

# FORMER BRUNSWICK GAS & COKE COMPANY RETORT HOUSE



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H02027 retort house  
brunswick nov 2002



H02027 2 retort house  
brunswick nov 2002



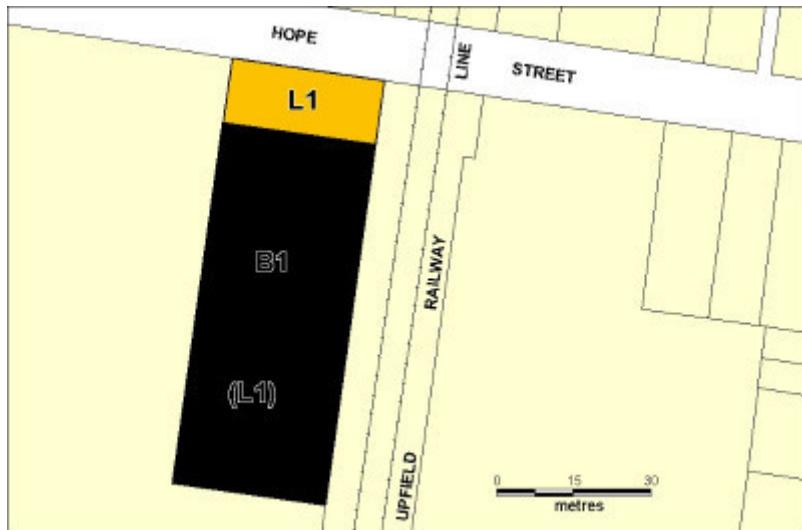
Former Brunswick Gas Works



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h02027 former brunswick gas coke company retort house plan

## Location

21 HOPE STREET AND 2-10 LUX WAY BRUNSWICK, MERRI-BEK CITY

## Municipality

MERRI-BEK CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2027

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO94

## VHR Registration

April 17, 2003

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 29, 2003

## What is significant?

The Former Brunswick Gas & Coke Company Retort House was among a full complement of gaswork structures erected on this site by engineer Stephen Hutchison for the Brunswick Gas & Coke Company in 1891. The complex made and distributed gas to the Brunswick Council for street lighting as well as to the local community for domestic consumption. At the time several gasworks operated competitively around Melbourne and plants also existed in some country towns, all with retort houses. These large buildings were central to the gas making process, containing the retorts in which coal was stoked by hand and burned to give off gas which was then purified and stored in a nearby gasometer. Little changed in their technology during the nineteenth century, and Brunswick's huge arch roofed, polychrome brick building was the last built in the metropolis before the era of gas expansion came to an end. The company survived through the 1890s and briefly became the Brunswick Gas Works before closing in 1904. The Lux Foundry purchased the site in 1906 and the retort house served as the company's workshop for making their popular Lux brand stoves and ranges until the late 1950s when the firm was taken over by the Ferrier Company. In the early 1960s the company operated as Craig & Seeley Proprietary Limited and modern offices projecting the company's new image were opened on the site by Premier Bolte in 1963. The retort house was retained in the manufactory complex and the company's Chef brand stoves became an enduring household name. The firm was still employing more than 500 workers when it closed in 2001.

## How is it significant?

The Former Brunswick Gas & Coke Company Retort House is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

## Why is it significant?

The Former Brunswick Gas & Coke Company Retort House is architecturally important as a rare building type. It is the last retort house to remain from several gas-making works built in the nineteenth century around Melbourne. While some remnant buildings survive from Melbourne's once large gas infrastructure, this is the sole retort house known to remain standing. A twentieth century example stands in Bendigo.

The Former Brunswick Gas and Coke Company Retort House is historically important for its association with the gas industry. The site has a long history of association with the industry, first as a gasworks where gas was manufactured, then as a foundry where cast iron stoves were made and more recently as a modern plant for manufacturing gas appliances. The building is representative of the boom period of Melbourne's once expansive gas industry and the competition that developed between the Metropolitan Gas Company and several suburban companies.

The retort house stands in juxtaposition with the modern Craig & Seeley offices of 1963, the two buildings providing a narrative of our changing use of gas and its associated technologies.

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

**Places of worship:** In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must notify the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

**Subdivision/consolidation:** Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or

object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

### **Specific Exemptions:**

(Classes of works or activities which may be undertaken without a permit under part 4 of the Heritage Act 1995)

#### General Conditions:

1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.
2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

#### Exemptions:

- \* Repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- \* Works required for making the buildings safe and protecting them against weather and vandalism, including temporary fencing and closing up of openings.
- \* Removal of fabric which has no impact on the retort house and associated workshop buildings.

Construction dates 1889,

Heritage Act Categories Registered place,

Other Names CHEF FACTORY,

Hermes Number 4407

Property Number

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### **Extent of Registration**

1. The building known as the Former Brunswick Gas & Coke Company Retort House shown as B1 on Diagram 2027 held by the Executive Director.
2. The land shown as L1 on Diagram 2027 held by the Executive Director.

*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/>*