S03-011312

PRELIMINARY ASSESSEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FORMER PIVOT INDUSTRIES SITE AT 219 WHITEHALL ROAD, YARRAVILLE, AND RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSED INCLUSION OF PART OF THE SITE IN HERITAGE OVERLAYS IN CLAUSE 43 OF THE CITY OF MARIBYRNONG PLANNING SCHEME.

prepared for

MAUNSELL PTY LTD

on behalf of

THE MELBOURNE PORT CORPORATION

Allom Lovell & Associates
Conservation Architects

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PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE OF FORMER PIVOT INDUSTRIES SITE, WHITEHALL ROAD, YARRAVILLE.

1.0 Introduction

This preliminary assessment of significance of the former Pivot Industries site at 219 Whitehall Road, Yarraville has been commissioned by Maunsell Pty Ltd on behalf of the Melbourne Port Corporation.

It has been prepared in response to a proposal to include part of the site in three separate heritage overlays under clause 43.01 of the City of Maribyrnong Planning Scheme. One consists of overlay HO 179, which extends across all of the site north of the main internal east-west entry road. The second overlay HO180 covers a small adjacent rectangular area immediately to the south along Whitehall Road. The third overlay HO181 is smaller in size and is located midway along the southern property boundary.

It considers the significance of a range of structures on the site and on the basis of this makes recommendations about the appropriateness of the proposed heritage overlays.

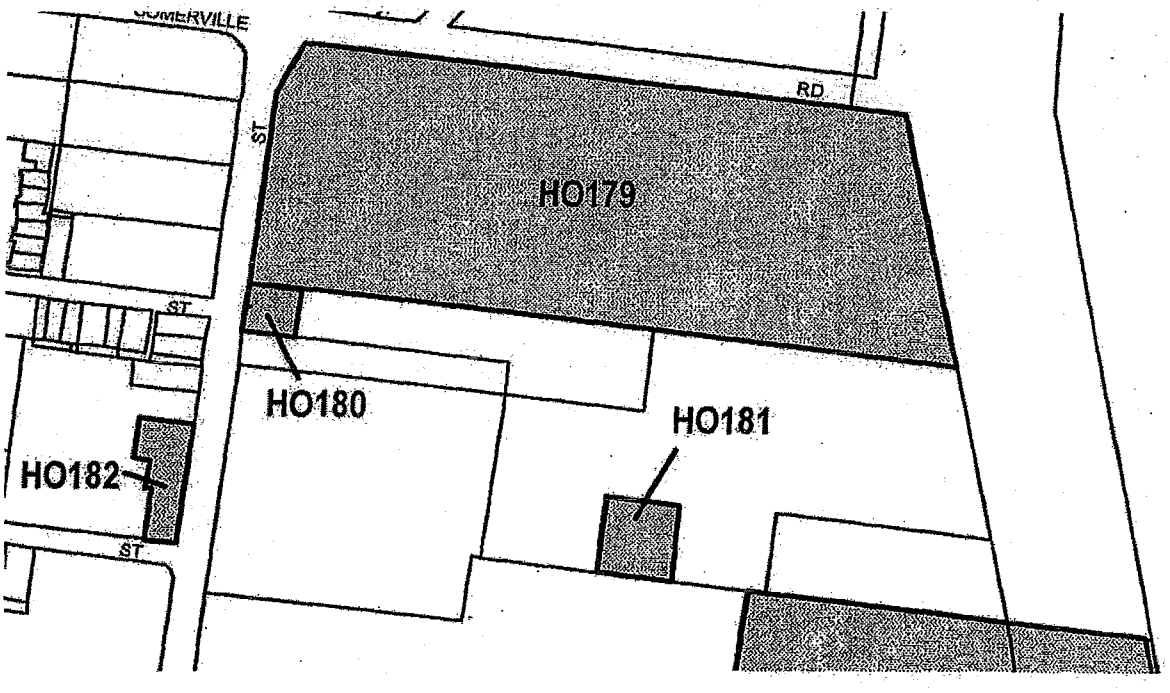

Figure 1 *The proposed heritage overlay controls for the site are HO 179, HO 180, HO 181.*

2.0 Background to the Proposed Listing

Historically the site has been occupied by two notable separate industrial enterprises – Cuming Smith & Co chemical works and James Miller & Co ropeworks – and structures remaining from each of these complexes were identified as significant in the following heritage studies.

The Western Region Industrial Heritage Study by Gary Vines, (1989).

Jill Barnard, Graeme Butler, Francis Gilfedder & Gary Vines, *Maribyrnong Heritage Review,* (2001).

Citations from these studies have been included in Appendix A.

3.0 History of the Site

Early History

An early parish plan shows that the land, until recently occupied by Pivot Industries, originally consisted of most of Allotments 1 and 2 in Section VIII of the original subdivision of the Parish of Cut Paw Paw.

The west bank of the Maribyrnong River at Footscray and Yarraville remained undeveloped well into the 1860s. A Cox maritime plan of 1864 shows only a few small, scattered buildings south of what is now Somerville Road, with a small section of Whitehall Street being the only road in the area. The site on the southeast corner of Whitehall Street and Somerville Roads comprising Allotments 1 and 2 shows two fenced allotments, which slope down to river flats along their eastern boundary. Several small buildings are shown in the centre of the site, and there are two small piers at the northern end of the riverbank.

By 1870 the firm of Robert Smith & Co had established a small chemical works plant at this site. This company has been established in the early 1860s as Clarke Hoffman & Co., the chemical works being originally located closer to Melbourne on the banks of the Yarra. After the business was acquired by Robert Smith and Co., a decision was made to relocate the plant to a new site at Yarraville which could accommodate future expansion.

The new factory was built in 1870 at the centre of Allotment 2 in Yarraville, on what then was a vacant site. Land in the area was relatively cheap, and the river offered essential access to water transport. Further development soon occurred along the riverfront. A tender notice for the construction of 'a large bluestone factory at Footscray for James McMeiken' appeared in the *Argus* on 2 April, 1870.[1] This was for manure works located along the riverbank at the eastern end of Allotment 2.

Cuming Smith & Co 1872-1929

In c.1871 Robert Smith & Co was purchased by Cuming Smith & Co, a newly formed partnership between James Cuming, George Smith and Charles Campbell.

James Cuming was born in Aberdeen, Scotland in 1835. He began an apprenticeship as a farrier in 1850. His family emigrated to New Brunswick, Canada in 1852, with James continuing his apprenticeship in Scotland for a further year before relocating. James purchased his father's farriery in 1856. After marrying fellow Scot, Elizabeth Smith, in 1858, he opened a business in Portland, Maine in 1859, before the couple emigrated to Melbourne in 1862. James initially resumed business as a blacksmith and farrier. During the 1860s, Cuming's brother-in-law George Smith, was working as a manager at the Robert Smith & Co's Yarraville plant. After a staffing dispute, George resigned with the intention of establishing a new rival company. On hearing this, the owner, who was close to retirement, offered to sell the business to Smith and Cuming, who responded by forming a new company to take over the works in partnership with an Aberdeen friend and businessman, Charles Campbell.[2]

From modest beginnings with a workforce of three, the business prospered under Cuming Smith & Co. A major setback occurred in c.1876, when a fire destroyed the plant, leaving only the chimney. The property was insured for £4,000, though Cuming estimated the damage to be at least £10,000. Despite this, production was resumed at the site eight weeks after the fire, the ruins being cleared back to their foundations and new factory buildings rapidly erected.[3] Reconstruction after the fire started a long process of expansion and development which continued for several decades. This began with the acquisition of McMeikan's Manure Co,

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1 Cited from Miles Lewis, *Australian Architectural Index*.

2 James Cuming, *An Autobiography*, pp. 22-23.

3 James Cuming, *An Autobiography*, p. 84.

manufacture artificial fertilisers. Production required secure chemical storage and packaging facilities. The presence of a laboratory on site was 'essential for properly conducting the business of the firm' for chemical analysis and quality control.[7] One of James Cuming's sons, James Cuming (junior), who had trained as an industrial chemist, managed the laboratory, becoming head chemist.[8]

The company exported its products across Australia and beyond, as mentioned in the following entry which appeared in the publication *Victoria and its Metropolis* in 1888.

> The production of artificial manures was begun in 1876, and has developed into a trade of 4000 tons annually for local consumption, in addition to which they have a considerable export trade to the Mauritius, New Zealand and Tasmania. ... There was formerly a large market for acids in Queensland, New Zealand and South Australia, but these colonies now manufacture their own acids, the acid works in South Australia and New Zealand having been originated by this firm. Notwithstanding the loss of trade thus occasioned, the acid business has largely increased, it being a well known axiom that "the extent of the production of sulphuric acid is an index of growth of the manufacturing industry of any country."[9]

It was noted that 'much labour is employed and a large capital invested in acid making, the cost of the buildings and plant alone having been £35,000, as much as £5,000 having been spent on platinum.'[10] An 1894 Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Plan provides a useful overview of development at the site by this time. Several small cottages were built along Whitehall Street opposite the intersection with Hall Street during the 1880s to accommodate mangers and other factory staff, included Dee cottage (1880). The chemical works consisted of a tight cluster of buildings in the centre of the site, with open space to the east and west, between it and Whitehall Street and the former Mc Meikan's building along the river. Photographs from the period indicate that by the end of the nineteenth century the site was characterised by large brick chimneys, and sawtooth roofed factories and stores.

In 1897 Cuming Smith amalgamated with Felton Grimwade & Co's acid and chemical works at Port Melbourne, the new entity continuing to trade as Cuming Smith.

James Cuming junior became general manager of the works in 1897. The Cuming family lived in Footscray for many years. James Cuming senior had become active in local affairs from the 1880s onwards. He had joined Footscray Council in 1881 and subsequently serving as mayor in 1885-86 and 1890-91. He later travelled extensively, and became a noted philanthropist, remaining heavily involved in the business until his death in 1911.[11] James Cuming junior emerged as an important industrialist in his own right. He negotiated a price fixing agreement with the company's competitors, Wischer & Co, Federal Fertilisers and Mount Lyell which lead to the formation of the Victorian Fertiliser Association in 1907. He was a founder of the Society of Chemical Industry in Victoria and travelled extensively to keep abreast of developments in the chemical industry overseas.[12] The influence of the family in the firm continued after the death of James junior in 1920, his eldest son, William Fehon Cuming, continued in the role of general manager until the 1930s.[13]

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7 *Local Industries in Williamstown, Footscray and Yarraville*, p. 25.
8 *Local Industries in Williamstown, Footscray and Yarraville*, pp. 26-27.
9 *Victoria and its Metropolis Past and Present*, Volume IIB, p. 597.
10 *Victoria and its Metropolis Past and Present*, Volume IIB, p. 597.
11 James Cuming, *An Autobiography*, pp. 22-23.
12 *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 8, p. 173.
13 *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 8, p. 173.

which occupied river frontage east of Cumming's factory. Cuming saw the two businesses as complementary.

> Soon after [the fire] a large manure works adjoining our place went insolvent and the plant was on the market. It had been a large customer of ours, and as the two businesses went well together we bought it in. Previous to this we had only the acid trade, which was driving in the summer but slack in the winter. By working the men about we were thus enabled to keep going all the year round.[4]

The expansion of the works was fuelled by the increased local demand for the manufactured fertilisers, as agricultural activities expanded across the colonies and Australian farmers begun to accept the use of synthetic fertilisers over more traditional products such as bone meal.

In 1881 George Smith left the partnership to establish chemical works in New Zealand. Cuming's son James Cumming (junior) studied industrial chemistry and was admitted into the partnership by 1882. Chemical works were also founded in Adelaide in 1882 by Cuming's eldest son, Robert Burns Cuming in a venture between Cuming, Alfred Felton, F D Grimwade and Campbell.[5]

The works produced a diverse range of chemical products including sulphuric acid which was produced using a complex process. An 1882 article described the acid works and the chemical process.

> The main building is 150 feet by 100 feet, and is strongly put together, and in addition has stabling, stores, sheds and necessary adjuncts.
>
> The sulphur is first burnt in twelve burners. With the sulphur is put a certain percentage of nitrate of soda, decomposed with sulphuric acid in small iron pots by the heat of burning sulphur. There are two charges placed in each burner, composed of certain proportions of sulphur and nitrate of sulphur, the latter of which is contained in [sic] iron pots. The effect, in about two hours, is to consume all the sulphur and decompose the nitrate of soda. The residue from the nitrate of soda has then become a bi-sulphate of soda. The gases from the burning sulphur, mixed with nitric oxides, pass from the burners into the condensing chambers, five in number, as follows: - three 90 feet by 20 feet, 14 feet high; one 60 feet by 22 feet, 14 feet high, and one 20 feet by 22 feet, 17 feet high. Here the gases mix, and the nitric acid oxidising sulphurous acid, with steam forms sulphuric acid, which condenses in the chambers. Steam is introduced into these chambers at different places by jets. The heat of the chambers must be kept at a uniform temperature. The temperature is regulated by the draught and the quantities of the stuff consumed. The draught is regulated by a rather complicated system, namely, by a series of pipes and condensing towers ("save alls"), all of which are introduced for the purpose of condensing to a greater degree. There is still a small percentage (about one degree) of uncondensed gases, which are carried through a large tower and long flue to the chimney of manure works belonging to the same firm. Here these uncondensed gases swerve the purpose of sweetening any high smells at the bone mill, which are also carried into the chimney by flues.[6]

Chemicals produced, besides sulphuric acid, included muriatic and nitric acid, nitrate of ammonia and various sulphates. A large proportion of the burnt sulphur was used to

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4 James Cuming, *An Autobiography*, p. 84.

5 *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 8, p. 172

6 *Local Industries in Williamstown, Footscray and Yarraville*, p. 25.

The site entered a new significant phase of development between c.1900-1920s, with a series of new structures being built on the eastern third of the site, and the demolition of the original McMeikan manure works building. The wharf at the south end of the river frontage was redeveloped and sheds (now demolished) built linking the waterfront with the factory complex in the centre of the site.

Miller & Co Ropeworks 1888-1929

During the 1880s heavy industry rapidly expanded in the Footscray area. A sugar refinery had been established on land to the south of the Cuming Smith Co site in 1873, with a narrow strip of vacant land between the two complexes. In 1888, James Miller erected ropeworks on this site.[14]

Scotsman James Miller originally established ropeworks on a site between Queen's Bridge Road and City Road in South Melbourne in the 1860s. After a disastrous fire, the firm relocated to a new brick building on a larger site in South Melbourne facing Moray Street in 1872, where it remained until Miller profitably sold the land during the 1880s land boom and relocated the factory to Yarraville in 1888.[15]

At Yarraville, the company built a large complex of connected brick buildings, including a series of distinctive Dutch gabled brick factory sheds, which were frequently depicted in advertising. An estimated workforce 150 women and girls were working at the factory by 1901.[16] Some of the sacking and cordage output was supplied to the adjacent Cuming Smith and CSR factories.[17]

The company was profiled in the 1909 publication *Footscray's First Fifty Years*.

> [James Mill & Co] manufacture rope and cordage of all kinds ... Besides being makers of rope and cordage, they have an extensive plant for the manufacture of seaming and roping twines, shop twines, and cords of every description. And in addition to these they make coir mats, coir matting, etc.
>
> The engine power required for the driving of the of machinery in the factory is a compound steam engine, and a high-pressure engine, totalling about 600 horse-power, and at the present time there are about 350 hand employed there.[18]

The same year the company opened a second factory in Dawson Street, Brunswick. The Yarraville factory remained the principal focus of operations until it was closed down in 1928-29, with production relocating to the Brunswick factory.[19]

Commonwealth Fertilisers 1929-1936

In 1929 Cuming Smith was taken over by Commonwealth Fertilisers Ltd, which also incorporated the Mount Lyell and Wischer fertiliser companies along with Federal Fertilisers. The amalgamation sought to take advantage of synergies in production and distribution in the industry, which the resultant company dominated.

During the 1930s the former Miller's ropeworks site was divided between the CSR and Commonwealth Fertiliser sites, with most substantial brick stores on land acquired by the latter

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14 *CSR Sugar Refinery Conservation Analysis*, Allom Lovell & Associates, p. 11.
15 H Michell, *Footscray's First Fifty Years*, (pages unnumbered).
16 John Lack, *A History of Footscray*, p. 165.
17 Gary Vines, *Western Region Industrial Heritage Study*, (pages unnumbered).
18 H Michell, *Footscray's First Fifty Years*, (pages unnumbered).
19 John Lack, *A History of Footscray*, p. 307.

company. By the 1930s a railway siding connection had been made with the site along the riverfront next to the large sheds in the vicinity.

Pivot Industries 1936-2000

In 1936 Commonwealth Fertilisers was taken over by ICI, and the former Cuming Smith component of its production sites was sold to the Geelong Company, Pivot.

Over the following decades most of the site was redeveloped, with large new storage and processing sheds replacing earlier structures in the centre of the site, and along the riverfront, where land reclamation extended the site eastwards. (A sequence of historic site plans showing the process of development is included in Appendix B.)

Change through the 1990s principally consisted of the demolition of most of the remaining earlier buildings on the site, thus completing the transformation of the site from being characterised by gable roofed brick stores and chimneys in the nineteenth century to one typified by large steel framed, corrugated iron clad sheds by the late twentieth.

In 2000, the site was purchased by the Melbourne Port Corporation.

4.0 Individual Buildings

4.1 Dee Cottage

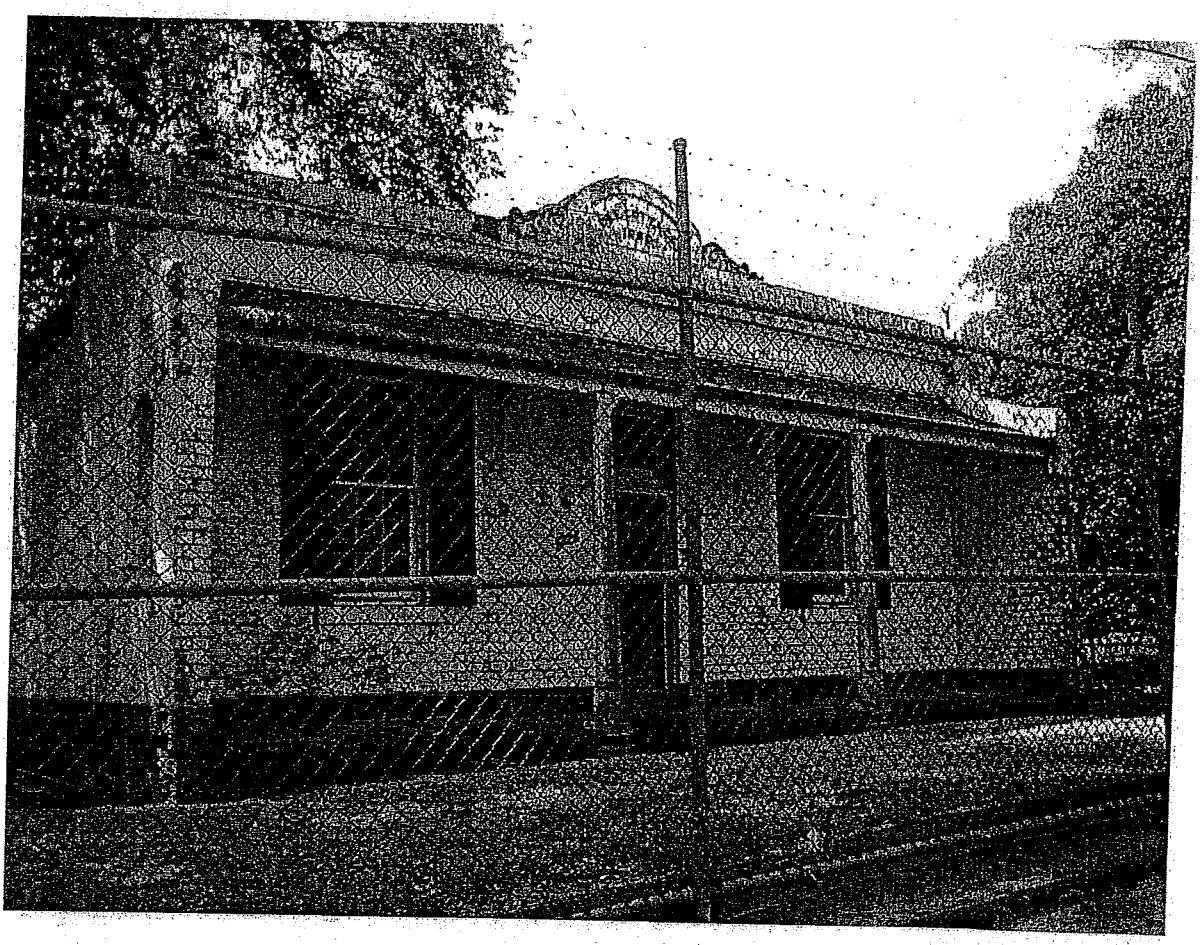


Figure 2 *View of Dee Cottage from Whitehall Road.*

History

The following summary history is based the citation for the site contained in the *Maribyrnong Heritage Review.*

Dee Cottage is believed to have been built by bricklayer David Goudie in 1880.[20] It was occupied by members of the Cuming family during the 1880s and 1890s including James Cuming junior from c.1886 to 1892, and George Cuming in 1895-96.[21] Several other timber houses were built in the vicinity at this time, and used by company workers. Dee Cottage was later occupied by company workers A G Garnsworthy, Horace Greig and then a foreman lead

20 Jill Barnard, Graeme Butler, Francis Gilfedder & Gary Vines, *Maribyrnong Heritage Review,* Volume 3, Appendix 1, p. 215.

21 James Cuming, *An Autobiography*, p. 133.

burner Jack Carter, who lived there from 1929 until 1963. Senior maintenance engineer Bruce Norton was resident in the cottage by 1970[22]

A timber extension and some external refurbishments were undertaken in the early twentieth century. The two large elm trees adjacent to the cottage are thought to have been planted in the late nineteenth century.

Description

Dee cottage is a brick villa constructed on bluestone foundations with a slate clad, hipped roof. The principal elevation along Whitehall Street features two windows with timber shutters flanking a central doorway, the original verandah posts and decoration having been removed. Lettering reading 'Dee Cottage 1880' is included in rendered decoration above the parapet. The nineteenth century interior fabric remains intact inside the cottage to a high degree, apart from the removal of original doors and fireplaces, and the insertion of early twentieth century pressed metal ceilings.

Significance

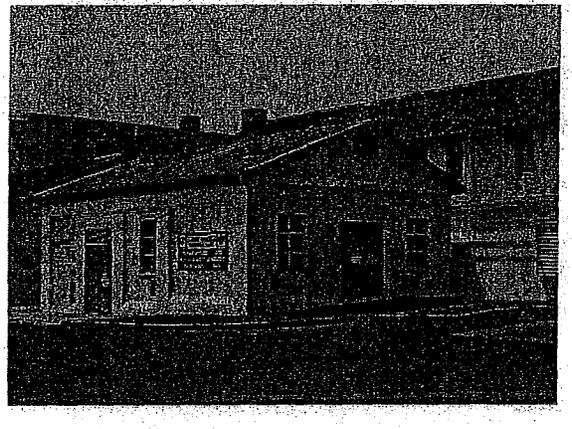
Dee Cottage is of historic significance as a surviving example of intact nineteenth century housing stock in the area. It is also significant for its close associations with the Cuming Smith company, having most likely been constructed to accommodate employees of the firm, with members of the Cuming family known to have been occupants in the 1880s and 1890s.

22 Jill Barnard, Graeme Butler, Francis Gilfedder & Gary Vines, *Maribyrnong Heritage Review*, Volume 3, Appendix 1, p. 215.

4.2 Administration Complex

Former Laboratory

Office Block



Electrical Substation

Former Stables

Figure 3 The administration complex is comprised of four buildings.

History

This cluster of buildings developed in the early twentieth century at the intersection between the main road into the site from Whitehall Street and a secondary north-south road between a series of larger factory buildings. The buildings were erected and modified in successive stages from the 1910s onwards. During the 1950s designs were prepared for a large new combined central office building for the site, though this option was abandoned in favour of making additions to the existing structures.

Laboratories where chemical analysis could be undertaken were an essential element within the complex. A small L-shaped laboratory building is visible on the south side of the main road in early sewerage plans from the 1910s. Early plans suggest it was attached to the adjacent number three chemical works building along its south side. 1939 plans for alterations by architect Joseph Plottel show the plan consisted of offices and staff areas on the ground floor, with four large laboratory spaces on the first floor. The alterations were carried out and

consisted primarily of modifications to window and door openings on the north, east and south facades, and reconstruction of the stairwell.

A small building is shown at the location of the current office block on site plans dating from the 1910s onwards. By the 1950s it had been enlarged and was functioning as the central offices for the site. Internal alterations were carried out in the mid-1950s and 1960s. The need for more office space resulted in plans being drawn up for a third floor in 1959, but this scheme however was rejected in favour of a two-storey extension to the north end of the building, built the same year.

The electrical substation dates from the c.1920s. The former stable at the south end of the complex is not shown on the 1894 MMBW plan of the site. Early site plans and photographs suggest a building had been erected in this location some time soon after the c.1910s.

Description

The administration complex consists of four buildings.

The laboratory is a two storeyed, painted, rendered brick structure with a partial double bay along its south side. The existing configuration of external windows and doors dates from the c.1950s. The portico above the main entrance on the east elevation dates from the c.1970s, while the windows are generally timber framed. The roof is gabled in form and clad with corrugated cement sheeting. A modern external stair has been added to the west elevation. The interior was not examined, but is believed to be highly modified.

The office block is of similar design and construction to the laboratories, though comprises a single gabled bay. The extent of the 1950s addition is clearly evident from lines in the brickwork. The original internal plan has been repeatedly altered, though evidence remains of some c.1930s finishes such as plaster cornices.

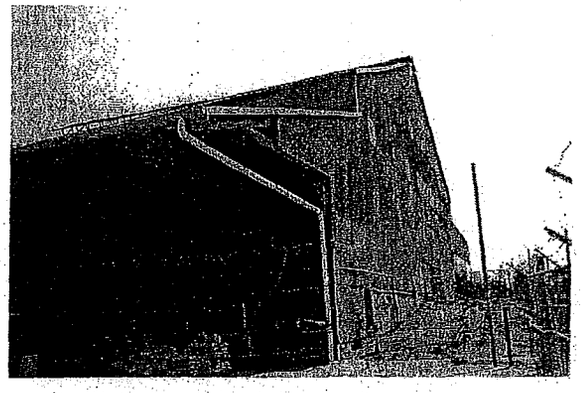
The electrical substation is a single storeyed, gabled rendered brick structure, which is square in plan. It is generally intact to its c.1920s construction. Windows are steel framed and the roof is clad with corrugated cement sheeting.

The former stable is a concrete walled shed, with a partial bluestone floor, and a c.1950s corrugated sheet cement clad roof. A small brick amenities block has been added to the north elevation. It is currently being used as a workshop/store.

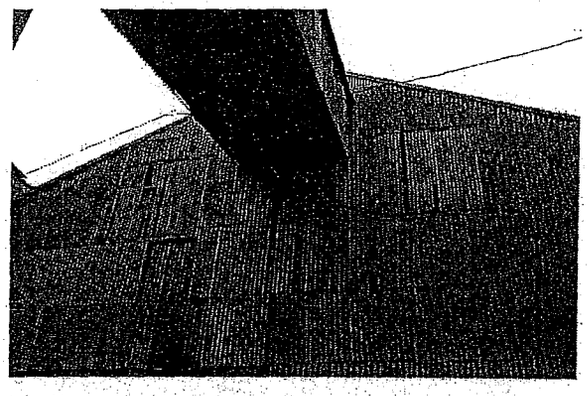
Significance

The administration complex is of some historic significance as a focal point for the former Cuming Smith factory complex. While not of particular architectural distinction, the laboratory, offices and electrical substation are the earliest and most architecturally elaborate structures remaining from the Cuming Smith works. Located along the principal entry road onto the site from Whitehall Street, they define a sense of entry, and closely relate to each other stylistically. As noted, the buildings have been extensively altered and added to and these works have to some degree diminished their significance.

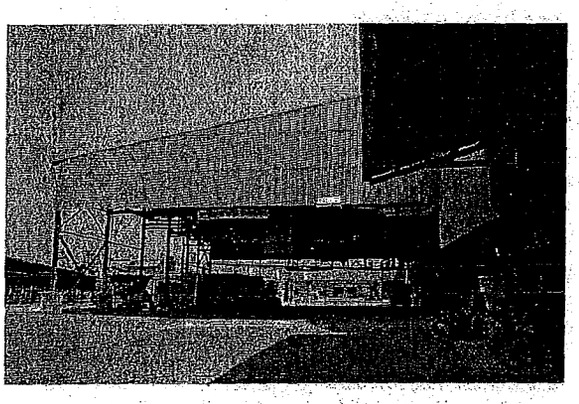
4.3 Shed 4-6



View showing the gabled north elevation.



The south elevation retains slatted timber ventilation screens.



A large awning has been added to the railway loading area on the south elevation.

Interior view looking north.

Figure 4 Various views of Shed 4-6.

History

During the 1910s and 20s a series of large new sheds were erected in the eastern third of the Cuming Smith site adjacent to the wharf and the railway siding.

Shed 4-6 was erected in two stages, beginning with the southern fourteen bays (originally known as Shed 4) dating between c.1919 and 1922, with a small gabled dressing plant on the east side. A larger extension of a further twenty bays on the north side (Sheds 5-6) and a covered loading station along the eastern side had been added by the late 1930s. By 1939 an adjacent shed (No 7 Storage Shed) had been built along the western side of Shed 4-6.

New timber knee bracing was added to the trusses in 1953.[23] By the late 1970s a large covered loading area had been added midway along the eastern elevation.

Description

Shed 4-6 is a large timber framed with a pitched roof, which is externally clad with modern corrugated, galvanised steel sheeting. The frame is composed of a grid of eight by thirty-four undressed timber log columns, with thirty-five single span timber trusses supporting the roof

23 Drawing B-0-321 (7), held on site in former Pivot drawing collection.

structure. The covered loading area on the east elevation is steel framed and has a corrugated sheet steel clad pitched roof.

The interior consists of a single large storage space, with some early conveying plant located in the side walls and within the roof, much of which has been decommissioned. A system of floor tunnels has recently collapsed and been infilled. Above concrete retaining walls and walls of bagged fertiliser along its eastern side, the space is open to the adjacent shed.

Significance

Shed 4-6 was built in several stages between c.1919-1930s as part of a major phase of development on the eastern third of the site. It is of some historic significance as one of the earliest remaining buildings associated with the Cuming Smith & Co works. It is of potential technological significance as an unusual example of a large, broad span timber framed store. It is noted that this shed is in relatively poor condition and its structural integrity is unknown.

4.4 Miller & Co Workshop/Garage

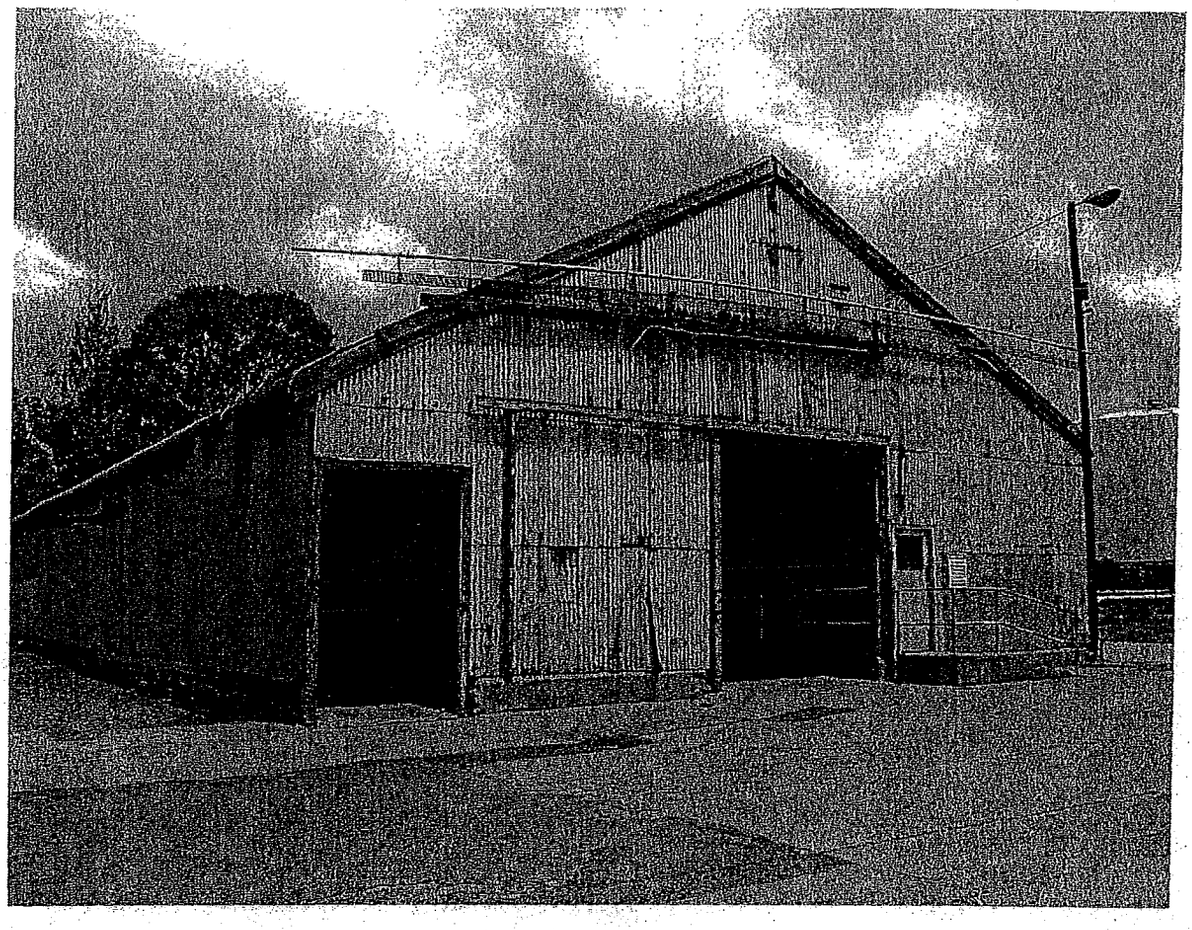


Figure 5 *View of the workshop/garage from the north.*

History

In 1888 James Miller relocated his rope manufacturing plant from South Melbourne to a new site in Yarraville between the Cuming Smith factory and CSR.[24] During the next decade a large complex of buildings was erected, including, nine Dutch gabled brick sheds and a long corrugated iron shed containing a ropewalk. Further works in the early twentieth century included a series of smaller ancillary structures such as this small garage/workshop, which is visible in aerial photographs dating from the 1920s. By the late 1990s, this was the only building remaining at the site.

Description

The shed is a simple utilitarian timber framed structure, rectangular in plan, with a gabled roof. It is externally clad with corrugated, galvanised steel sheeting. An office has been partitioned off along its western interior wall.

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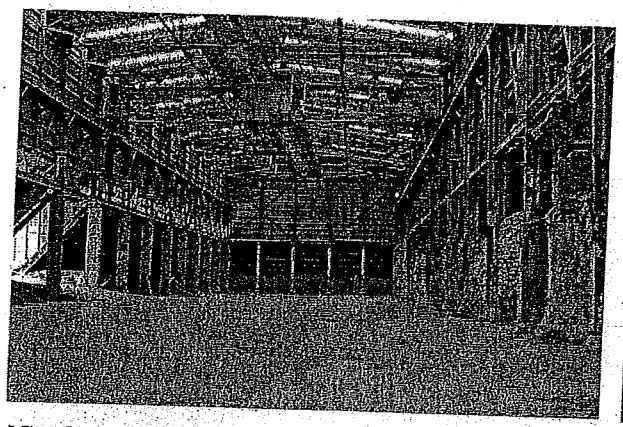
24 H Michell, *Footscray's First Fifty Years*, (pages unnumbered).

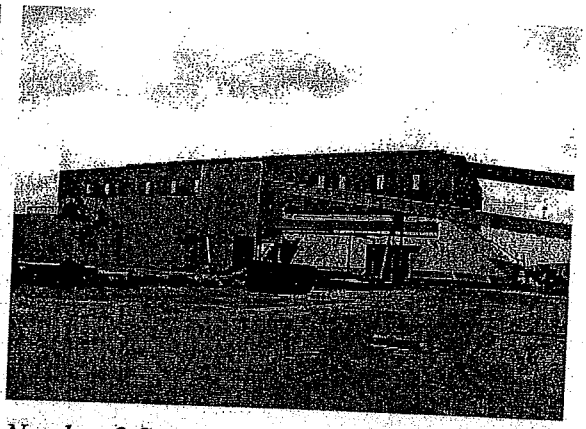
Significance

This workshop/garage building appears to date from the c.1920s, and was part of what was originally a large complex of buildings associated with the now demolished James Miller & Co's rope manufacturing works. Purely utilitarian in character, it is of conventional design and construction for the period, and as such is of limited interest.

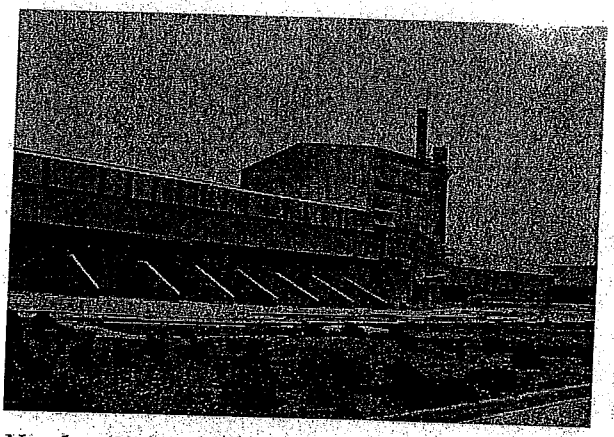
4.5 Other Buildings



Number 7 Store

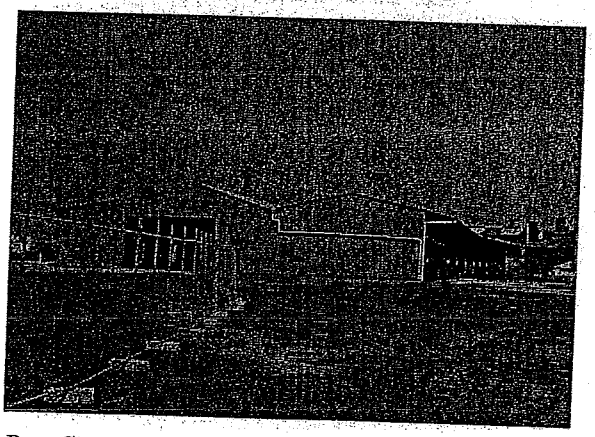


Number 8 Store

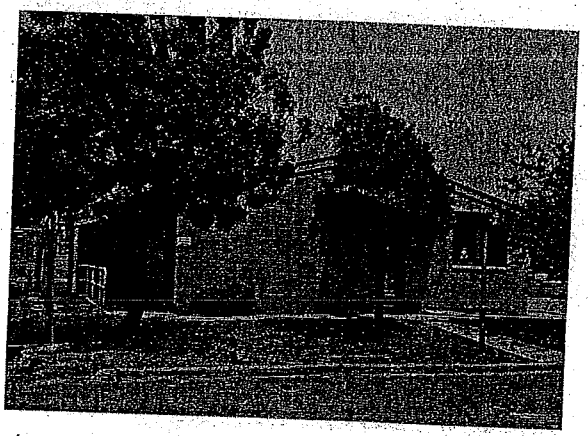


Number 8 Plant/ Granulation Store

Offices/Store



Bag Storage Sheds Numbers 1 & 2



Amenities Block

Figure 6 *Various other storage and processing sheds and amenities buildings are located at the site.*

History & Description

Building	Construction Date	Description
Number 7 Store	Late 1930s	Very large steel framed store, with simple pitched roof, externally clad with corrugated steel sheeting.
Number 8 Store	c.1960s.	Massive, unusually shaped steel framed phosphate store, with simple pitched roof, externally clad with corrugated steel sheeting.
Number 8 Plant/ Granulation Store	c.1960s	Steel framed processing plant/store, clad with corrugated sheet steel. Contain recently decommissioned machinery.
Offices/Store	c.1940s	Timber framed store with c.1950s brick façade. Pitched roof is clad with corrugated cement sheeting. The store has been partitioned internally to accommodate offices.
Bag Storage Sheds Numbers 1 & 2	c.1980s	Steel framed, pressed sheet steel clad sheds.
Amenities Block	c.1990s	Conventional brick veneer construction.

Significance

None of these buildings are considered to be of individual significance or of significance in demonstrating the early workings of this site.

5.0 Assessment of Significance

5.1 Statement of Significance

The following statement of significance for the site was presented in the *City of Maribyrnong Heritage Review.*

> Cuming Smith is of regional, historical and architectural significance as it was the largest and one of the first manufacturers of superphosphate fertiliser in Victoria. The works pioneered the manufacture of chemical fertiliser and introduced integrated processes in acid and chemical manufacture. The factory is one of the major industrial facilities in the Yarraville area with considerable surviving building stock from the turn of the century period. Its sickle Brand agricultural products (sheep dip, rabbit poison, wheat pickling, etc) were famous among Australian and overseas farmers. Substantial parts of the works dating from the period of greatest expansion and of unusual construction survive, still in the context of fertiliser production. A distinctive group of building forms and highly unusual industrial landscape with the fertiliser frames on the wharf a local landmark. James Cuming made his fortune from this works and for its sake played an influential role in the civic and commercial affairs of Footscray.[25]

(Note: Since this was written the wharf and cranes have been demolished.)

5.2 Related Industrial Sites

In considering the above statement, the following provides an overview of the context and relative importance of the site.

Fertiliser Manufacturers

The former Cuming Smith site may most directly be compared to surviving fertiliser manufacturing complexes in Melbourne's western suburbs, of which there were originally four by the 1910s – Cuming Smith & Co., the Mt Lyell Mining & Railway Co., Wischer & Co., and Federal Fertilisers.

The Mt Lyell and Wischer & Co works were located almost adjacent to the Cuming Smith site along Whitehall Street south of the neighbouring CSR factory, the three companies forming a fertiliser manufacturing precinct with similar complexes of factories, stores, offices and river wharfage. (Of these, it was noted in the 1989 *Western Region Industrial Heritage Study* that the original Wischer & Co factory had been demolished.[26])

The former Mt Lyell & Railway Co site at 295 Whitehall Street was established in 1896 on the site of an earlier company, the Victoria Smelting Works.[27] Sulphuric acid, chlorine and caustic soda were produced on the site during the company's early years, with a phosphate plant opened in 1940.[28] At its peak, the complex is known to have comprised of wharves, a

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25 Jill Barnard, Graeme Butler, Francis Gilfedder & Gary Vines, *Maribyrnong Heritage Review,* Volume 3, Appendix 1, pp. 219.

26 Gary Vines, *Western Region Industrial Heritage Study*, (pages unnumbered).

27 Jill Barnard, Graeme Butler, Francis Gilfedder & Gary Vines, *Maribyrnong Heritage Review,* Volume 3, Appendix 1, pp. 227-30.

28 Jill Barnard, Graeme Butler, Francis Gilfedder & Gary Vines, *Maribyrnong Heritage Review,* Volume 3, Appendix 1, pp. 227-30.

power plant, offices, a laboratory and a various chemical production plants. It was identified in the 2001 *Maribyrnong Heritage Review* as consisting of a substantial group of buildings including very large, gabled, timber framed phosphate storage sheds dating from the c.1900s, as well as various smaller sheds and workshops.

Federal Fertilisers was established on Ballarat Road in Deer Park at the turn of the century. Owned by the Nobel Explosives Co., it manufactured superphosphate fertiliser using output chemicals from the production of nitro-glycerine and gelignite.[29] It originally included a large, multi-bay gabled timber framed store, which is thought to have been recently demolished.

Western Suburbs Industrial Sites

More broadly, the former Cuming Smith & Co site may also be compared with a large number of nineteenth and early twentieth century industrial complexes in Melbourne's Western suburbs. The *Maribyrnong Heritage Review* of 2001 identified over thirty complexes dating from the 1870s to the 1940s that are demonstrative of the industrial development of the region.

Conclusion

The former Pivot Industries site is one of two surviving fertiliser manufacturing sites in Melbourne's Western suburbs in operation by the 1910s or earlier. It may most directly be compared to the nearby former Mt Lyell & Railway Co site, which retains a large complex of buildings of a similar scale and possibly more buildings of an earlier date. It is among a substantial number of sites in the region which demonstrate the distinctly industrial character of Yarraville and Footscray. It is understood, however that the former Mt Lyell and Railway Company site, now Orica, contains a more comprehensive range of buildings than have survived on the Pivot site. (Refer to the citation for the site included in Appendix A).

6.0 Comment on Proposed Heritage Overlay

It is currently proposed to introduce heritage overlay controls over several parts of the site, including all of the northern half (HO 179), these overlays affecting a range of different structures and features, as described in the Heritage Overlay map and Heritage Overlay Schedule. The following comments are provided with respect to the proposal as a whole.

6.1 Overall Site

The former Pivot Industries site as a whole is clearly of historic and social significance for its associations with the chemical fertiliser and rope manufacturing industry, dating from the 1870s onwards. Beginning in c.1870, two substantial complexes of buildings were developed by the fertiliser manufacturers Cuming Smith & Co. and rope manufacturers Miller & Co.,

Substantial redevelopment has however occurred from the early twentieth century onwards as well as a more recent demolition program which have transformed the overall character of the site and left few remnants of this early stage of development. Most of the remaining buildings in the complex date from the 1930s and later, and relate to the period when the complex was owned by and operated by Pivot, with only a small shed remaining from Millers Ropeworks.

On this basis, the application of heritage overlay controls to the site as a whole, or in this case to the northern half is not considered to be warranted. The recommended approach would be one where any heritage overlay controls relate only to the extent of individual buildings identified as significant, taking in additional surrounding curtilage where appropriate.

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29 Gary Vines, *Western Region Industrial Heritage Study*, (pages unnumbered).

6.2 Individual Buildings

The following recommendations are made with respect to individual buildings

Dee Cottage

The inclusion of Dee Cottage (with associated curtilage including the adjacent elm trees) in a heritage overlay as part of the City of Maribyrnong Planning Scheme is considered appropriate and warranted.

Administration Complex

Identification of the administrative complex to the extent of the former laboratory, office block, electrical substation and former stable under a heritage overlay in the City of Maribyrnong Planning Scheme with a curtilage limit of three metres and no internal controls is considered appropriate.

Shed 4-6

On the basis of limited investigation, Shed 4-6 would appear to be of some historic and technological significance. Balanced against this, the shed is in poor condition and of questionable structural adequacy. In this context, the proposed application of a heritage overlay should be reviewed. Further investigation would be required to justify the imposition of an overlay, and were one to be applied, it should extend only as far as the perimeter boundary walls, of the original section of the shed without including any surrounding curtilage.

Miller & Co Workshop/Garage

Given that this structure is of little technological or architectural note, and is not demonstrative of the rope manufacturing activities which formerly occurred at the site, inclusion of the building in a heritage overlay under the local planning scheme is not considered to be warranted.

Other Buildings

None of these buildings are considered to be significant to a degree to warrant protection under a heritage overlay control. At present Number 7 Store, Number 8 Store, and Bag Storage Sheds Numbers 1 & 2 are included under the proposed heritage overlay HO 179.

6.3 Conclusions

Three heritage overlays have been proposed for the former Pivot Industries site, HO 179, HO 180 and HO 181.

Heritage overlay protection on the site is considered appropriate only to the extent of Dee Cottage with associated curtilage and the administrative complex with a 3 metre curtilage

In light of this it is recommended that

- Overlay HO 179 be replaced with a smaller overlay covering only the buildings comprising the administration complex.
- Overlay HO 180 be accepted.
- Overlay HO 181 over the Miller & Co. Workshop/Garage be abandoned.

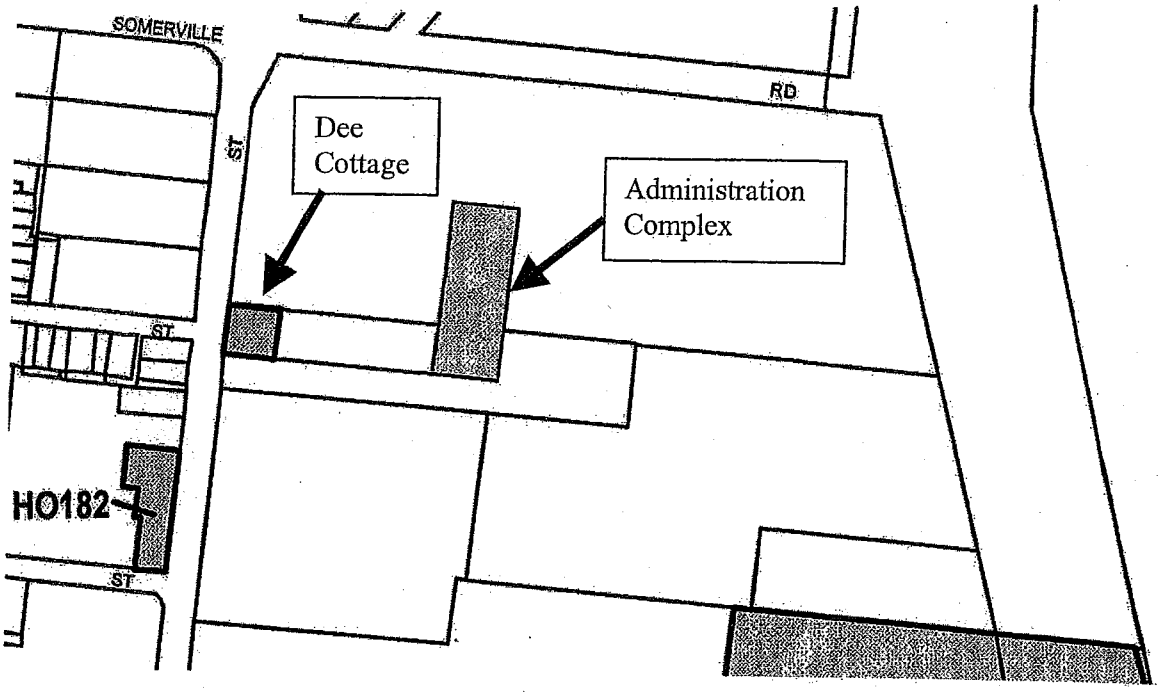

Figure 7 *It is recommended that any heritage overlays applied to the site cover only Dee Cottage (existing overlay HO 181) and the administration complex with a three metre curtilage.*

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APPENDIX A HERITAGE STUDY CITATIONS

Western Region Industrial Heritage Study 1989

Citations for

- Cuming Smith
- Miller's Ropeworks
- Mt Lyell Mining & Railway Co. Ltd

Maribyrnong City Council Heritage Review 2001

Citations for

- Dee Cottage
- Cuming Smith
- Miller's Ropeworks
- Mt Lyell Mining & Railway Co. Ltd