

GREATER GEELONG OUTER AREAS HERITAGE STUDY: STAGE 2

ADMINISTRATIVE SHEET

Existing Use/Type <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: 100%;">Industrial</div>		Key Dates Original 1925		Site Address	
				No. 455	Street/Site Name Melbourne Road
Survey Date 15/05/1998	Cons Man Plan High Priority	Major Changes <small>1934, 1935, 1937, 1941, 1942. c.1960</small>		Town/Suburb North Geelong	Postcode 3215
Recorded By <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">David Rowe</div>		Precinct Name <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 15px;"></div>		Current Site Name Ford Motor Company Complex	



**Heritage Status**

Register of the National Estate  
Database No.  File No.

Victorian Heritage Register

Planning Scheme:  
C.G.G.  HO1717

Heritage Inventory (Archaeological)

National Trust Register:

Other:

**Recommended Heritage Listings**

Victorian Heritage Register  
 Victorian Heritage Inventory  
 Register of the National Estate  
 HO City of Greater Geelong

**Heritage Study Degrees of Significance**

A H C Assessment Criteria	Significance Level	
Aesthetic value	<input type="text" value="D.2, E.1"/>	<input type="text" value="National"/>
Historic value	<input type="text" value="A.4"/>	<input type="text" value="National"/>
Scientific value	<input type="text" value="F.1"/>	<input type="text" value="State"/>
Social value	<input type="text" value="G.1"/>	<input type="text" value="State"/>
<b>Overall Significance Level</b>		<input type="text" value="National"/>

**Condition of the fabric**

Excellent  
 Good  
 Fair  
 Poor  
 Ruinous  
 Unexposed

**Integrity of the site**

Excellent  
 Good  
 Fair  
 Poor  
 Partially excavated  
 Fully excavated

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# GREATER GEELONG OUTER AREAS HERITAGE STUDY: STAGE 2

TECHNICAL SHEET

Precinct Name

**Site Plan/Location Sketch (not to scale)**

ADM  
SHR  
Geel  
SHO  
Map  
OPEI  
Map

**Site Address**

No.  Street/Site Name

Town/Suburb  Postcode

Site Name

**Australian Map Grid Co-ordinates**

Map

Scale

Ownership

**Cadastral Location**

County

Parish

Allotment

Block

**Types of Sites**

- |  |                                       |   |                                     |   |                                    |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> monument              | <input type="checkbox"/> recreational | <input type="checkbox"/> residential    | <input type="checkbox"/> aviation   | <input type="checkbox"/> gate               | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial | <input type="checkbox"/> public       | <input type="checkbox"/> infrastructure | <input type="checkbox"/> relic/ruin | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> tree(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> religious | <input type="checkbox"/> educational         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> agricultural          | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial   | <input type="checkbox"/> maritime       | <input type="checkbox"/> fence      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> garden  | <input type="checkbox"/> machinery | <input type="checkbox"/> miscellaneous       |

**Historical Themes**

Heritage Study Theme	AHC Theme No.	Heritage Study Theme	AHC Theme No.
Early settlement	<input type="text"/>	Industry	<input type="text" value="inManufacturing"/>
Maritime	<input type="text"/>	Community Life	<input type="text"/>
Tourism	<input type="text"/>	Urbanization	<input type="text"/>
Transport	<input type="text" value="trRoads"/>	Landscapes	<input type="text" value="lpsIndustrial"/>
Townships	<input type="text"/>	Miscellaneous	<input type="text"/>

**Significant Architectural Features**

- Original Materials
- Original Chimneys
- Wall Decoration
- Verandah Structure
- Verandah Decoration
- Original Parapet
- Other Prominent Elevations
- Appropriate Fence
- Early Garden

Roof

Openings

Decoration

Finish

Stylistic Character

**Present Threats**

- Human; mining
- Human; visitor erosion
- Human; vandalism
- Human; development
- Human; conservation/maintenance
- Human; stock
- Natural Forces; erosion
- Natural Forces; vegetation
- Not threatened

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**GREATER GEELONG OUTER AREAS HERITAGE STUDY: STAGE 2**

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<b>Site Address</b>	<b>No.</b> 455	<b>Street/Site Name</b> Melbourne Road	<b>Town/Suburb</b> North Geelong	<b>Postcode</b> 3215
			<b>Site Name</b> Ford Motor Company Complex	

**Description**

The single storey, red brick, stripped Classical Ford Motor Company complex facing the Melbourne Road, North Geelong, is characterised by saw tooth, M and gable roof forms arranged lineally on an east-west axis. The original (1925) northern Melbourne Road facade is of a rectilinear form. The large brick and painted rendered concrete wall planes are broken up by 5 vertically oriented, slightly-projecting pavilions. These pavilions are linked by four bays: an off-centre entrance with a crowning recessed parapet; and 3 glazed colonnaded bays having brick vestigial pillars between the windows. The facade is further accentuated by the subtle stripped Classical detailing seen in the roundel motifs above the vestigial pilasters on the vertical pavilions, rectilinear moulding and lines, and the rectangular parapet panels with decorative banded borders. The original (1925) southern Melbourne Road facade is also a distinctive stripped Classical composition with its simple gabled end supported by flanking giant terminal pylons. The later, remaining southern facade is sympathetic proportionally and stylistically to the original sections of the building.

The internal construction system of the building is based on a complex arrangement of steel trusses with doubly tapered top chords which carry roof loads and plant machinery and equipment. The main trusses span from column to column but also carry the craneway, etc. suspended from their second interior panel points. These panel points are the parts on the upper and lower members of the truss - the chords - at which vertical and diagonal members are connected. The original clerestorey wire reinforced, brown tinted actinic glazing along the sides of the large, lineal spaces, have steel sashes operated by a pulley system. Large rivetted sheet metal toilet blocks are also of interest, being suspended above the factory floor.

The front landscaping - including the substantial Palm trees, flower beds, lawned areas and fences and gates - are an integral part of the complete design of the complex.

**History**

Ford's interest in Australia began in 1909 when Robert Durand established a network of dealers throughout the country and began the assembly and sale of Ford vehicles through them.<sup>1</sup> With stronger competition by 1923, Ford Canada sent two executives, H.C. French and M. Brooks, to Australia on a reconnaissance visit. The consequence of this visit was to establish a Ford Motor Company plant in Australia. In November, 1924, P.W. Grandjean, secretary of Ford Canada, returned to Australia to choose an appropriate site. A single central plant based on the Canadian model had been ruled out due to the lack of uniformity of railway gauges.<sup>1</sup> Nearly four months later, the decision was made to build in Geelong, on a 100 acre North Geelong site sold by the Geelong Harbour Trust. A single storey factory covering 200,000 square feet was to be erected and when completed would employ 500 men. French was appointed general manager, R.A. McFarlane sales manager, and E.F. Hughes secretary. Branches in Brisbane, Adelaide, Sydney and Fremantle would assemble parts from Geelong and overseas.<sup>1</sup> Construction commenced on the Ford Motor Company complex on the Melbourne Road, North Geelong, on 22 May, 1925, to a design that had apparently been imported from Ford's latest Canadian (Toronto) works.<sup>15</sup> The design engineers were Fyvie & Stewart, in association with W.J. Grassick of Melbourne.<sup>5</sup> The major contractor was Concrete Constructors Ltd of Sydney and they used Johns & Waygood steel procured locally from BHP and from the UK.<sup>6</sup> Physical and documentary evidence suggests that the design and construction for the Ford Canadian plants - or at least the North Geelong complex - actually originated from Ford's headquarters in Detroit, U.S.A. Ford's American architect (and thus the designer of the North Geelong complex) was Albert Kahn. He had been commissioned by Henry Ford as early as 1908 to design the Ford Highland Park Plant, Detroit, U.S.A.<sup>2</sup> This commission led to a long-term engagement between Kahn and the Ford Motor Company, for Kahn was to design the Ford Rouge Complex between 1916 and 1932. According to Grant Hildebrand, this plant became the prototype of Ford buildings of the twenties.<sup>2</sup> Kahn also designed several other industrial plants including the Packard Forge Shop, Detroit (1911), Geo. N. Pierce Company Automotive Plant, Buffalo (1906), and the Chevrolet Motor Division Commercial Body Plant, Indianapolis (1935).<sup>2</sup> Additions to the North Geelong complex were carried out in 1934, 1935, 1937, 1941, 1942, 1960s, 1970s and in more recent years.<sup>3</sup> By 1936, Ford had ... continued under Comparative Analysis ...

**Heritage Precinct: Significant Urban Character Features visually connected to this place**  
*(this section is only applicable to places in precincts)*

Precinct Name

<b>Neighbouring Buildings</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Similar Types	<input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate Bulk/Form
	<input type="checkbox"/> Similar Styles	<input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate Architectural Detailing
	<input type="checkbox"/> Similar Construction Dates	<input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate Materials & Finishes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate Set Backs	<input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate Fence Designs & Locations
<b>Urban Design</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Significant Historical Development	<input type="checkbox"/> Original Paving
	<input type="checkbox"/> Significant Urban Focii	<input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate Allotment Sizes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Significant Views	<input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate Street Furniture
	<input type="checkbox"/> Original Kerbing	
<b>Landscaping</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Treelines <input type="checkbox"/> Public Gardens <input type="checkbox"/> Median Strips <input type="checkbox"/> Nature Strips	

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# GREATER GEELONG OUTER AREAS HERITAGE STUDY: STAGE 2

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

Site Address	No.	Street/Site Name	Town/Suburb	Postcode
	455	Melbourne Road	North Geelong	3215
			Site Name	Ford Motor Company Complex

