

Identification and location

Name of Place: **Pyrotechnic Division OFM**

Other Name Midway Migrant Hostel/Student Village

Address Williamson Road
Maribyrnong

Place Identifier **8835**

Heritage Significance *city*

Creation date(s): 1942/78

Map (Melway) 27 H9

Boundary description Group of second world war buildings located near Williamson Road within the Student Village, possibly also some structures in adjoining Commonwealth land (see plan)

Local Government Area: City of Maribyrnong

Ownership Type State (Education)

Description

Site Type: factory/hostel

Physical Description

A small group of buildings survive as part of the VUT student village located near Gorenkos Drive and Williamson Road. These represent the last remnants of the former Pyrotechnics Section. The buildings include timber and corrugated iron structures with timber framed windows and are of a type similar to the standard "P" huts erected by the Australian Army for barracks and general stores throughout Australia. Also at least one "Quonset" or "Nissen" hut survives, of a great number once located here and used following the Second World War. At least one some small red brick building with steel framed windows from the 1940s period also survives.

Of the later redevelopment of the site as part of first the Maribyrnong Migrant Hostel, and later the Student Village includes two main sections. One large section comprises six groups of interconnected blocks of flats, four to a group in a cruciform pattern with other service buildings adjacent. These are brick with tiled roofs. The other main group is to the west and comprises a circular building divided into 16 bays with passageways between and a circular courtyard. Again, this is of brick with tiled roof.

Some possibly contemporary landscape is also evident including Cypress trees lining the main driveway. Other native trees are probably of more recent origin.

Condition

in good condition

Integrity

Only some of the original building survive, and those remaining have been altered.

Context

Within the student accommodation precinct of the VUT student village

Threats

possible redevelopment of this area is likely.

History

Land South of Williamson Road was originally sold late in the area's development with lots facing the road going to F. Kosh and C.B. Fisher in 1881. This was generally part of Fisher's Maribyrnong Estate.

Military activity in the Maribyrnong area dates back to the establishment of Jacks Magazine in 1878. The location of the magazine for storage of gunpowder was chosen because of its convenience to Melbourne and the docks, and protection in an isolated part of the Maribyrnong Valley. The Colonial Ammunition Factory was built near the magazine as a private venture in the 1880s, but was supported by the Victorian colonial government, which was its major customer.

With the creation of the Commonwealth Government at Federation of the colonies, responsibility for defence was transferred from the colonial militias to the Commonwealth armed forces and a Munitions Supply Board was set up to ensure the military could be self sufficient in armaments and other supplies.

The Explosives Factory Maribyrnong was established in 1910 as the first of the munitions factories, and about the same time, the Royal Australian Field Artillery training depot was located on the Maribyrnong Estate land purchased in 1906 by the Defence Department. Substantial barracks, stables, messes and administrative buildings were erected on the Wests Road Site in the period 1913-15.

The Ordnance Factory was established in 1923 in two converted buildings with the carriage shop built in 1925 and the tool room set up in a converted stable in the same year. The No. 1 Forge (Building 49) was erected in 1925 as the central core of the factory. Steady expansion occurred until 1939-45 when the floor area was increased to 80000 sq. m. and employment rose to 6500 people.

The Pyrotechnic section of the Maribyrnong munitions complex, was established south of Williamsons Road late in the Second World War. The New Pyrotechnics Section was officially inaugurated in January 1942 for the manufacture of fuses, flares, tracers, and the like. A private residence was on the site prior to this, but does not appear to have been retained. This site was functionally related to the Ordnance Factory to the north of Williamson Road. Pyrotechnics involved the production of flairs, tracer rounds smoke grenades an other forms of explosive compounds.

Thematic context

Australian Principal Theme Manufacturing and Processing

PAHT Subtheme: Manufacturing and Processing

Local Theme Maribyrnong Ordnance Factory

Cultural Significance

The Pyrotechnic division is of local historical significance to the City as an integral part of the defence industries in Maribyrnong. As some of the only production buildings related to manufacture of ammunition and ordnance it is of considerable importance as a reflection of the once extensive complex. (Criterion B2)

All other factory buildings at the Ordnance and Ammunition Factories have been demolished.

Comparative Examples

Unusual survivors of the production building types associated with munition manufacture, these simple corrugated iron sheds represent the utilitarian forms once common at other defence sites but now only surviving at the Explosives Factory.

Recommendations

Heritage Victoria Register	<input type="text" value="No"/>
Register of the National Estate	<input type="text" value="No"/>
National Trust Register	<input type="text" value="Recommended"/>
Other Heritage Listings	<input type="text" value="No"/>
Planning Scheme Protection	<input type="text" value="Recommended"/>
External Paint Controls Apply?	<input type="text" value="No"/>
Internal Alteration Controls Apply?	<input type="text" value="No"/>
Tree Controls Apply?	<input type="text" value="No"/>
Included on the Victorian Heritage Register under the Act	<input type="text" value="No"/>
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

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.

As part of the production site of the Ordnance Factory, the remaining buildings of the Pyrotechnic sector are important reminders of the once extensive factory.

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.

Munitions manufacture was once the greatest industry in the Maribyrnong region and the western suburbs, now disappeared as the factories have closed and been demolished.

Documentation

References

Allom Lovell *ADI Maribyrnong Site Redevelopment EES*. 1992

Les McLean, *The History of the Ordnance Factory Maribyrnong 1923-1993, published by the Author 1994..*

Data recording

Assessed By

Assessed Date: