

---

## Cuming Smith



Ho179image1.jpg



Ho179image4.jpg



Ho179image3.jpg



Ho179image5.jpg



HO179 (2) - Cuming Smith,  
221A Whitehall Street,  
Yarraville.JPG



HO179 (3) - Cuming Smith,  
221A Whitehall Street,  
Yarraville.JPG



HO179 (1) - Cuming Smith,  
221A Whitehall Street,  
Yarraville.JPG

---

### Location

221A Whitehall Street, YARRAVILLE VIC 3013 - Property No 4098005200

### Municipality

MARIBYRNONG CITY

### Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO179

## Heritage Listing

Maribyrnong City

---

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

Statement of Significance from the Incorporated plan: *Former Cuming Smith Site, 221a Whitehall Street, Yarraville:: HO179 Incorporated Plan.*

The site is historically significant for its association with James Cuming who made his fortune from the works and for its sake played an influential role in the civic and commercial affairs of Footscray.

The administration complex is of some historical significance as a focal point for the former Cuming Smith factory complex. While not of particular architectural distinction, the laboratory, offices, electrical substation and former nitrate store are the earliest and most architecturally elaborate structures remaining from the Cuming Smith works. Located along the principle entry road into the site from Whitehall Street, they define a sense of entry and closely related to each other stylistically.

Shed 4-6 is of historical significance as one of the earliest surviving buildings associated with the Cumin Smith & Co phase of occupation of the site.

Shed 4-6 is of technological interest as an unusual example of a large, broad span timber framed store.

Statement of Significance from the Maribyrnong Heritage Review, 2001

Cuming Smith is of Regional historical and architectural significance as it was the largest and one of the first manufacturers of superphosphate fertiliser in Victoria. The works pioneered the manufacture of chemical fertiliser and introduced integrated processes in acid and chemical manufacture. (Criterion A4) The factory is one of the major industrial facilities in the Yarraville area with considerable surviving building stock from the turn of the century period.

Its Sickle Brand agricultural products (sheep dip, rabbit poison, wheat pickling, etc) were famous among Australian and overseas farmers. (Criterion D2) Substantial parts of the works dating from the period of greatest expansion and of unusual construction survive, still in the context of chemical fertiliser production. A distinctive group of building forms and highly unusual industrial landscape with the fertiliser cranes on the wharf a local landmark. (Criterion A3) James Cuming made his fortune from this works and for its sake played an influential role in the civic and commercial affairs of Footscray. (Criterion H1)

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:

A.3 richness and diversity of cultural features

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

H.1 association with important person or group

D.2 good example of type

Heritage Study/Consultant	Maribyrnong - Maribyrnong Heritage Review, Jill Barnard, Graeme Butler, Francine Gilfedder & Gary Vines, 2000;
Construction dates	1870,
Other Names	Listed as number 219 in the Maribyrnong Heritage Review, Melbourne Bone Mills, McMeikan's Bone Mills, Commonwealth Fertilisers, Pivot Fertilisers,
Hermes Number	28789
Property Number	

## Physical Description 1

Physical Description from the Incorporated plan: *Former Cuming Smith Site, 221a Whitehall Street, Yarraville:: HO179 Incorporated Plan.*

The administration complex comprises the former laboratory, office block, former electrical substation and nitrate store. The buildings were erected and modified successively from the 1910's which has to some degree diminished their significance

Former laboratory: the former laboratory is a 2 storeyed painted, rendered brick structure with a partial double bay along its south side. The existing configuration of doors and windows dates from the 1950s. The portico above the main entrance on the east elevation dates from the 1970s. The roof is gabled in form and clad with corrugated cement sheeting. A modern external stair has been added to the west elevation.

Office block: the office block is of similar design and construction to the laboratories. The extent of the 1950s addition is clearly evident form lines in the brickwork. The original internal plan has been repeatedly altered.

Electrical substation: The electrical substation is a single storeyed, gabled rendered brick structure square in plan. It is generally intact to its 1920s construction. Windows are steel framed and the roof is clad with corrugated cement sheeting.

Former Nitrate store: the former nitrate store is a concrete walled shed with a partial bluestone floor and a c.1950s corrugated sheet cement clad roof. A small brick amenities block has been added to the north elevation.

Shed 4-6 was one of series of storage shed erected in several stages in the 1910s and early 1920s as part of a major phase of development probably driven by the need to handle increasingly large quantities of materials.

Shed 4-6 is a large timber framed storage shed with a pitched roof which is externally clad with modern corrugated, galvanised steel sheeting. The frame is composed of grid of eight by thirty four undressed timber log columns, with thirty five signal span timber trusses supporting the roof sheeting.

Shed 4-6 was constructed in stages, only part of the structure dating from the 1910s. Various additions and structural bracing have been added to the building throughout the 20th century.

It is noted that this shed is in relatively poor condition and has been extensively added to and modified on the eastern side. On the western side, apart from the columns and framing it is open to the adjacent Shed 7 and is understood to be in part dependent for structural support on that shed.

Beyond these two buildings groups part of the site are thought to have archaeological significance.

## Integrity

Much of the site has been demolished including large timber framed fertiliser sheds near the river.

## **Historical Australian Themes**

### **Thematic context**

**Australian Principal Theme** Manufacturing and Processing

**PAHT Subtheme:** Manufacturing and Processing

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

*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/>*