

Building:	Former Crusader Plate Building	Significance:	B
Address:	651-653 Victoria Street, Abbotsford	Melway Map Ref:	2H F2
Building Type:	Factory	Construction Date:	1937
Architect:	Unknown	Builder:	Unknown



Intactness:	Condition:
G[ ] F[x] P[ ]	G[x] F[ ] P[ ]
Existing Heritage Listings:	Recommended Heritage Listings:
Victorian Heritage Register [ ]	Victorian Heritage Register [ ]
Register of the National Estate [ ]	Register of the National Estate [x]
National Trust [ ]	Heritage Overlay Controls [x]

## History

The Crusader Plate building was built adjacent to, and to a design similar to, the earlier Handley & Tilley building (1929; No. 655). In 1927, the 60 x 242 foot (18 x 72.5 metre) block of land was sold by the Trustees Tivoli Club to Crusader Plate. In the same year, the brick house on the block was demolished to be replaced by a brick factory, owned and operated by Handley's. In 1939 Handley's was in the name of John Handley. Edgar Handley operated Crusader Plate, for which a brick factory was built on the again vacant 60 x 242 feet (18 x 72.5 metre) block of land in 1939.<sup>1</sup>

Andrew Ward. *Collingwood Conservation Study*. 1995.

The Skipping Girl Vinegar sign which is mounted on this building is a reconstruction, at least in part, of a sign dating from 1936. The original sign of 'Little Audrey', Melbourne's first animated neon sign, was originally erected on the Shamrock Brewing Co. building, which was demolished in 1968. The present sign was reconstructed in 1970 following a popular campaign for its re-erection.

## Description

The Crusader Plate building, 651-653 Victoria Street, Abbotsford, is a three storey brick Moderne building to the immediate west of the Handley & Tilley building (No. 655). The building was designed in sympathy with the Moderne Handley's complex, and has walls of the same graded brickwork, with dark brown bricks at the base, then red, warm cream and light cream at the top, finished with a painted rendered parapet. The entrance, to the east of the building, has a tall, rendered vertical panel topped with three small fins, which penetrates the parapet. Rear walls are of red brick. Windows are multi-paned, in large, rectangular openings; the glazing is not original, although the configuration of the mullions of the original steel-framed windows has been partially reconstructed in aluminium.

The Skipping Girl Vinegar neon sign—depicting Little Audrey—is mounted on the roof of this building.

## Comparative Examples

Former Handley & Tilley Building, 655 Victoria Street, Abbotsford

## Significance

The former Crusader Plate building, at 651-653 Victoria Street, Abbotsford, is of local architectural significance. Whilst the adjacent Handley's building (No. 655), upon which the Crusader Plate building is styled, is a far more confident expression of the Moderne idiom, the Crusader Plate building is nonetheless an interesting and unusual Moderne composition. It is a particularly sympathetic extension to the Handley's complex. The significance of the building has been reduced by the alterations to the glazing and vehicle entrance. The Skipping Girl Vinegar sign is of local historical and social significance. The original sign was Melbourne's first animated neon sign, and the reconstruction remains a local landmark and a Melbourne cultural icon.

## Original Source

Andrew Ward. *Collingwood Conservation Study*. 1995.

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1 Rate Books 1938, 1940.