## Comparative Listings

The stripped Classical style of the Ford Motor Company complex at North Geelong appears to have its origins in Albert Kahn's design of the Ford Highland Park Plant, U.S.A., 1908.<sup>2</sup> The construction of the North Geelong complex - including the exterior brick walls, steel truss roof construction (with doubly tapered top chords to carry roof loads), M, saw tooth and gable roof forms, and the clerestorey lighting with operable steel sashes, is all based on Kahn's American industrial designs, particularly his Ford Rouge complex. Other comparable Ford industrial buildings include the Toronto works, Canada,<sup>5</sup> Seaview Works, New Zealand<sup>6</sup> and the former complexes in Sydney and Brisbane.<sup>3</sup> The stripped Classical style of the North Geelong complex represents a distinctive phase of public and industrial architecture in Australia of the 1920s. Several Commonwealth buildings, including Old Parliament House, Canberra, were designed in a similar style throughout the 1920s and 1930s<sup>4</sup> and the Ford building is therefore contemporary historically and aesthetically with these nationally-significant developments.

### ...History continued ...

spent L136 million on wages, plant, buildings and locally made components.<sup>2</sup> During World War Two, Ford operated for defence production, manufacturing landing craft, barges, tanks, anti-aircraft guns, lighters and military vehicles.<sup>2</sup> After the war, expansion continued and in 1960 the first fully Australian Ford, the Falcon, was produced.<sup>2</sup> An assembly plant at Broadmeadows had been built especially as an assembly plant for this model, while the Geelong plant concentrated on engine manufacturing.<sup>2</sup>

## Statement of Cultural Significance

*The significant parts of the Ford Motor Company complex at North Geelong are the 1920s sections only, including the Melbourne Road facade and landscaping. See the attached site plan for further verification.*

The Ford Motor Company complex on the Melbourne Road at North Geelong is **aesthetically** significant at a **NATIONAL** level. It demonstrates in an outstanding way original design qualities of the interwar stripped Classical style. These qualities on the original (1925) northern facade include the large brick and painted rendered concrete wall planes broken up by 5 vertically oriented, slightly-projecting pavilions, four horizontal bays including the off-centre entrance with a crowning recessed parapet and the 3 glazed colonnaded bays having brick vestigial pillars between the windows. Other intact qualities include the subtle stripped Classical detailing and in particular the roundel motifs above the vestigial pilasters on the vertical pavilions, rectilinear moulding and lines, and the rectangular parapet panels with decorative banded borders. The original (1925) southern Melbourne Road facade is also a distinctive stripped Classical composition with its simple gabled end supported by flanking giant terminal pylons. The later, remaining southern facade is sympathetic proportionally and stylistically to the original sections of the building.

The six substantial palm trees and lawned areas fronting the Melbourne Road, together with the fences and gates, contribute to the significance of the place.

The Ford Motor Company complex on the Melbourne Road at North Geelong is historically significant at a **NATIONAL** level. It is associated with the development of the Ford Motor Company in Australia, as a major contributor of employment and economic development on a national scale. The complex has associations with the American architect, Albert Kahn, who designed many of the Ford industrial plants in the U.S.A. It is also associated with the development of the first fully Australian motor vehicle, the Falcon, in the 1960s.

The Ford Motor Company complex on the Melbourne Road at North Geelong is **scientifically** significant at a **STATE** level. The complex steel truss roof systems, with panel points that enable the support of cranes and other machinery, illustrates a particular constructional and technological development in Victoria in the 1920s. The clerestorey lighting, with openable sashes operated by a pulley system, are also of technical interest.

The Ford Motor Company complex on the Melbourne Road at North Geelong is **socially** significant at a **STATE** level. It is recognised and valued by the wider community as a major employer in Victoria and as a substantial industrial manufacturer.

Overall, the Ford Motor Company complex on the Melbourne Road at North Geelong is of **NATIONAL** significance.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that a Conservation Management Plan be carried out. In particular, the clerestorey lighting on the original sections of the complex are substantially deteriorating, and the Plan should consider the conservation of at least one bay as an example of the original construction.

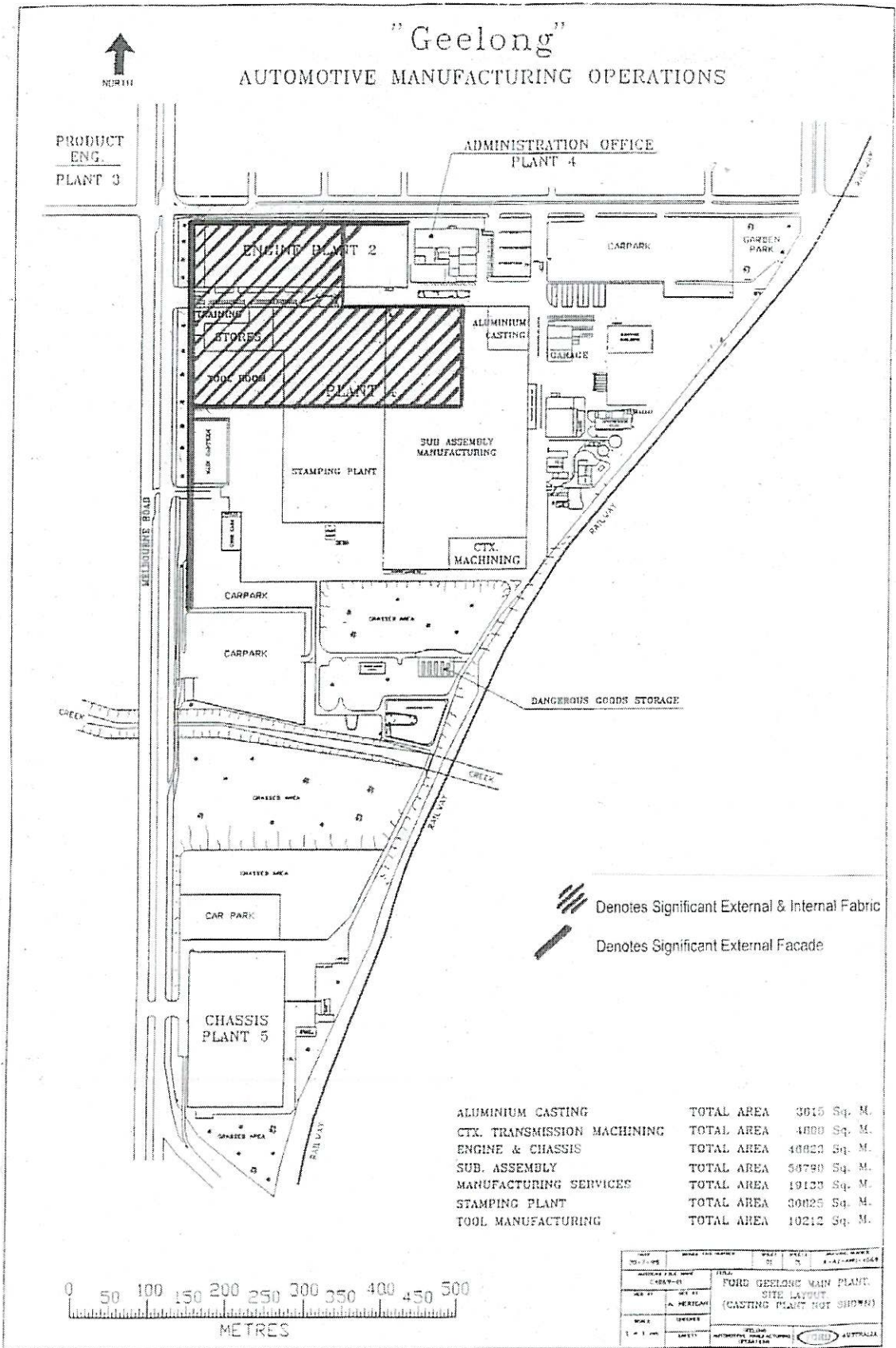
## References

1. Wynd, *So Fine A Country: A History of the Shire of Corio*, pp.101-105.
2. G. Hildebrand, *The Architecture of Albert Kahn*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1974.
3. Information from Peter Frick, Ford Motor Company, North Geelong.
4. D. Rowe, 'Building a National Image: The Architecture of John Smith Murdoch, Australia's First Commonwealth Government Architect', PhD (Architecture) Thesis, Deakin University, Geelong, 1997.
5. Draft Report, National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Industrial History Committee, National Trust of Australia (Victoria), Melbourne.
6. J. Gately, 'Ford Thinking: The Former Ford Motor Company Building, Seaview', in J. Wilson (ed.), *Zeal and Crusade: The Modern Movement in Wellington*, Te Waihora Press, Christchurch, 1996, in the collection of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria).

# GREATER GEELONG OUTER AREAS HERITAGE STUDY: STAGE 2

**Site Address**

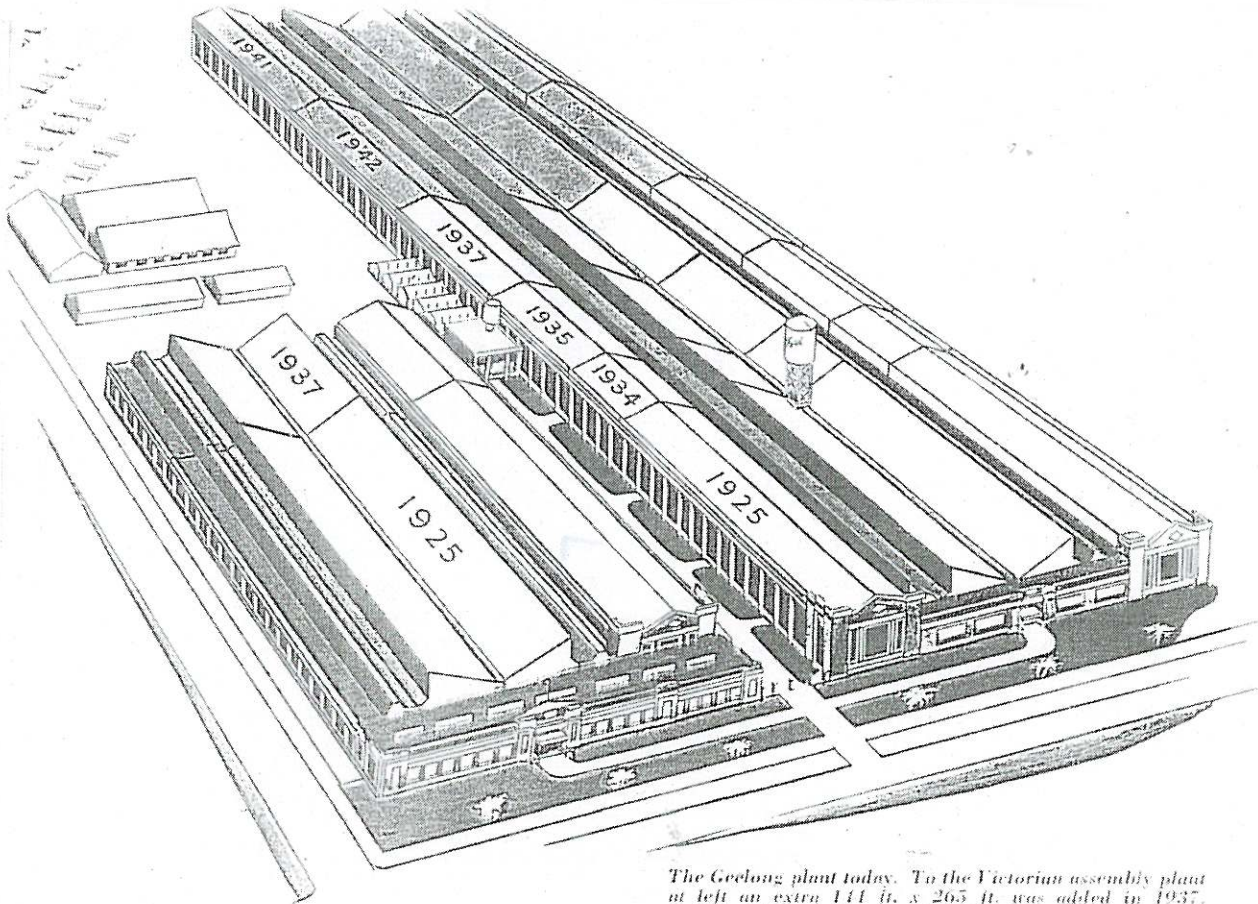
<b>No.</b>	<b>Street/Site Name</b>	<b>Town/Suburb</b>	<b>Postcode</b>
455	Melbourne Road	North Geelong	3215
<b>Site Name</b>		Ford Motor Company Complex	



# GREATER GEELONG OUTER AREAS HERITAGE STUDY: STAGE 2

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<b>Site Address</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Street/Site Name</b>	<b>Town/Suburb</b>	<b>Postcode</b>
	455	Melbourne Road	North Geelong	3215
			<b>Site Name</b>	Ford Motor Company Complex



*The Geelong plant today. To the Victorian assembly plant at left an extra 144 ft. x 265 ft. was added in 1937. Building is now 576 ft. x 265 ft., a total floor space of 152,640 square feet. The green section of the Manufacturing building, right, represents an extension of 192 ft. x 330 ft. made in 1927. The purple extensions represent two wartime extensions, each 240 ft. x 330 ft. Manufacturing building is now 1,248 ft. x 330 ft., 111,480 square feet, giving a grand total of 561,480 square feet for Geelong plants. In addition, there are Dining Halls, a modern kitchen with steam cookers, food preparation rooms, cooling chambers. These, with Women's Mess and Change Rooms and other outbuildings have a total floor space of 52,286 square feet.*

*Annexe for construction of Naval Mines and sinkers erected in 1911 on property opposite the main plant. Annexe is 250 ft. x 180 ft. with 60 ft. x 60 ft. extension — total 48,600 sq. ft. Annexe Mess room has an area of 1,536 sq. ft.*



*Source: Ford Motor Co.  
North Geelong*

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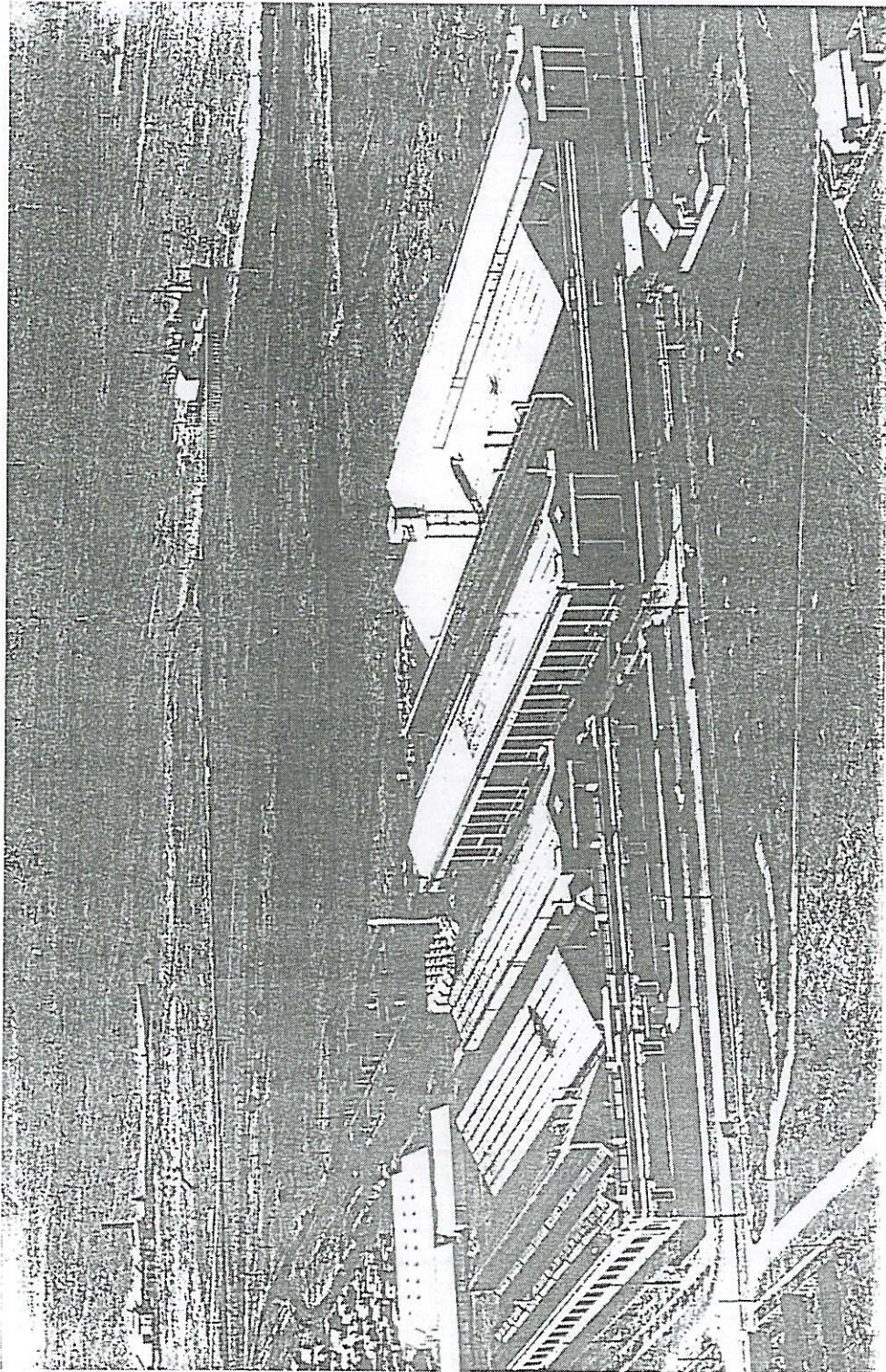
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GREATER GEELONG OUTER AREAS HERITAGE STUDY: STAGE 2

Site  
Address

No.	Street/Site Name	Town/Suburb	Postcode
455	Melbourne Road	North Geelong	3215

Site Name



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GREATER GEELONG OUTER AREAS HERITAGE STUDY: STAGE 2

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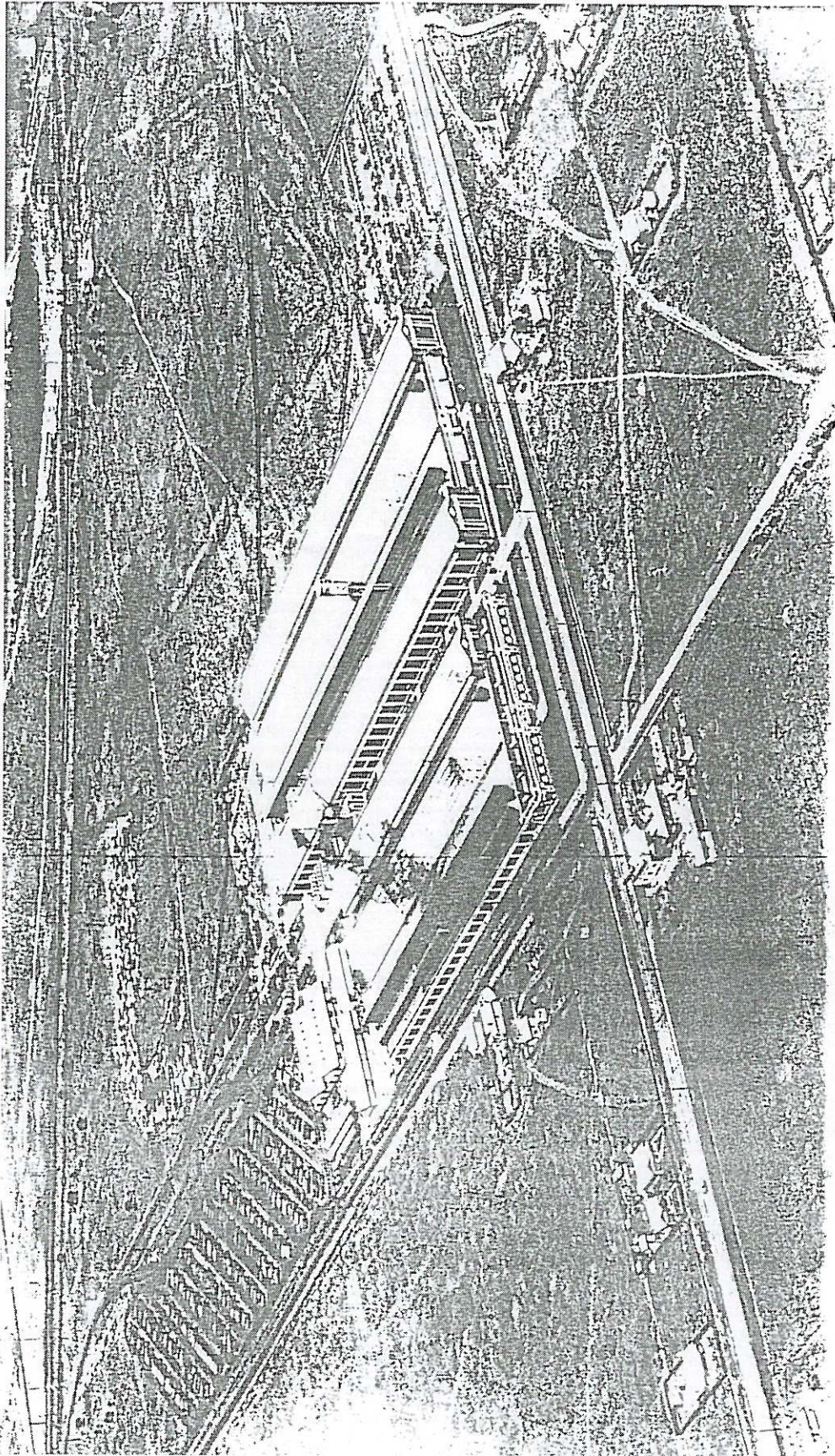
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Street/Site Name  
Melbourne Road

Town/Suburb  
North Geelong

Postcode  
3215

Site Name Ford Motor Company Complex



↑ ORIGINAL F.D. DARK ROOF 1925  
 ↑ 1934 EXTENSION TO SOUTH SIDE  
 ↑ ORIGINAL 1925 SECTION PARK TO INTERIOR TRACK

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GREATER GEELONG OUTER AREAS HERITAGE STUDY: STAGE 2

Site  
Address

No.	Street/Site Name	Town/Suburb	Postcode
455	Melbourne Road	North Geelong	3215

Site Name



Ford Motor Company Building, North Geelong.  
Interior view of roof truss systems.



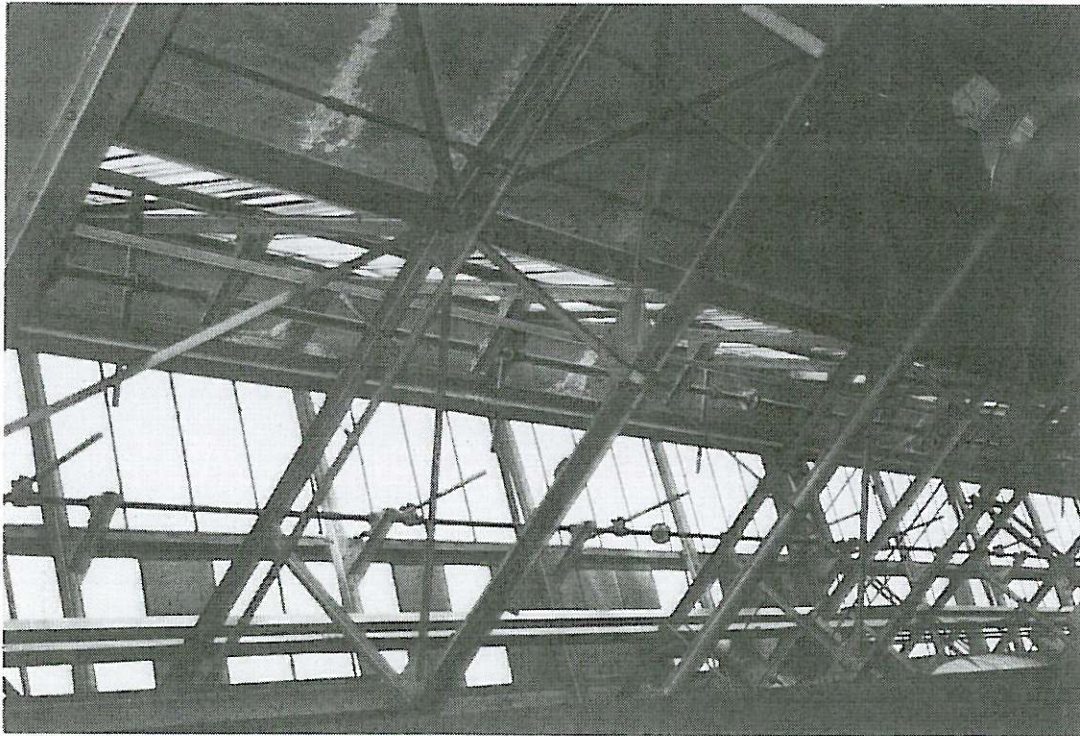
Ford Motor Company Building,  
North Geelong.  
Interior view of suspended toilet  
block.

GREATER GEELONG OUTER AREAS HERITAGE STUDY: STAGE 2

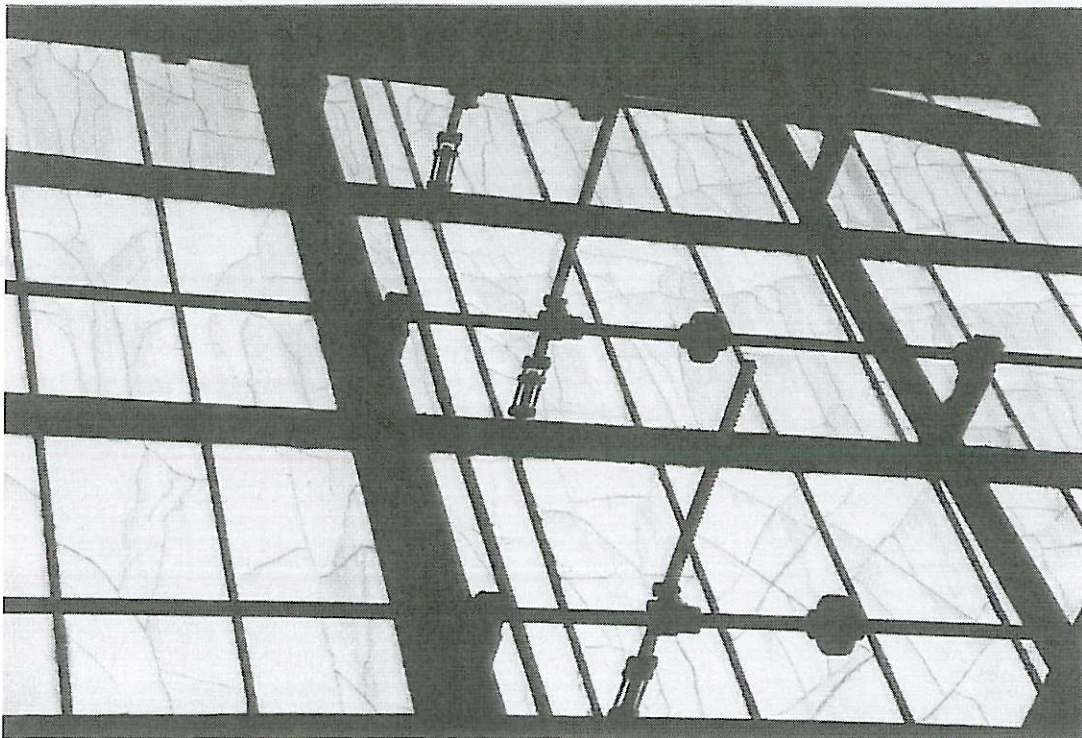
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No.	Street/Site Name	Town/Suburb	Postcode
455	Melbourne Road	North Geelong	3215
		Site Name	Ford Motor Company Complex



Ford Motor Company Building, North Geelong.  
Interior view of clerestory lighting, showing openable  
sashes operated by a pulley system.



Ford Motor Company Building, North Geelong.  
Detail of clerestory windows.

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