its association with the prominent mill builders and managers Edwin and Walter

Gaunt. (Criterion H1)

It is also important as an early example of recycling of an industrial building for other uses, in this case, its conversion to a pottery in 1889, and as a major manufacturer of porcelain insulators in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The building is architecturally significant for the use of ashlar bluestone masonry featuring prominent string courses and pilasters and arched openings with quoin-work of projecting, drafted-edge bluestone blocks and decorated keystones. (Criterion E1)

The building may also attain the level of potential national architectural significance as the earliest surviving example of the sawtooth roof form in Victoria and the earliest known example in Australia, with the large timber-framed saw-tooth roof of the main weaving hall surviving intact apart from the removal of the upright posts and recladding.(Criterion F1)

Australian Heritage Commission (AHC) criteria

The Australian Heritage Commission criteria consist of a set of eight criteria which cover social, aesthetic, scientific, and historic values. Each criterion has sub-criteria written specifically for cultural or natural values. The relevant criteria are:

C.2 research potential

H.1 association with important person or group

A.4 demonstrates well the course and pattern of history, important historic events

E.1 aesthetic importance to the community or cultural group

F.1 design or technological achievement .

Heritage Study/Consultant	Maribyrnong - Maribyrnong Heritage Review, Jill Barnard, Graeme Butler, Francine Gilfedder & Gary Vines, 2000;
Construction dates	1869, 1920,
Other Names	Morlynn Ceramics P/L., Yarraville Woollen Mills, Australian Porcelain Insulator Co.,
Hermes Number	28355
Property Number	

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## Physical Description 1

Most of the externally visible construction is of 1920-1940 origin but a bluestone wall with pilasters and arched openings survives parallel to and about 8 m. inside the eastern wall of the factory introducing a remarkably intact mid-nineteenth century industrial complex, hidden from view by later construction.

This first-seen wall corresponds to the east wall featured in an 1882 photo of the Melbourne Woollen Mills. Much of the central area of the factory is of 19th century origin with substantial bluestone walls forming three sides of the main production space. Another wall, also with arches, marks the former spinning hall, and a two storey brick and stone section identifies the (probably) centrally placed boiler/engine house. The major missing component is the chimney which stood on the east side, and may survive as archaeological evidence in the form of the base and flue, beneath the present concrete floor.

The painted word "porcelain" (part of a larger sign) is visible on one elevated part from a high vantage point to the north identifying the subsequent occupant. Two bottle kilns are shown on the 1900 MMBW plan but could not be identified in the factory, but again may survive as footings. A photo dated c.1882 and the 1895 MMBW plan appear to record the central core of the factory which has been enclosed in later construction.

## **Physical Conditions**

In good condition

## **Integrity**

The majority of the original woollen mill can be discerned and missing components can be inferred from internal clues (eg. breaks in construction of later additions) the significant saw tooth roof has had the uprights replaced by a steel lattice truss slung below the timber trusses, and the external cladding has been replaced.

## **Physical Description 2**

In an isolated location adjacent to the Williamstown Railway and Stony Creek on the south edge of the Yarraville residential area.

## **Historical Australian Themes**

### **Thematic context**

**Australian Principal Theme** Manufacturing and Processing

**PAHT Subtheme:** Manufacturing and Processing

**Local Theme** Industry by the River: Early

## **Physical Description 3**

**Creation date(s):** 1869 - 1871, 1920C

**Map (Melway)** 42 A10

### **Boundary description**

bounded on the west by the railway, on the south by Stony Creek, on the east by Banool Ave. and on the north by housing

## **Physical Description 4**

**Additional Report from: Maribyrnong Industrial Heritage Places, Panel Report, Amendment C31, May 2004, Gary Vines**

1.1 Yarraville Woollen Mills

HO 81 No Submission (Conservation Plan completed by owner)

This site has been dealt with in a separate amendment and so will not be considered in this panel, However, details of the review are included to demonstrate the approach of the consultants and Council.

Allom Lovell & Associates prepared a conservation assessment for the site in 2002. This concluded that the nineteenth century fabric was of historical significance, but due to the degree of alteration, was not of architectural significance, while the saw-tooth roof was of technical significance as one of the earliest surviving

examples of the roof form. In consequence of this the assessment determined that the nineteenth century components of the works were of sufficient significance to warrant inclusion on the schedule to the Heritage Overlay.

The Allom Lovell report makes some comments on the Maribyrnong Heritage Review describing "inaccuracies" relating to the age, history and intactness of the structure. Apart from the comment on the establishment of the works by the Gaunt brothers, these are viewed as differences of interpretation of the history and fabric, rather than errors of fact.

Following a further inspection of the site, after the former owners, Morlynn Insulators, had vacated the building, consideration was given to reducing the overlay. While this would be possible in the context of a redevelopment of the site, the present form of the buildings means that it is not possible to draw an overlay boundary which relates to logical divisions in buildings. The proposed limit of the overlay by Allom Lovell does not include the 1868-72 fabric on the east of the main saw-tooth roof. This area has been panelled over as part of offices, and so it is impossible at present to determine the extent of survival of the fabric in this area.

There are also areas of archaeological potential (separately included on the Heritage Inventory H7822-0688) which may reveal further information on the former structures on the site.

Reduction of the overlay to the 19th century buildings would still require a reasonable curtilage (at least 5 metres) and control over adjacent development to ensure it did not impact on the heritage values of the significant structures. Therefore, it would seem that a more appropriate approach would be to retain the overlay over the larger site in conjunction with an incorporated plan, which addresses the conservation and enhancement of the historic significance of the site. This could also guide new development and provide envelopes for new structures in and around the mill buildings.

Recommendation:

Retain the overlay as proposed. On the basis that the heritage response no amendment to the citation is necessary.

*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/>*