

Identification and location

Name of Place: **Melbourne Meat Preserving Co - Hume Pipe Co**

Other Name Pipemakers Park, Australian Frozen Meat Export Company, Raleigh's Boiling Down Works

Address Van Ness Avenue
 Maribyrnong

Place Identifier 20245

Heritage Significance national

Creation date(s): 1848, 1868, 1874,

Map (Melway) 28 B10

Boundary description The Northern end of Pipemakers Park between Van Ness Avenue and the Maribyrnong River.

Local Government Area: City of Maribyrnong

Ownership Type Crown (Parks Victoria)

Description

Site Type: Factory

Physical Description

Several large bluestone buildings of distinctive design on several levels survive from the period of occupation of the Melbourne Meat Preserving Company. From the north they include: the tallow store and tin shop - a single storey structure, formerly with an upper storey of timber. The northern part of the building retains a concrete vaulted ceiling carried on riveted wrought iron girders and cast iron columns which is believed to be an early example of fire proof construction. the roof is a later (1920s?) timber truss and corrugated iron hipped structure.

To the south is the former preserving department, generally an 1873 reconstruction (following a fire) of the 1868 MMPC extension of Raleigh's original 1848 meatworks. Stone work at the rear (west side) incorporates many weathered surface stones and a random, un-coursed masonry that suggests the early date. The range of buildings extending north of this includes several partitioned spaces which are believed to have served as workshop and stables during the Humes period and may have had similar functions in the 19th century. A brick feature believed to be the setting of a steam boiler is constructed against the outside of this wall. The main part of the building is a tall, gable roofed structure on two levels with a central arched brick colonnade between them and circular louvred vents in the twin gables at each end. The roof is made of cast and wrought iron trusses clad in corrugated iron again evidence of fire proof building design (this part of the structure was burnt down and rebuilt in 1872-3).

The roofing iron has been replaced several times. Windows in the west and south walls also include original cast iron frames. Tall window openings (with new timber frames and glazing) alternate with stone pillars on the east facade. Evidence of many other former openings which have been bricked up can be seen in the walls, including a large brick arch which once opened to the north connecting to the former tin shop of c1850, now only surviving as the walls of adjoining buildings and the rendered 2 metre high retaining wall on the west.

The third major bluestone building has been refurbished and is currently used as the Living Museum office and visitor centre. This, the former testing department of the MMPC, has bluestone walls on three sides with skillion and gabled roof of timber truss and corrugated iron (renewed). The gable section appears at least partly original. The skillion was added by Humes around the 1920s. Brick ovens in the west wall connect to stoke holes and flues on the outside. Between this and the preserving department is the base of the boiler house chimney and evidence of the boilerhouse and engine room in the form of remnants of walls and flues and

Condition

The remaining buildings are in sound condition although rising damp effects some of the bluestone walls.

Integrity

While only some of the many buildings which have been on the site survive, there are remains of all significant phases of the sites history.

Context

Located on the banks of the Maribyrnong River in developed open space. The 1878 Jacks Magazine and remnants of the Footscray Ammunition Factory are the first major structures down-stream and offer opportunities for connections in an industrial heritage precinct.

Threats

None at present, but public accessibility to some buildings could be improved.

History

Originally a boiling down works established by Joseph Raleigh in c.1847. Raleigh was one of Port Phillip's first pastoral settlers, establishing a grazing property at Maribyrnong in the early 1840s. He was also prominent in shipping and constructed one of Melbourne's first wharves and warehouses on the Yarra River between Spencer and King Streets. He operated one of the colonies first boiling down and salting works near Yarraville from about 1842, an industry which helped rescue the colony from a severe rural recession by providing a market for sheep. He built a more substantial works at Maribyrnong in around 1847-8 which was at that time the most substantial industrial establishment in the colony.

Raleigh died in 1850 and the works lay vacant for a time, the gold rushes having caused a rise in fresh meat prices which effected the boiling down trade. The abandoned works were occupied by Robertson Martin & Smith in 1853-4 manufacturers of Australia's first steam Locomotive.

Following another period of disuse, the buildings were refurbished for the production of preserved, tinned meat by a vacuum cooking process by the Melbourne Meat Preserving Company in 1868. The MMPC were one of the pioneering companies in this field, achieving the first successful export of preserved tinned meat to England. It employed several hundred workers to operate the first large scale meat cannery in Australia. It provided the inspiration and model for many later meat canning companies as well as trained personnel.

The main buildings of the company are substantially intact, designed as an open-plan factory on several levels, an adaptation of English industrial design. In its day the factory was commended for its efficiency, cleanliness and automation.

The works was hygienic and modern and the largest of the early preserving works. It continued to operate until c.1888 when declining demand forced its closure.

For a brief period the site was also used by the Australian Frozen Meat Export Co (1880-2). This firm is credited with the first successful maritime export of frozen meat in the world. The company leased part of the MMPC premises, built a large freezing chamber and transported frozen carcasses at night to a refrigerated ship. The company moved to Newport in 1882 in order to have better access to the docks.

The Humes Pipe Co, established in 1911 pioneered in the production of centrifugally-spun concrete pipes, a process invented in South Australia by E J & W R Hume. The firm took over the once more abandoned Maribyrnong meat works and installed machinery of their own design for manufacture of pipes, as well as concrete mixers and wire reinforcement machines. Initially the bluestone buildings were adapted for the factory, but as the works expanded other rudimentary process sheds were erected to house more moulding machines and the workers who operated them.

In 1920 the process received a world-wide patent, and factories were constructed in New Zealand, South Africa, Malaysia, England, Singapore, and U.S.A. The Maribyrnong factory was the largest concrete pipe factory in the Southern Hemisphere and is the oldest remaining Humes factory in Australia. Humes pipes were used throughout Australia and many parts of the world for water supply, sewerage, irrigation and drainage works.

The firm pioneered a new technology and exported its innovations throughout the world. The Australian process of making concrete pipes became world famous; it is still the basic method used by a large part of the world's concrete pipe industry. From the 1950s the factory employed a large proportion of southern European migrant workers, some of whom planted fruit trees around the factory and created a distinct social culture around the factory.

Thematic context

Australian Principal Theme

PAHT Subtheme:

Local Theme

Cultural Significance

The place is of national historical, social and architectural significance as some of the oldest and most substantial early industrial structures associated with at least five different innovations in Manufacture. The boiling down works was one of the first of its type in Australia and the largest in Victoria, the Melbourne Meat Preserving Co. pioneered meat preserving by the vacuum process, as the Australian Frozen Meat Export Co. pioneered bulk freezing and is credited with the first successful frozen meat export in the world, Robertson Martin & Smith were the makers of the first locomotive for the first railway in Australia and utilised part of the site to fulfil this contract; and Hume Pipes were an innovator in the field of concrete pipe manufacture, being the first Australian company to export a manufacturing technology as opposed to a raw material or product. The site shows a range of cultural features relating to five separate innovative industries stretching over 140 years. (Criteria A3, A4 & D2) Several technological innovations took place here including boiling down, meat preserving, meat freezing, and concrete pipe manufacture. (Criterion F1)

Architecturally, the buildings represent early fire proof construction techniques. The boiling down and meat industries have disappeared from Melbourne and industrial buildings of any kind from the mid nineteenth century are exceptionally rare in Melbourne. (Criterion B2) The river location demonstrates the importance of maritime communication to early industry as well as the need for a water source and drain. This site encapsulates the history of industrial development in Melbourne and represents some of its major phases. Several significant historical figures are associated with the site including Joseph Raleigh, Samuel Sextus Ritchie (proprietor of the MMPC) and Walter Hume. (Criterion H1)

Comparative Examples

A rare example of early nineteenth century industrial building in Victoria, it has few comparisons, some of the earlier flour mills demonstrating the scale and use of bluestone.

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

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 manage and interpret the place as a historic site to the public.

Australian Heritage Commission Criteria

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

The site shows a range of cultural features relating to five separate innovative industries stretching over 140 years

A4 Importance for their association with events, developments or cultural phases which have had a significant role in the human occupation and evolution of the nation, state, region or community.

The place is associated with several cultural phases including the 1840s pastoral boom, the 1860-80s development of local manufacturing industry and the early 20th century industrial expansion of Melbourne and Victoria.

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.

The boiling down and meat industries have disappeared from Melbourne and industrial buildings of any kind from the mid nineteenth century are exceptionally rare in Melbourne.

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C2 Importance for information contributing to a wider understanding of the history of human occupation of Australia.

Without the boiling down works as represented by this place, the squatters and graziers may not have recovered from the rural recession of the 1840s.

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).

A wide range of activities have occurred on this site relating to several industrial processes.

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

The buildings represent design developments which were advanced for their time, particularly the techniques of fire proof construction. Several technological innovations took place here including boiling down, meat preserving, meat

H1 Importance for their close associations with individuals whose activities have been significant within the history of the nation, state or region.

Several significant historical figures are associated with the site including Joseph Raleigh, Samuel Sextus Ritchie (proprietor of the MMPC) and Walter Hume.

Documentation

References

Vines & Ford, *Pipemakers Park Conservation Plan*, Living Museum of the West 1997

W. Snoek, thesis, Hume Pipe Company, University of Melbourne.

G.J.R. Linge, *Industrial Awakening. MUP 1986.*

Data recording

Assessed By

Assessed Date: