

## Identification and location

**Name of Place:** **Bradmill**

**Other Name** Davies Coop & Co. Bradford Cotton Mills Pty Ltd.

**Address** 341-351 Francis Street  
Yarraville

**Place Identifier** 8766

**Heritage Significance** city

**Creation date(s):** 1959 **Map (Melway)** 41 F10

**Boundary description** The extent of the current allotment, bounded on the south by the railway line, on the north by Francis Street and on the east by the extension of Roberts Street.

**Local Government Area:** City of Maribyrnong

**Ownership Type** Private

## Description

**Site Type:** manufacture

### Physical Description

This large industrial complex features range of steel framed corrugated iron and fibro-cement sheet clad buildings. The most prominent component is the multistory boilerhouse which is a landmark visible from the West Gate Freeway. This originally coal-fired boilerhouse provided steam for dyeing and fabric conditioning and motive power via electricity generated from steam-powered turbo-alternator sets, to drive the spinning and weaving machines throughout the factory.

The boilerhouse is built with steel structural framing with a gabled roof through which four tall steel stacks protrude, clad in corrugated iron with large areas transparent corrugated strips in the cladding and areas of steel framed glazing.

The remainder of the works comprises south facing saw-tooth roof single story shed, much clad in corrugated fibro-cement. The fibro-cement sheeting, some possibly asbestos, has been progressively renewed with corrugated iron.

### Condition

In good condition. The boiler house and much of the rest of the plant has been recently clad and repainted (in the last 3-5 years).

### Integrity

The complex is intact to its late 1960s appearance, having been progressively constructed over the first ten years of operation.

## Context

Adjacent to the Newport-Sunshine loop line and opposite the similarly scaled James Hardie industrial complex but with a residential area to the north and McIvor Reserve to the east. Also very visible from the West Gate Freeway, particularly in terms of the boiler house.

## Threats

No know threats

## History

The Davies Coop & Company Cotton Mills were established initially in Melbourne's inner suburbs in the 1920s. They built a new mill on a large greenfields site on the western fringe of the Brooklyn/Spotswood industrial zone in about 1959. Davis Coop had grown in the inter war period into a major spinning, weaving and clothing manufacturer with its subsidiaries in the 1960s including Exacto Clothing in Lygon Street Carlton, Stirling Clothing in Collingwood, Tara Towels in Collingwood, a Flax Mill in Thornbury, Sewing Rooms in Poath Road Hughesdale and in Oakleigh, a spinning mill in Rydelmeer New South Wales, and a spinning or weaving mill in South Australia.

The Spotswood mill was positioned to take advantage of the Newport railway goods loop with sidings providing for delivery of coal for the large boilerhouse, and raw materials for the mills. The boilerhouse was fired by brown coal from the Maddingly open cut at Bacchus Marsh. The earliest reference to the Spotswood site in Sands and McDougall is 1967, where Davies Coop & Co Cotton Spinners are listed at the address. The site is shown as Bradmill for the first time in the Melway Street Directory of Greater Melbourne in 1979

Bradford Cotton Mills, a New South Wales firm, look over the former site of Barnet Glass Rubber located in Moreland and Parker Streets Footscray in 1939. The company adapted the existing factory to cotton textile production. However, the rapid expansion of the firm following the long boom during the 1950s and 60s, saw demand outstrip their production capacity and a new factory was sought. The Davis Coop mills proved ideal and were absorbed into the Bradmills empire by the late 1970s.

A merger was proposed between Bradford Dyers (A division of Bradford Weaving Mills) and Davis Coop was proposed in c1968 but this failed and the Bradmills concern eventually took over Davies Coop in its entirety.

## Thematic context

Australian Principal Theme

PAHT Subtheme:

Local Theme

## Cultural Significance

The former Davis Coop / Bradmill site is of historical significance to the City of Maribyrnong as the largest textile manufacturer in the municipality . (Criterion A4) It is also of architectural and aesthetic note for its scale and form in the predominantly industrial landscape of the West Footscray - Brooklyn area, the boiler house in particular standing out as a large and dominant local landmark. (Criterion E1)

The place is also of social/historic significance for its association with two major local companies, Davis Coop and Bradmills, each of which made a profound contribution to the development of industrial infrastructure in the district and consequentially the prosperity of the municipality. (Criterion D2)

## Comparative Examples

The Davis Coop factory compares with a hand full of other major industrial enterprises of the 1950s - 60s period including the Port Melbourne Kraft factory.

## 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, primarily the external form with emphasis on the boiler house and eastern elevation.
- 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.*

Bradmills represents the ultimate expansion of the textile industry in Melbourne's Western Suburbs and the importance of integrated cotton mills to the industry.

*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).*

Bradmills is the ultimate expression of the industrialised textile industry which was a defining characteristic of Melbourne's northern and western suburbs and Geelong .

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

The dominant landmark of the district which is both a stylish architectural feature in the functional modernist tradition and which towers as the dominant visual landmark from the West Gate freeway which defines the industrial character of the area..

## Documentation

### References

Footscray's First Hundred Years,  
Footscray's First Fifty Years,  
Butler, G. Footscray Conservation Study, 1989,  
Footscray Advertiser 27/10/06.  
Milner register of Historic engineering establishments, University of Melbourne  
Ron Angwin, Pers Comm,

### Data recording

Assessed By

Assessed Date: