

Identification and location

Name of Place: Hopkins Odlum

Other Name Apex Belting

Address 268 - 275 Geelong Road
Footscray West

Place Identifier 45

Heritage Significance regional

Creation date(s): 1890 1940 **Map (Melway)** 41 K5

Boundary description extent of current allotment

Local Government Area: City of Maribyrnong

Ownership Type Private

Description

Site Type: manufacture

Physical Description

Extensive brick and iron factory complex built on site of earlier (1890) factory of Apex Belting. The offices are divided into two with more prosaic additions to the west and the more architecturally pretentious and earlier section to the east with an orange brick vertical feature adorned at its top with cement fins and a "floating" capping. This element provided the distinctive identification for the building and hence the company and its products - the modern equivalent being the corporate image. A rendered block with ruled grid similar to Boon Spa (0208) formed a window element and a base to the vertical feature. The building proper has a long horizontal steel framed window strip, each bay divided by fins of deep green terra-cotta. Landscaping contemporary to the design features a continuous quarry tile capped planter box defining the boundary and some remnant cypress planting.

Behind it are the ubiquitous corrugated iron and asbestos sheeting clad manufacturing buildings with brick in double colonial bond and single veneer forming the boundary walls.

Condition

In good condition

Integrity

Generally intact to original appearance apart from alterations to the entrance porch, some additions to the west and recladding in recent decades.

Context

One of a number of Moderne factories forming a cohesive group on Geelong Road.

Threats

none apparent

History

Hopkins Odlum Pty Ltd. were established in 1912 as a belting manufacturing company which later took over Apex Belting which was itself established in 1890. They acquired this site in 1938 and commissioned architects R.M. & M.H. King to design the new building. The works was complete and in production in 1940.

By the 1970s the company possessed a nominal capital of two million dollars and was still centering its products on industrial machine or conveyor belting, (now in PVC and vulcanized rubber more so than the traditional leather) under the brand names of Apex, Brammer and Superflex.

Thematic context

Australian Principal Theme

PAHT Subtheme:

Local Theme

Cultural Significance

Of regional historical and architectural significance as an accomplished early Moderne factory/office design which related to a key manufacturing enterprise and which forms part of a regionally important industrial precinct established along Geelong Road prior to World War Two. Historically the place is significant as a major manufacturer of a specialist product which was a critical component in manufacturing in the region and nationally. (Criterion B2) This role is expressed architecturally as the building is of some distinction, a visually interesting example of the works of a well known architectural firm who had a number of commissions in the western region. (Criterion F1) The remnant landscaping with planter boxes and cypress trees is contributory.

Comparative Examples

Relates to the nearby factories such as Boon Spa (facade demolished) and Southern Can (extant) while the broader trends of the Moderne can be seen in a number of other local factories.

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.
To encourage continuation of the original use of the place.

Australian Heritage Commission Criteria

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.

Leather belting, as the major product of Hopkins Odium in its early years, was then critical to industry. The impressive factory reflects the importance of their product.

F1 Importance for their technical, creative, design or artistic excellence, innovation or achievement.

One of the more accomplished Modern factory complexes designed by locally notable architects and part of a regionally important precinct of stylish industrial facades.

Documentation

References

Butler 1989:4-67,
Forging Ahead
Valuers Field Cards

Data recording

Assessed By

Assessed Date: