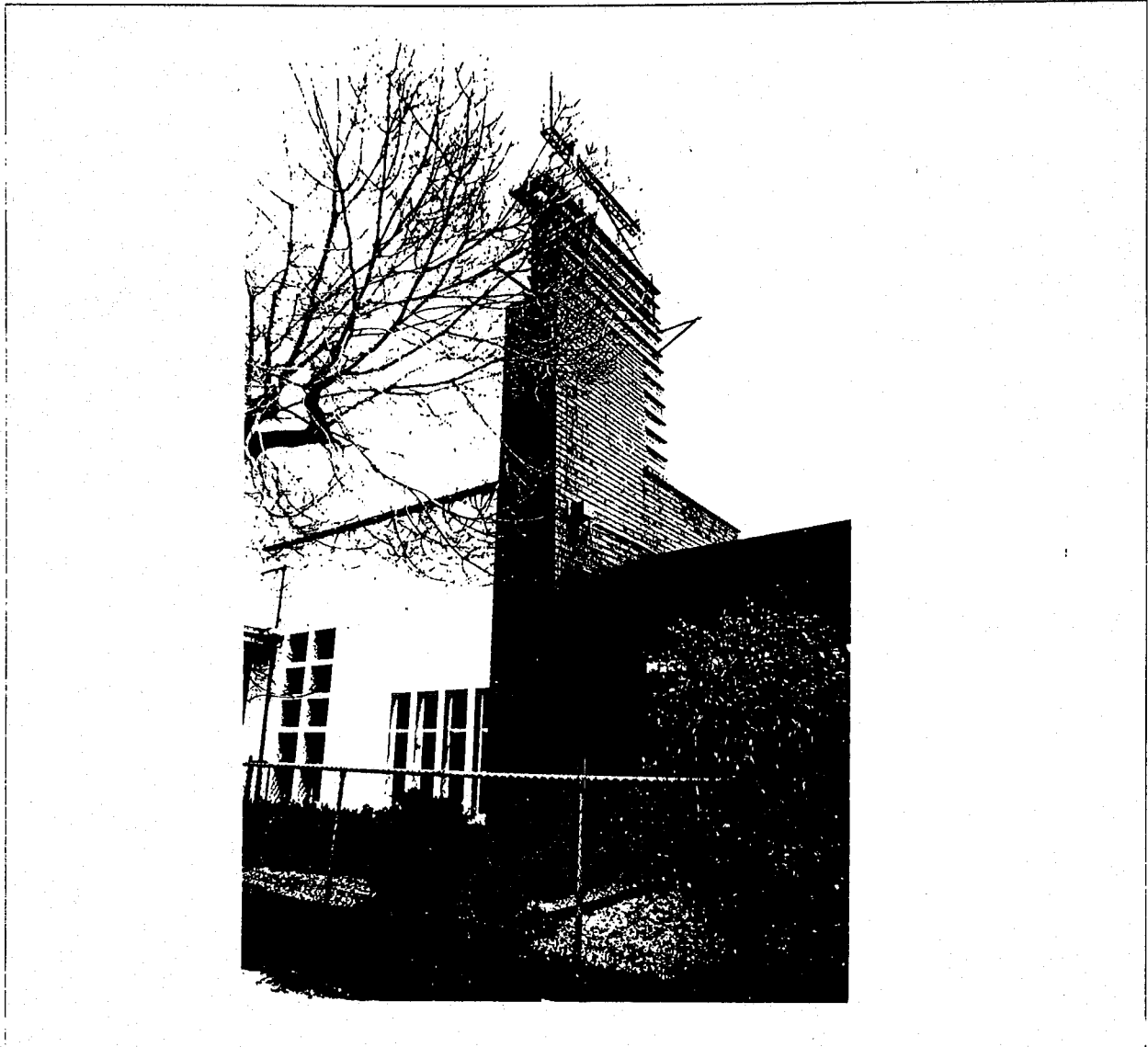


**Hopkins Odlum Pty. Ltd.  
268-270 Geelong Road**

**History**

Belt manufacturers, Hopkins Odlum Pty. Ltd., acquired this site in 1938, occupying it one year later.<sup>1</sup> Architects, R.M. & M.H. King, won yet another Footscray commission, in 1939, with their design of the factory complex which followed, in 1940.<sup>2</sup>

By the 1970s the holding company, Hopkins Odlum Ltd. (est.1912) possessed nominal capital of two million dollars, \$1,414,900 being issued. Among its directors were Leslie Odlum, Alwyn Ford (sales director), Rolf Moodie (managing director), Edwyn Wade, James Shepherdly and chairman, Robert Simpson. Apex Belting, also at this address, (and New South Wales), was a subsidiary, having been itself established in 1890 and replaced Hopkins Odlum Pty. Ltd. Their products still centred on industrial machine or conveyer belting including leather and PVC, rubber, conveyer and transmission belting, and all types of



4 - 55 268-270 Geelong Road

1 VFC  
2 ibid.

vee-belts. Airport luggage handling equipment, industrial fasteners, ash, coal, soot and cement conveyers, laces and general leather goods and simple rubber sheeting were all part of a long list of related products, brand names including Apex, Brammer and Superflex. Issued capital was \$153,750 and employed staff numbered 180.<sup>1</sup>

#### Description

Architecturally, the offices of this complex are divided into two, with recent more prosaic additions to the west and the more architecturally pretentious and earlier section to the east. The latter section commences on an orange brick 'vertical feature', adorned at its top with cement fins and a 'floating' capping: this was the element which identified the building. At its base was a rendered block which, like the adjoining Boon Spa, was ruled-off into squares which formed, in part, subtle gridded window elements. Set to one side and 'floating' off in an all-glazed lightly-framed annexe was the entrance (probably from the later addition). On the other side stretched the building proper, set low, with a long horizontal window strip comprising steel-framed windows, each divided by fins of deep green

terra-cotta. A round window provided a full-stop for this strip, at the eastern end, where the walls turn north into a courtyard and meet the industrial section of the complex. A quarry tile capped, continuous brick planter defined the boundary, with some remnant cypress planting nearby. At the rear, boundary walls are of brick with corrugated iron and asbestos sheet forming other wall and roof surfaces.

#### External Integrity

Chain wire fence added to the planter; complex extended to west and alterations made to the entrance porch.

#### Streetscape

Closely integrated with Boon Spa and relates to the foundry offices at the eastern extent of the block.

#### Significance

An accomplished early Modern factory/office design which forms part of a regionally important industrial



4 - 56 357 Geelong Road

1 BWWA 1924, pp.80,327

precinct established along Geelong Road prior to the Second War.

### House

#### 357 Geelong Road

#### History

Bricklayer, Charles White, presumably participated in the erection of this seven-room brick house, in 1923-4, for his family's subsequent long occupancy.<sup>1</sup> Apparently of Scottish origin, Charles was dead by 1934, leaving his widow Margaret and family, William, Alex and Davie.<sup>2</sup> Margaret (or Elsie) White remained here at least into the 1950s.<sup>3</sup>

#### Description

Californian Bungalow in form, the house retains its smooth and rough-cast stucco and unpainted red brick walls. Aligned with this use of natural finishes, are the Marseilles pattern terra-cotta tiles used on the roof. Not unlike a stripped version of Pebbles (q.v.), further east in Geelong Road, this house has limited but precise detailing, including the ox-bow arched gable vent, the porch stair and balustrade, terra-cotta scotias, and formed brackets set under the window bay eaves. The bay itself provides a minor geometric volume in an interplay of gabled forms. The side porch hints at the cruciform plan of some early Bungalows and the Eastern-style fretted brackets to the deep eaves are details carried over from the previous Queen Anne.

#### External Integrity

Generally original, except for a new fence (c1940?) and garden walling. Some aspects of the garden survive, including the asphalt two-wheel driveway.

#### Streetscape

Adjoins recent unrelated housing.

#### Significance

Architecturally, a well preserved brick bungalow which possesses some unusual and precise detailing.

### George Bramall & Co. Factory 438-450 Geelong Road

#### History

Rising with a tradition of Footscray rubber goods and waterproofing manufacturers such as Barnet Glass and Beaurepaire, George Bramall expanded to this site from Elizabeth Street in 1928, following the expansion of his business and the need for more and cheaper production area. Like other local industries Bramall & Co. benefited from the Second War, in this case making ground sheets among other things, and also, like earlier Footscray employers, he claimed an improvement in industrial relations having been among the first to introduce the 40 hour week for his workforce. Three years before Bramall's death, in 1945, this complex was erected, following a design approach similar to that of Edward Billson or Oakley & Parkes<sup>4</sup>

Following a merger with the British firm of Greengate & Irwell, the surviving eastern wing of the factory was built 1958-9, manufacturing specifically the Girflex Vee Rope used for machine belts<sup>5</sup>

#### Description

The 1928-42 wing has been recently demolished and what now remains is the 1959 wing, comprising the elevation of the saw-tooth roof profile, as the upper elevation, and a cream brick wall, as the lower. Industrial glazing (aluminium) and an openable window strip comprise most of the elevation and once served as counterpoint to the notable European Modern first wing of the complex, once sited west of this building.

#### External Integrity

Generally original (Geelong Road elevation).

#### Streetscape

Remnant of one of the large complexes developed along this road in the period 1925-40.

#### Significance

Architecturally, what remains is prosaic with none of the style of the 1942 wing and historically, it is repre-

1 RB1923-4.p.176  
2 *The Age* 19.9.34  
3 d1935-50  
4 FFOY p.139  
5 *ibid.*