

**Heritage Place Name**

Nugget Factory (Former)

**Address**

16-20 Kanowna Street, Williamstown

**Heritage Overlay No.**

HO317

**Heritage Precinct(s)**

Government Survey Heritage Precinct

**Significance**

Local

**Style & Type**

19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Non-maritime Industrial Heritage

**Significant Dates**

c1887

c1945

c1908-1974

**Designer**

Unknown

**Builder**

Unknown



**Statement of Significance**

**What is Significant?**

The Nugget Factory (Former), comprising the two (2) storey brick building was constructed c.1887, originally an industrial laundry servicing the maritime industry, it was later used for the manufacturing of shoe and boot polish. It is located at 16-20 Kanowna Street, Williamstown.

**How is it Significant?**

The Nugget Factory (former) is of local and cultural significance to the City of Hobsons Bay.

**Why is it Significant?**

Historically the former Nugget Polish factory is significant as an example of Williamstown's maritime industrial heritage in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and its non-maritime manufacturing history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Originally built to provide laundry services for ships docking at Williamstown, it reflects the town's maritime history. The building was used as the Nugget Polish Company Limited's manufacturing base from 1908-09 to 1974, and represents the new influx of industry into Williamstown in the early twentieth century. The company manufactured Nugget shoe and boot polish. The word 'Nugget' became popularly associated with shoe polish in Australia. The factory later took on the manufacture of other well-known brands of household products owned by the Reckitt & Colman group. The factory is also significant for its former association with the Williamstown community, with locals employed in both management and general positions.

## History

The site of the former Nugget factory on what was then called Morris Street was part of the original government surveys of Williamstown made between 1837 and 1855. The land was part of Allotment 18 & 19 Section 1 of the Parish of Cut Paw Paw purchased by William Mair in 1852. The subject site is said to have remained vacant until around 1887 when it was occupied by a laundry (not necessarily the P&O laundry), offices and machinery owned by a Mrs Black. It has been suggested that the building had been the site of the P&O laundry, however this appears to be incorrect. A report in the *Williamstown Chronicle* in 1883 stated that the P&O laundry was located in four timber buildings inside the fence that divides Nelson Place and the railway.

The building was occupied by Silex Soap Company in 1896 and 1897, then lay vacant for a few years until it was leased by the Standard Centrifugal Company. In 1907 the site was advertised for sale, described as a modern two storey brick building. The ground floor, with an area of 3,235 feet, featured five large compartments, and a one story washing and draining room with brick floor, dome and sky-lights, while the upper floor featured a large room of 1200 square feet. According to a title search the Nugget Polish Company Limited initially signed a five year lease of the building, which was then owned by George Thompson, with a right to purchase. By October 1909 Nugget appeared to own the building. Nugget was initially a brand name of the Lane & Fitte boot polish business established by Paul Fitte and H.C. Lane in Kennington, England in 1895. In 1898 the partnership was converted to the Nugget Polish Company Limited. In 1903 F.E. Pincott joined the London office of the Nugget Polish Company and three years later was transferred to Australia where the Nugget business was developing. An office was rented in Elizabeth Street and the stock was imported. Vines writes that the decision to establish a local manufacturing base was probably affected by the new Federal Government's decision to introduce protection on local manufacture by imposing import tariffs.

It is not known what prompted Nugget to purchase the Williamstown site, though Williamstown had developed as an industrial centre and was located near rail transport and shipping. A western suburbs location may have also been favoured due to its proximity to the raw materials used in making polish. Many industries associated with animal by-products were located near abattoirs and boiling down works. Lanolin and tallow, by-products of sheep, were ingredients of shoe polish. The move may have also been prompted by the municipality's change of attitude and the desire to bring industry to Williamstown. The *Williamstown Chronicle* reported favourably on the company's plans and stated that "Williamstown is being favourably looked upon just now as a depot wherein to establish industries."

In 1929 the Nugget Polish Company joined with the Chiswick Polish Company to become part of the Chiswick Polish Group. In 1959 the Chiswick Polish Group was acquired by Reckitt & Colman, which was an amalgamation of Reckitt & Sons Ltd, J & J Colman, as well as Chiswick Products Ltd. After the acquisition Reckitt & Colman and Nugget operated separately for some time. Manufacturing continued at Williamstown, which also had its own administration and sales organisation. Changes in ownership and expansion of the business saw new products manufactured at the Williamstown factory.

In 1948 Nugget Polish purchased William Fisher Pty Ltd, a Victorian company manufacturing floor wax. Additions were made to the factory in 1953 and Fishers Wax was made at Williamstown. As part of the Reckitt & Colman group Nugget took on the manufacture of Pine-O-Cleen with manufacturing at Williamstown, before manufacturing was done at small Reckitt depots. Edwards writes that in the 1970s there was limited scope for Nugget to expand at Williamstown, particularly after taking on the manufacture of additional Reckitt & Colman products. In 1964 Reckitt & Colman leased newly purpose built premises at Notting Hill and in 1968 the company purchased land in Clayton to build a central depot with manufacturing. In 1968 the administration and marketing executives were transferred to West Ryde in New South Wales and storage and distribution went to Clayton, allowing the Williamstown factory to expand and continue manufacturing until 1976, when all Nugget manufacturing went to West Ryde.

## Description

A report in the *Williamstown Advertiser* described the new factory:

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*There are six rooms on the ground floor with a superficial area of 3500 feet. The boiling room and engine room are on the ground floor at the rear of the building. Next to them is the filling room. An ingenious machine, patented and built in London, is used for this operation. A tray containing 88 tins is passed under the machine at one end and the machine automatically travels along a table for about six feet when it delivers the tray to a lad stationed there, every one of the tins being filled with an accuracy that can be regulated to a grain. One machine is charged with black and the other with brown polish and each can turn out 15000 tins per hour. The quality of the blacking made in Williamstown proves to be first class, the warmer climate assisting in the process. The packing department adjoins the filling room; and upstairs, which may be reached by lifts, the finishing operations are carried out. Boxes, containing a brush and pot, are put up as a travellers outfit. At present these boxes and tins are imported; but Mr Pincott is determined to make the Australian factory self contained and equipped with everything that the firms experience elsewhere can suggest. He intends to identify himself with the town and to employ as much local labor as possible.*

### **External Condition**

Fair

### **External Integrity**

Moderate

### **Context**

Contributory part to the Williamstown Non-maritime Industrial heritage of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

### **Comparative Analysis**

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The Former Nugget Factory is located in the Government Survey Heritage Precinct [HO8] which includes structures primarily associated with the development of the port, railways, and associated industries. This particular building was originally associated with the shipping industry when it was a laundry. It is a building that made the transition from Williamstown's maritime industry to its nonmaritime industry. The former Williamstown Steam Laundry (later Nugget factory) is one of the few remaining buildings in Williamstown that reflects the non-maritime origins and growth of Williamstown. However it could be argued that the subject site actually reflects Williams's maritime origins as well, in view of its adaptation from a laundry serving the shipping industry to a manufacturing site. In 1908 when MMBW Detail Plan 47 was drawn there were no other factories shown in the immediate vicinity. The other industrial site nearby in Morris Street, the Carboniser wool processing factory, did not open until about 1930. By the 1950s it had developed into the large James Seymour Woollen Mills, later known as the Port Phillip Woollen Mills.

The Hobsons Bay Heritage Study includes several factories and industrial complexes in Newport and Spotswood, such as the Former Melbourne Glass Bottle Works [HO046] which is the oldest continuously operating industrial complex in Hobsons Bay. Although established in Spotswood in 1890 much of the extant fabric dates from the interwar era. Other factories included the former Hugh Lennon Agricultural Implement Works [HO153], W. Goetz & Sons Ltd [HO139], and the former WC Thomas & Sons Flour Mill [HO186]. The heritage study does not record any factories in Williamstown. A Williamstown contemporary of the Nugget factory, the Alfred Woollen Mills which were established in Osborne Street in 1878, have since been demolished. The Nugget factory would be one of the earliest extant manufacturing sites in Williamstown. A comparative business was Nugget's major competitor, the Kiwi Polish Company, which was based in Burnley Street Richmond, but the original building no longer exists.

### **Thematic Context**

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*Principal Australian Historical Theme(s)*

Manufacturing and Processing

Maritime and Non-maritime

*Associations*

Unknown

## Recommendations

### *Statutory protection*

Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme:	Yes
Heritage Victoria Register:	No
Register of the National Estate:	No
National Trust Register:	No

### *Management objectives*

Conserve elements that contribute to the significance of the place and ensure that new development is sympathetic to the historic character of the place in accordance with the relevant articles and conservation principles, processes and practice set out in the *Burra Charter*. Refer to the relevant Heritage local policy at Clause 22.01 of the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme.

It would also be desirable to restore previous uses of the buildings in this heritage precinct for both maritime and nonmaritime uses since its construction.

## References

- Application 38397; Search notes, Applications for Certificates of Title, Memorial Library, Registrar-General  
Lovell Chen, *Former Williamstown Steam Laundry, Kanowna Street, Williamstown: Appraisal Report*, p.1  
Lovell Chen, p.1
- Argus 2 March 1907, cited in Lovell Chen, *ibid.*, p.1
- Application 38397; Search notes, Applications for Certificates of Title, Memorial Library, Registrar-General  
Edwards, *ibid.*, p.12
- Ibid.*
- Vines, Gary with Andrew Ward, p.36  
*Ibid.*, p.35
- Ibid.*
- Williamstown Chronicle* 7 November 1908  
Edwards., p, 1, pp.44-46  
*Ibid.*, pp 57-58
- Williamstown Advertiser* 30 January 1909
- Hobsons Bay Heritage Study – Amended 2010 – Vol. 3, Part 1, HO8, p.60*  
Lovell Chen, p.2
- Raworth  
*Hobsons Bay Heritage Study – Amended 2010 – Vol. 3, Part 2, p.62*  
*Hobsons Bay Heritage Study – Amended 2010*  
*Hobsons Bay Heritage Study – Amended 2010 – Vol. 3, Part 1, HO34, p.235*