

## Identification and location

**Name of Place:** **Warren & Brown Engineering Workshops**

**Other Name**

**Address** 113 - 115 Ballarat Road

Footscray

**Place Identifier** 10

**Heritage Significance** city

**Creation date(s):** 1938- 1941c

**Map (Melway)** 42 C3

**Boundary description** The extent of the current allotment boundary

**Local Government Area:** City of Maribyrnong

**Ownership Type** private?

## Description

**Site Type:** factory - metal engineering

### Physical Description

Developed in stages, the facade demonstrates the architectural style of the period in a slick streamlined Moderne combination of one and two-storey blocks in patterned manganese salt glazed and cream brickwork with contrasting coloured sills and string courses of dark brick or concrete forming the horizontal elements and pilasters of darker brick between the windows and tall projecting panels over the entrance form the verticals - surmounted by the signature flagpole of the style.

Bands of steel framed windows are surmounted by the painted steel lettering of the company name. Curved corners and brick planter boxes complete the Moderne details.

Behind are buildings of other periods including red brick and render from c 1920 and steel and iron framed galvanised iron clad factory space. One timber section may be the original livery stable.

Large Eucalypt trees (South Australian Sugar Gums) and other small trees and shrubs remain from 1960s landscaping across the front of the site, while planter boxes demonstrate the original extent of the landscape scheme.

Recent demolition has removed a large part of the functional factory space but appears to retain the facades and the rear of the complex.

### Condition

The buildings are all in good condition and well maintained, although plant and equipment has been removed. The buildings are well maintained and structurally sound.

### Integrity

Apart from the removal of machinery, the complex is intact to its final phase of development.

## Context

On Ballarat Road in an otherwise residential area but forming a self contained industrial complex opposite Victoria University. Isolated, but not far from the similar Geelong Road examples.

## Threats

Expansion of Victoria University of Technology and possible future widening of Ballarat Road pose threats in the future. The site currently appears to be vacant.

## History

Prior to the erection of this factory, a livery stable was located at 113 Ballarat Rd. occupied by B. Cakebread and later Martin McGrath who went on to run a large transport company in Melbourne. At 115 a four-room timber house was occupied by Ivan Hutchinson.

In the 1930s the firm of Warren Brown was operating a small workshop from number 119 which was also the address given for Andrew Brown. It is highly likely that the former livery stables formed the catalyst of the Warren Brown engineering establishment, particular as a suitably styled and aged building still forms part of the complex.

William H. Warren lived nearby at 58 Stirling St. which he had thoroughly renovated in the new (1920s) Bungalow style. While the company dates from before 1928 it was not until c.1939-40 that the site was substantially improved when the present stylish office facade was probably added. Warren & Brown were jobbing engineers but had a reputation for sophistication in their work. The works has in recent years been part of the Footscray Institute of Technology (now VUT) campus and at least one building has been leased for a commercial retail use.

## Thematic context

**Australian Principal Theme** Manufacturing and Processing

**PAHT Subtheme:** Manufacturing and Processing

**Local Theme** Industry Pushing Outwards:

## Cultural Significance

Warren Brown is of significance to the City of Maribyrnong as an important example of the Moderne styled factory complex representing the growth of engineering firms in the early 20th century. (Criterion A3) Until recently, a near original and accomplished Moderne style office-factory design for a medium sized engineering firm representative of the growth of the metal trades in Footscray around the second World War. Criterion A3) Now only surviving as facades and fragments. However, few jobbing engineers survive in Maribyrnong or other inner suburbs as industrial zones have been reclaimed for residential/commercial development. (Criterion B2) The owner-built factory with an architecturally elaborate facade bearing the owners name as part of the construction, perhaps reached its apotheosis in the immediate pre-war period, later to be subsumed by anonymous and undistinguished standard design factory buildings with a separated administrative function in a geographically isolated location (usually in the CBD). The named factory demonstrates both the character of the owners and the public expression of their motivation and ambition in their chosen industry. (Criterion E1) The former livery-stables is potentially of significance for its connections with the origins of the firm and associations with the prior transport-related function. (Criterion D2) Mid 20th century landscaping survives in the form of a few eucalypts and small conifers which contribute to the aesthetic.

## Comparative Examples

Sharing the characteristic features of the Moderne Style (curved walls, manganese bricks, horizontal and vertical motifs, etc) with other industrial complexes in the Municipality including Olympic Tyres and Apex Belting. In scale and function, however, it is a rare survivor of the once common jobbing engineer firms such as the demolished Ebelings in Yarraville, or Richardson's in Whitehall St. Footscray.

## Recommendations

Heritage Victoria Register

Register of the National Estate

National Trust Register

Other Heritage Listings

Planning Scheme Protection

External Paint Controls Apply?

Internal Alteration Controls Apply?

Tree Controls Apply?

Included on the Victorian Heritage Register under the Act

Are there Outbuildings or Fences not Exempt?

Prohibited Uses may be Permitted?

## Recommendations

The following objectives relate to the Statement of Significance and the cited fabric or contributory elements.

- To conserve and enhance the significant elements of the place.
- To conserve and enhance the public view of these elements.
- To conserve and enhance the visual relationships between the contributory elements.
- To ensure that new or altered elements within the place are visually recessive and related to the contributory elements.
- To prepare a conservation management plan which embodies the above objectives.

## Australian Heritage Commission Criteria

*A3 Importance in exhibiting unusual richness or diversity of flora, fauna, landscape or cultural features.*

Part of the important small, diverse engineering industry in Footscray which supported a range of other industrial concerns.

*B2 Importance in demonstrating a distinctive way of life, custom, process, land-use, function or design no longer practised, in danger of being lost, or of exceptional interest.*

Few jobbing engineers survive in Maribyrnong or other inner suburbs as industrial zones have been reclaimed for residential/commercial development.

*D2 Importance in demonstrating the principle characteristics of the range of human activities in the Australian environment (including way of life, custom, process, land-use, function, design or technique).*

Warren & Brown is one of the few remaining buildings (along with D.Richardson & Sons) expressing the important engineering industry in the Footscray area which flourished in the inter War and post WWII periods.

*E1 Importance for a community for aesthetic characteristics held in high esteem or otherwise valued by the community.*

The distinctive Moderne design complex with earlier surviving elements reflects a visual setting well known to and treasured by the local community.

## Documentation

### References

Butler *Footscray Conservation Study*, 1989:(4-8)  
Sands & McDougall Directories  
Valuers Field Cards

### Data recording

Assessed By

Assessed Date: