

GEELONG CITY 'C' CITATIONS

Site Name: Factory Complex

Project File No: 0953

Address: 8-10 Gravel Pits Road South Geelong 3220

Approx. Date: 1875, 1900

Integrity: Moderate

Significance Level: C (Local)

Photograph No: 07.01 & 07.02

Survey Date: March 2002



History

This site, known since the 1980s as Jackson's Tannery at 8-10 Gravel Pits Road, Geelong, is located on Profis Property Plan no.V9080F021.

In October 1875, a weatherboard fellmongery with 4 large rooms was built at this site for wool brokers, H. M. Strachan, William Murray and Charles Shannon, who had only formed a partnership a month or so earlier. The fellmongery was originally called Barwon Terrace, and then Barwon Banks. The manager of the new works was Charles Henry Smith, who was responsible for fitting out most of the original machinery. By 1878, the weatherboard buildings were partly replaced by buildings of stone and brick, the main building being a 2 storey brick and timber structure, and, over the ensuing 8 years, two more rooms and a 10-horse power steam engine were added. Carpentry was by a Mr Taylor, and the masonry was by a Mr Bond. By 1893, the property was valued at 1,015 pounds. In the mid 1890s, the fellmongery was known as the Clyde Works for Strachan, Murray and Shannon Company of London. Some galvanised iron sheds and a small 4-roomed weatherboard house for a caretaker (to watch over the tannery on days when it was not operating) were also built at this time. The caretaker, Martin Bolgar, could not have prevented a massive fire which swept through the property on 5 August, 1900, destroying most of the brick and weatherboard buildings, a steam engine, recently

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installed to make production independent of climatic conditions, and wool-scouring machinery, worth a total of 15 -20 thousand pounds. Apparently, the sweat rooms, originally used to remove wool from the hides, had been preserved. The Geelong Advertiser stated in 1900 that

"the site of the main buildings was occupied by a heat whitened chimney stack that stood along amidst a vast area of smoking debris and ruined machinery."

Charles Henry Smith took charge of the property and oversaw the rebuilding process in the ensuing years. The reconstruction was financed by insurance payouts by the North British and Australian Alliance Companies. Before Smith's death in 1908, the fellmongery was known as C. H. Smith & Sons. It operated as a proprietary company and the business employed many of the original workers. In 1920, the Barwon Ward Rate Book described the property as consisting of galvanised iron buildings, fenced land and machinery, plus a 4 roomed weatherboard dwelling, all valued at 226 pounds per annum. By 1960, the net annual value had increased to over 400 pounds. C. H. Smith & Sons owned the property until the mid 1970s, when it was renamed Jackson's Tannery.

Description

The factory complex at 8-10 Gravel Pits Road, South Geelong, is set on an irregular allotment. The front is bound by an introduced cyclone wire fence, with concrete driveways flanking a central circular garden bed of grass and trees. The front also has grassed and landscaped areas each side the main entrance.

The factory complex consists of at least six buildings, including the main building, office block, warehouse, amenities block, store and pits.

The main building represents the early structure on the site. It is characterised by a large gable roof form, together with a projecting parapeted wing and gabled building to the west, and gabled and saw-toothed roof sections to the south. The components that represent the c.1875 and c.1900 design and construction include the front (northern) gabled roof form, and side parapeted and gabled buildings to the west. These roof forms are clad in galvanised corrugated steel. The main building and west wings are also constructed of early unpainted Geelong red and blue bricks, as is the square tapered chimney stack (with a multi-corbelled top) that adorns the projecting building to the west. The main building also has an early stepped unpainted brick parapet and early segmentally arched timber framed windows and vehicular opening. The east wall of the main building has a rendered finish and early window openings (including the bluestone lintels and sills), but some of the openings have been blocked up and the remaining appear to have recent timber framed windows. Another early segmentally arched window opening is also evident on the projecting west parapeted wing, but the other windows nearby appear to have been introduced.

A landmark feature of the complex is the early round and tapering unpainted red brick chimney stack that towers above the main building. There are also introduced galvanised steel ventilation stacks and towers that project a small way above the early parapet of the main building.

The remaining buildings on the site appear to be later additions. The two storey office building is characterised by a gabled roof form clad in galvanised corrugated steel, and has horizontal timber weatherboard wall cladding and timber framed windows. The warehouse is a large gabled building clad in corrugated Colorbond, while the amenities block has a hipped roof clad in galvanised corrugated steel and pressed red brick wall construction. The store building is more recent and has a gabled roof and corrugated Colorbond wall and roof cladding.

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Statement of Cultural Significance

The factory complex at 8-10 Gravel Pits Road, South Geelong, has significance as a physical legacy of the thriving fellmongeries established on the banks of the Barwon River in the second half of the 19th century. Built originally as the Barwon Terrace fellmongery in 1875 for wool brokers H.M. Strahan, William Murray and Charles Shannon, the brick buildings were constructed in 1878 but were largely destroyed by fire in 1900 before being rebuilt. The complex was more popularly known as the Clyde Works from the late 19th century and although altered and extended, the exterior of the main building from the front largely reflects the early design.

The main building of the factory complex at 8-10 Gravel Pits Road is architecturally significant at a LOCAL level. It demonstrates original design qualities associated with the construction in 1878 and c.1900 when the complex was a thriving fellmongery. These qualities include the large gable roof form, together with the projecting parapeted wing and gabled building to the west, and the galvanised corrugated steel roof cladding. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the unpainted brick wall construction (in Geelong red and blue bricks), square tapered chimney stack (with multi-corbelled top) that adorns the projecting building to the west, stepped unpainted brick parapet to the main building at the front, segmentally arched timber framed windows and vehicular opening at the front, window openings with bluestone lintels and sills on the east side, and the segmentally arched window opening on the projecting west parapeted wing. A significant landmark feature of the complex is the round and tapering unpainted red brick chimney stack that towers above the main building.

The factory complex at 8-10 Gravel Pits Road is historically significant at a LOCAL level. It is associated with the establishment of fellmongeries and tanneries along the Barwon River in the second half of the 19th century, all of which were a critical source of Geelong's early prosperity and employment. In particular, this factory complex has associations with H.M. Strahan, William Murray and Charles Shannon, wool brokers and original owners from 1875 when they instigated the initial construction of the buildings, and from 1878 when the existing brick main buildings were built. The complex was originally named Barwon Terrace, but was more widely known as the Clyde Works from the mid 1890s and after the devastating fire in 1900 that resulted in the rebuilding of the complex. The early buildings also have associations with Charles Smith, manager, who was responsible for the fitting out of the original machinery. He took ownership of the complex and had it rebuilt before his death in 1908. The business recommenced with Smith's four sons and was known as C.H. Smith and Sons. He employed many of the men from the original company.

Overall, the factory complex at 8-10 Gravel Pits Road is of LOCAL significance.

References

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