

Identification and location

Name of Place: **Murphy's Transport**

Other Name

Address 230-352 Whitehall Street

Yarraville

Place Identifier 8785

Heritage Significance regional

Creation date(s): 1933c.

Map (Melway) 42 C9

Boundary description The extent of the current allotment

Local Government Area: City of Maribyrnong

Ownership Type

Description

Site Type: transport depot

Physical Description

Array of predominantly red brick office, store and garage buildings arranged around a large open yard and reflecting the original horse era layout of the transport yard. The principal facade to Hyde Street features a tall curved pediment/parapet with raised lettering declaring the company name "E. Murphy & Sons". The office block behind has steel hopper sash windows and steel lintels over. Some cobbled crossovers mark the original driveways, now superseded by a wide concrete entry.

Condition

In good condition - most buildings relating to 1930s - 50s period survive in original state.

Integrity

Intact substantially to its post motor transport redevelopment of the 1930s.

Context

Located opposite major industrial area including the Sugar Refinery and fertiliser works which gave them much of their business.

Threats

None at present

History

The Murphy family have been associated with quarrying and carting in Footscray since 1858. Thomas Murphy, a cabinet maker by trade, arrived in Melbourne from Ireland with his family, first living in tents in Collins Street, then moving to Adelaide Street West Footscray. One of his children, Edward or Ned, opened several quarries, including one at the corner of Anderson St, and Williamstown Road. He operated one of the first stone crushers in Footscray, in Princess Street, Seddon.

Murphy won several road-making contracts on the strength of supplying crushed stone. In 1871, Ned Murphy and another contractor, Timothy Lenaire were employed on construction of Joshua Brothers sugar mill at Yarraville, later to become CSR.

Known as “ready-Money-Ned”, Murphy several times left his work for gold prospecting, following rushes when and where they occurred, including leaving the construction of Albert Street for a Western Australian gold rush at one stage. His prominence in the local community is marked by organising sporting events at Kelly’s Hotel, as Trustee and Treasurer of the Yarraville Oval, founding member and first president of the Yarraville Citizen’s Club, founding member and first president of the Hope of Yarraville Masonic Lodge. He died in 1909 and was followed by his son Bill in the contracting business, as well as social affairs such as the Yarraville Football Club, as president to the VFA. As an inducement to players, jobs were provided at the firm where it was said “half the Yarra team worked.

The Murphy’s were renowned for their fine horses and this interest combined with the business as heavy horses were crucial to the delivery of stone and road making. Bill Murphy was renowned for his judgment and selection of horses, and included sick pens and breeding pens among the animal amenities in his yards and in the 1920s the firm held 886 horses. Horse carriages from drays to four-horse lorries could be made at the spot.

Located in the centre of the Yarraville industrial area, Murphy's won cartage contracts with many of the local firms such as Millers Ropes and Vacuum Oil, and began a continuing association with CSR in 1917. Bill’s eldest son Lindsay Jr. took the firm into the motor truck era during WWII, but not retiring the last horse team until 1957. Bulk transport was developed in the 1950s, and the old stables, blacksmiths and coach builders shed were demolished and new offices and vehicle maintenance workshops constructed. Most of the present buildings date from this transition period with the facades and office buildings being from about 1935 to 1950. In the 1970s the firm moved into heavy articulated trucks and construction of large warehouses for transshipment at the Yarraville Yard.

While the firm became a propriety company in 1929, it continued to be run as a wholly family-owned business at least into the 1980s.

Thematic context

Australian Principal Theme

PAHT Subtheme:

Local Theme

Cultural Significance

E. Murphy & Sons transport depot is of regional historical significance as it is representative of the importance of road transport to the industrial development of the inner west. The buildings are of local architectural significance as an elaborated design solution to the particular function demonstrating their horse and wagon era inheritance. The site has a high degree of integrity, and in its local context, demonstrates the strong historical link between the company, and the bulk processing industries located opposite along the Yarraville wharves. Unusual as a family operated transport company which attained sufficient prominence to justify such a purpose-built facility, most other such depots being unremarkable paved yards and workshops. Criterion B2)

As the most distinctive place associated with goods transport in connection with the industries of the region, Murphy's Transport demonstrates the important industrial development of the region in the 20th century. (Criterion A4) The Murphy family have had an important association with transport and industry in the area for more than 140 years. Criterion H1)

Comparative Examples

A rare example of pre-war road transport depot which stands alone in the region. Displaying some of the characteristics of the smaller motor garages of the period eg. The Big Garage, Bairnsdale.

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 prepare a conservation management plan which embodies the above objectives.
 To encourage continuation of the original use of the place.

Australian Heritage Commission Criteria

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.

As the most distinctive place associated with goods transport in connection with the industries of the region, Murphy's demonstrates the important industrial development of the region in the 20th century.

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.

Unusual as a family operated transport company which attained sufficient prominence to justify such a purpose-built facility, most other such depots being unremarkable paved yards and workshops.

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

The Murphy family have had an important association with transport and industry in the area for more than 140 years.

Documentation

References

City of Footscray 125th anniversary Celebration, 1984.pp.38-9.
Sand & McDougall Directories.

Data recording

Assessed By

Assessed Date: