

Significance

Architecturally, a conservative Neo-Grec design with only minor alterations. Historically, on a long-established hotel site and for some sixty odd years a local social centre.

**Southern Can Company (Australia) Pty. Ltd.
240 Geelong Road**

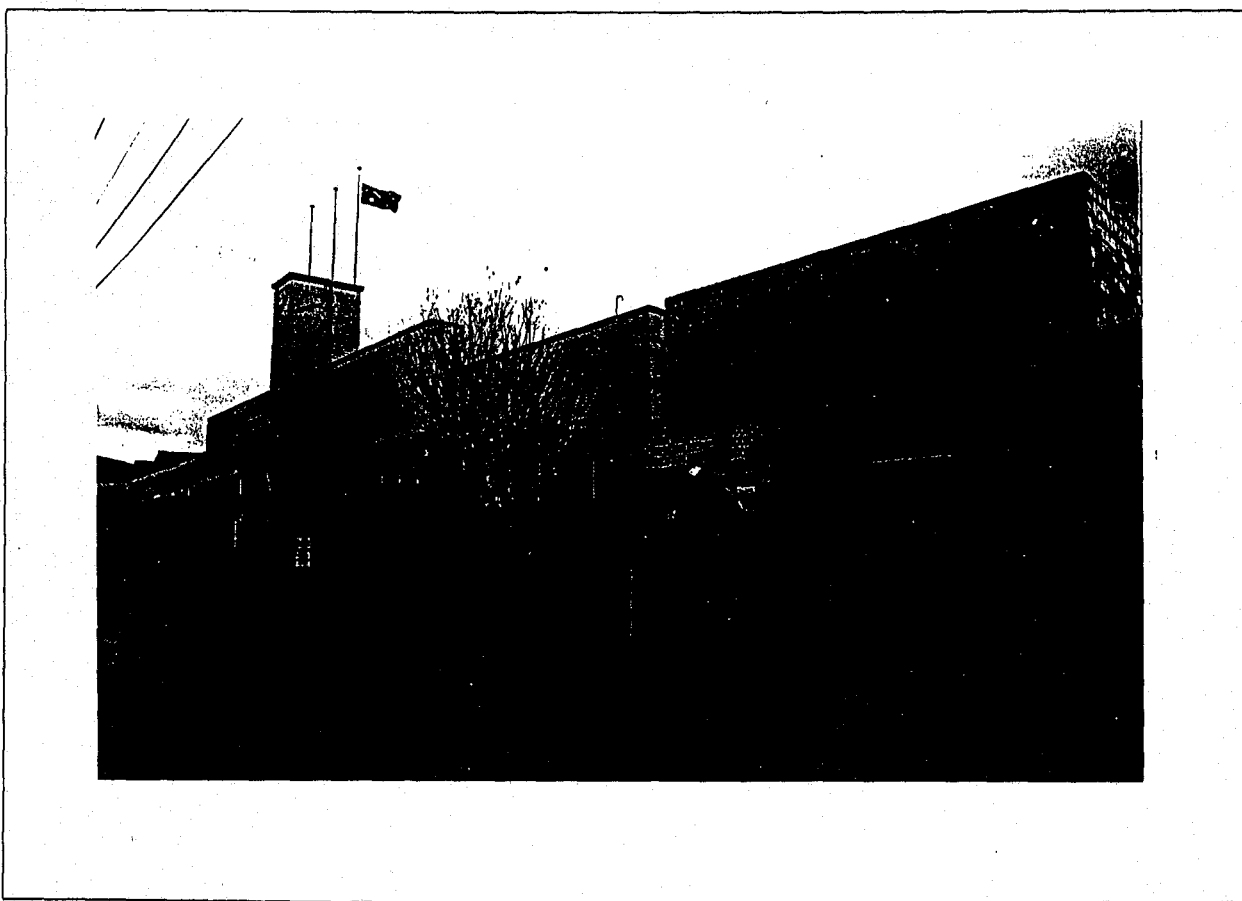
History

The Southern Can Company (Australia) Pty. Ltd. complex was noted modestly as 'typical' of the city's new

factories, in a 1945 Footscray pamphlet. That year saw Footscray municipality as the second only to Melbourne for the value of its manufactured goods, (over 27 million pounds in value).¹

The complex pictured was the design of architects, Oakley & Parkes, who called tenders for a cannery at Footscray in 1937,² allowing production to begin in 1939, three years after formation of the company³. Its form and arched entry resembled closely a slightly earlier design by Edward Billson for the Warburton Signs Publishing Company. Both designs took their inspiration from Dudok of the Netherlands. The builders were Hansen & Yuncken.⁴

Two years after the above pamphlet, another (*Forging Ahead*) pictured the factory, citing one million cans



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- 1 FFC, p.7.
- 2 MUAJ; VFC 1936-8.
- 3 Lack, site notes
- 4 *ibid.*

per day for its output. This involved 'Thousands of tons of Tin-plate ... supplied to leading canners of milk, cheese, meat, fruit, and vegetables.' Its member-companies, on the international canning stage, were the Continental Can Company, Inc. (America) and the Metal Box Company (Britain).¹

Description

Perhaps the most extensive and substantial of the Second War period Footscray factories, this complex occupies an entire block and does not give-way immediately to corrugated iron sheds on its rear flanks.

The Geelong Road face is comprised of two obvious eras: the first and (as with Ajax Belting) more architecturally pretentious is that on the east. Its focus is (also like Ajax) its clock tower which descends into an artfully stacked group of brick geometric forms, each providing some counterpoint to the next in their progress to the ground. An archway is sufficient contrast to the surrounding rectangles to draw immediate attention to the entrance, its architectural origins being

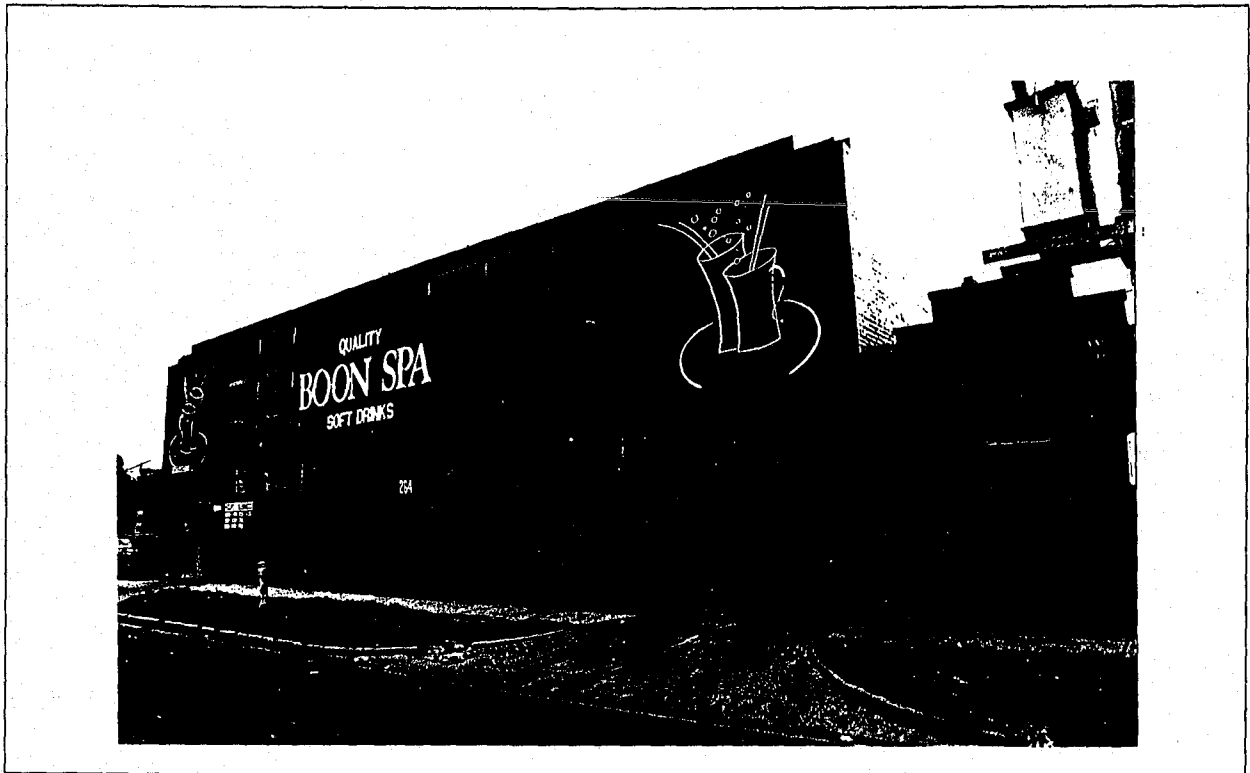
probably in Dudok's 1920s Hilversum work and also in common with Billson's Warburton factory.

However, unlike the rigorous display of brickwork used in these examples, the once resplendent brickwork of this complex has been painted over. Fortunately, the unpainted clinker brick planter boxes give some indication of the brick colour. Once clear of the Dudok massing of the entrance, the western part of the elevation becomes more austere with projecting concrete window hoods punctuating implied bays built into the parapeted facade. The more recent section, on the extreme west, is related in part to the original complex by the use of similar window hoods and fenestration patterns.

Unlike Ajax, some related landscaping survives (palms). At the rear, bold brick-clad forms provide a continuous aesthetic to the complex's perimeter.

External Integrity

(See above). Generally original.



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1 FA, p.27.

Streetscape

Relates to adjoining Ajax and Boon Spa complexes.

Significance

Architecturally, the most substantial and skillfully designed of the Geelong Road Second War period factories, it rivals Billson's Warburton work except for the unfortunate painting of its brickwork. Historically, it corresponds with other industrial expansion in Footscray, particularly along major road routes and within a production sphere related to the approaching conflict.

**Boon Spa Pty. Ltd.
264 Geelong Road**

History

Emerging from a long history of cordial and aerated water manufacturing, the public frontage of this complex was designed by Moderne stylists, R.M. & M.H. King, in 1939.¹ However, its beginnings lie in 1885 with Johann Jacobson's first cordial works at the east end of Paisley Street.² By 1898 it had moved to Geelong Road, on a triangular site bounded by Sunshine and Graingers Roads, where Johann's sons, Alec and Sylvester, began to play a major part in its operation.

About this time (c1909), the family discovered and acquired the source of a mineral spring which emanated from near the Kororoit Creek. The discovery reputedly came from the observation of unexplained recuperative powers of a seasoned beer (and spa) drinker, at the nearby Guiding Star Hotel (by family member, Mrs. Lena Ellens). This inspired the new name, Boon Spa, Pty. Ltd.³

Just before this 1930s phase of the complex's development, the Jacobson brothers were bought out by their former delivery team driver, George Sayer. Sayer presided over the erection of this new factory, installation of new mass-producing machinery and the addition of 22 trucks to the delivery team over the next 19 years. Sayer, in turn, accredited chemist advisor, Gordon Robinson, with the success of his liquid product.⁴

Description

Visible only as the showroom and offices front to an extensive industrial area behind, this is nevertheless both a fanciful facade and the honest projection of one of the saw-teeth of the factory roof profile beyond! Conceived originally as a grid-imposed on a bland rendered facade, the elevation is near symmetrical and divided off in horizontal bands. The top band contains the bold pseudo-structure grid between two end-blocks, behind which presumably industrial-framed glazing shed light on the area beyond (now painted over), just as the other sawteeth still do. The two end panels were rendered and ruled into rectangles, representing the 'glazing' grid between. Sketched over the top of the grid were two jaunty glasses placed together on a tray and dressed with straws and bubbles.

The next band was steel-framed multi-pane glazing, separated from the first by a projecting cement shelf which, through lack of any sunshading capability, was strictly a compositional dividing line. The lowest band comprised large rendered panels, divided off into approx. 270mm x 150mm rectangles, either side of a blank panel surrounding the office entry door which was itself paneled. Roller-shutters closed off large goods entry points at each end of the elevation. Inside, the building was steel-framed with probable earlier buildings beyond.

External Integrity

Glazing painted over on the top level and in part on the next level. A sign panel has been attached to the upper grid.

Streetscape

Relates to the adjoining Ajax Belting complex in style, also to the foundry offices to the east by type.

Significance

Architecturally, a whimsical but two-dimensional example of Moderne styling as applied to the strictly utilitarian shell behind also complementary to similarly if more successfully styled factory and office complexes adjoining. Historically, symbolic of a recent but important period of expansion in this old Footscray firm whose products reached all of Victoria also of the wave of new industrial development which changed Geelong Road.

1 MCAI.
2 FFOY, p.144.
3 ibid.
4 ibid.