

# Application to Heritage Victoria for Heritage Listing 2014

Williamstown Victoria 3016

Former Nugget Polish Factory / former P & O steam laundry, soap factory and chemical works,  
Shipyard Training Facility, boat storage and sail making / 16 – 20 Kanowna Street (formerly Morris  
St) Williamstown Victoria 3016 / 1-7 Aitken Street Williamstown Vic 3016



Former Nugget Factory on the left next to the Britannia Hotel HO162 (after renovation)

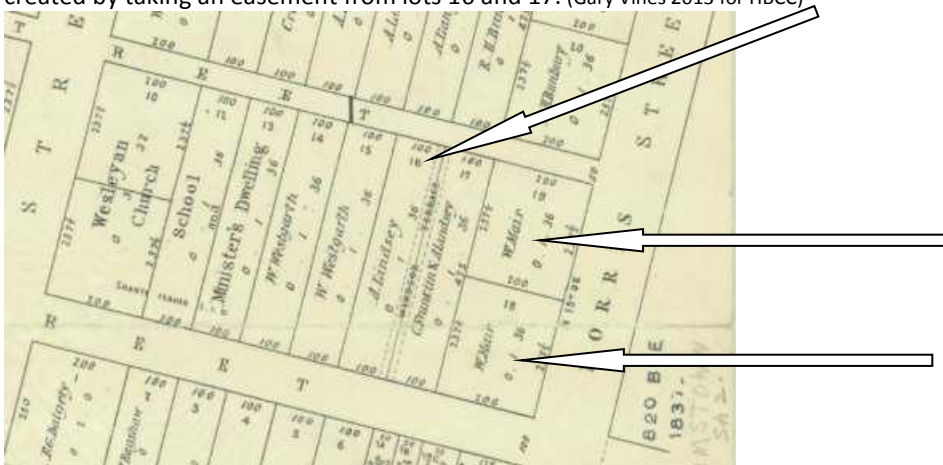
## Introduction:

We are long term residents of Williamstown and are deeply concerned about the continuing loss of the heritage of this historic town which played such an integral part in the development of Melbourne and Victoria.

## Background and history of the former Nugget Factory Williamstown 1883 - 89 to 2014

Kanowna Street (former Morris Street) was part of the original Government survey area of Williamstown, which was carried out between 1837 and 1855, based on an initial feature survey by Robert Hoddle.

Allotments 18 and 19 were purchased by W. Mair in the Crown land sales about 1857. The adjoining lot 17 to the west was purchased by C. Franklin and A. Lindsay in the same sales, but sometime after Windsor Terrace was created by taking an easement from lots 16 and 17. (Gary Vines 2013 for HBCC)



*In 1883 P & O line set up a steam laundry near Railway pier, close to Williamstown's first (now gone) railway station. Consisting of two rows of single and multiple timber buildings its role was to clean the laundry of P & O*

*ships arriving in Williamstown. Each P & O vessel may have delivered up to 29,000 items to be laundered.*

*The laundry initially employed 12 women and 2 men which soon expanded to 24 women, of which 50% were widows with large families. However, by 1886 the land was required for increased defence purposes, possibly for construction of the drill hall that, in the 1920's was dismantled and rebuilt in Pasco Street, last used by the Williamstown High School and demolished in 1970. (Williamstown Historical Society)*

There was no recorded building or other use on the property until 1888 when the rate books list a "laundry, offices and machinery" owned by Mrs Black with a rateable value of £200, while the Sands and McDougall Directory of 1889 names the property as the Williamstown S. (Steam) Laundry. It is therefore assumed that the two storey building facing Kanowna Street was built for the steam laundry in 1888-9. (Gary Vines 2013 for HBCC)

The owner appears to have died soon after the building's construction, with a tender for the purchase of "land at the corner of Cecil Street and Morris Street, Williamstown, with the building known as the steam laundry, and the Machinery, Plant, and Chattels used in connexion herewith". (Lovell Chen 2010 for HBCC)

*Local architect, C J Polain, prepared the plans and advertised for tenders to construct the steam laundry in August 1887 and the buildings were soon finished for Mrs Eliza Black by early 1888.*

*Mrs Black, a widow, had operated the temporary steam laundry near Railway Pier since its inception in 1882. Only recently she had sold the original machinery for £153, via John Morgan, a local auctioneer. Polain's fees for designing the new building and supervising construction came to £110.10s. (Williamstown Historical Society) 2012*

*C J Polain, Architect, invites tenders for the erection of Steam Laundry, Two –storey Brick, in Morris Street, Williamstown for Mrs e Black. Plans may be seen at the Advertiser Exchange, and Barkley Street, Footscray.*

*Unfortunately, only weeks after opening the new laundry Eliza Black died and the control of the laundry passed to her children to manage and within a short time the business closed and, as part of the estate, the premises were put up for sale but with little prospect of a quick sale. (Williamstown Historical Society)*

*At the time of Mrs Eliza Black's death, she was a wealthy land owner in the immediate vicinity of Windsor Terrace and Cecil Street. The factory and land was valued at £3450 plus £500 for machinery. However her new debts on the factory ate into the estate which passed to her two children. (Williamstown Historical Society)*

*For a number of years the building remained vacant save for various ventures that, either did not get off the ground or failed after a short time until the Nugget Factory was established in the buildings. (Williamstown Historical Society)*

Primary evidence of Eliza Black's Will and Debts due to the deceased: The Peninsula and Oriental Company (P & O) for washing: (1) £131. 9s 9d: (2) for rent £611.10s: (3) C J Polain, Architect: £111.10s. (Appendix 3: Primary sources)

*In the Will and Codicil of -  
 Eliza Black late of Cecil Street -  
 Williamstown in the Colony of Victoria  
 Widow deceased.*

*Debts due to deceased*  
 John Morgan & Co. net proceeds sale of old  
 machinery to } 153. 1. 1  
 Peninsular and Oriental Company for washing } 131. 9. 9  
 Forward £

W. Attenborough	On account of mortgage debt	1000	0	0
Peter Murray	Balance of purchase money	210	11	6
Robert Gamlin	Contractor work &c.	200	0	0
Peninsular & Oriental Co.	Rent	614	10	0
W. Moller	Work & labour	28	18	0
C. J. Polain	Architect's fees &c.	111	10	0
Mrs Murray	Nursing	5	0	0
S. G. & Co. Matthews	work & labour	6	6	11
Williamstown Borough	rates	34	14	3
		£	2995	11 0

**Note: C J Polain** was mentioned in the will and legal documents of Eliza Black, owner of the former Nugget Factory y, as being owed £111.10s for "Architect's fees": Since there is no mention of any other property, it is clear that C J Polain was the architect responsible for the former Nugget Factory building.

(See Appendix 4: C J Polain article in the Timeball Times) (Williamstown Historical Society) also (See Appendix 3: Primary Sources)

The Timeline thereafter is:

- 1889 – 1892 the Steam Laundry was part of the estate of Mrs Eliza Black;
- 1891 and 1892: Auction notices appeared in the Argus: 1891 Included the 'Substantially erected brick premises, known as the steam laundry, with land 262.5 feet frontage to Morris Street by a depth of 132 feet along Cecil Street, situated close to shipping and train': 1892 '..... The laundry buildings are two-storied, and foundations are capable of carrying another story, and could easily be converted into

warehouse, store, or factory. The structure contains all machinery and appliances for carrying on an extensive laundry business, including patent ironing machines, nearly new, and in perfect order ... (Lovell Chen 2010 for HBCC)

- 1892 – 1895: George Thompson buys the property and the steam laundry carries on business for a number of years:
- **Primary Documentary evidence (1)** Sands and McDougall's Melbourne and suburban directory (Vic.: 1862-1902) for year 1889 (State Library of Victoria) – listed as a steam laundry.

Dickinson, George Rowley, -- <i>Williamstown junction</i>  <b>Morris st – N side</b> <i>Nelson st</i> Warner, L., restaurant Dock htl – Moss & Tanner <i>Lt Nelson st</i> Britannia htl – Frith, S. Williamstown S. Laundry <i>Cecil st</i> Warren, John Glenister, Henry Wisewould, Cecil	Dock Pier – Freeman, J. gatekeeper Government Patent slip New Railway Pier Floating Dock Mel Coal Shipgr & Eng Co Gas Works – Birnie, George, secretary Ann st Pier Oliver, George, sen con The Morgue Melb Harbour Trust Wright, Robert A. Wright's Patent Slip Melb Coal Company Taylor, Charles	Palmer, D., fishmonger <i>Right-of-way</i> Vacant Arnold, John, bootmkr Crothers & Co., grocers Powell, Wm., fruiterer Williamson & Phillips 41 Smith, R., hairdresser Pier htl – Sparks, Hy. <i>Thompson st</i> Craig, J. H., bookseller Aitken, A. G., draper Woods, F., dining rooms Lewis, William, tailor Brown, A., watchmaker Taylor, Mrs M., tobacst
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- **Primary Documentary evidence (1)** Sands and McDougall directory for year 1895. Building listed as steam laundry. (S L V)

5 Liebert, Robert 7 Fraser, John 9 Lloyd, Richard, store <i>Parker st</i> 11 Heather, G. H., bootmkr 15 Baumatyne, Alexander 17 Keineys, William C. 19 Vacant 21 Vacant 23 Lancaster, Henry 25 Stephens, Frank 27 Sanders, Miss Maria A. 31 Cooper, William 33 Stevens, Peter	<b>W side</b> <i>Nelson st</i> Legg, R., restaurant Dock htl – Harris, C. H. <i>Lt Nelson st</i> Britannia htl – Frith, S. Vernon, Wallace Williamstown S. laundry <i>Cecil st</i> 36 Morrison, Richard 38 Keig, Robert 40 Vacant 42 Harden, Frederick 44 Brownfield, Augustus	Wright's patent slip Reed, Frederick Melbourne Coal Co Victoria Yacht Club shed Water police station – Mitchell, Sergeant B. Custom house – Ham- mond, T. D., tide insp Pilot Board office Steamboat pier Hick, Henry, tin yard Hume & Knight, slip Vacant Blunt, Clement, boatbldr
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- 1896 -97: ..... Although described in the Rate Books as a brick laundry of ten rooms, the Sands and McDougal Directory for the years 1896 and 1897 list the occupant as the Silex Soap Co. Lovell Chen 2010 for HBCC)
- Standard Centrifuge Co, importers and manufacturers then occupied the building.
- 1907: the building was again advertised in The Argus as 'formerly used as a steam laundry' and describes the fitting including 'Drying room, Hoist and hand lifts. Upstairs – Large room, 1200 square feet, and large compartment fitted with clothes rails, heated by steam-pipes, and drying room overhead ..... ' Lovell Chen 2010 for HBCC) originally The Argus 2 March 1907.
- 1907 – 8: Building bought by the Nugget Polish Company:
- 1909 – 1974: Nugget Polish Factory operated on the site.
- The building was very significant in its relationship with the maritime history of Williamstown. The soap making and the boot polish manufacture both used wool and sheep by-products which were shipped in and out of the port of Williamstown. Boot polish was used by British and Australian troops to keep their feet dry during World War One.
- 1929: Williamstown Chronicle reported that the Nugget Boot Polish Co. Has prospered to such an extent that its operations have given it a front rank place among Australian industries. Indeed the name of Nugget has become a household word, not only throughout Australasia, but in many countries overseas".
- 1976 to the present day: The building was later used by the Naval Dockyards as a secure and secret facility for the development of radar and communications for the ships being built at Williamstown, with Naval personnel being based there until development became a possibility about 5 years ago to the present day: variously a Shipyard training facility, Offices, warehouse, boat store and sail making.
- It is currently used as a boat storage yard and there is also a sail maker on the premises;

- The Develop claims that the building is “underused” but the evidence contradicts that view. Its fabric is still in good condition and it would be easy to retain.

## The Building

*In 1889 a new, substantial structure was constructed in Morris (now Kanowna) Street. Initially it was constructed with a Victorian Italianate style façade - gothic lancet windows, ornamental urns, a large ornate pediment and patterned brick work. All which were removed sometime after the late 1920s or even in the 1950s. (Williamstown Historical Society)*

The arched windows were replaced with steel framed windows and the façade was painted, covering up the polychrome brickwork. This will probably survive and the brickwork could be visible once more. The pilasters dividing the front of the building into sections are still recognisable in current photos. . The facade was altered sometime between 1945 and 1960 according to Lovell Chen. This is verified by the two photos In the Lovell Chen report, one in 1945 shows the pediment still in place, while in the other in 1960, the pediment has gone. 'Lovell Chen 2010 for HBCC p6)

A separate office building was constructed immediately to the south between 1919 and 1922, and a Tin -making plant was installed 1933 and the factory expanded again in the 1950s.

(The Nugget Polish Company joined with the Chiswick Polish Company as Chiswick Polish Group in 1929, possibly triggering the improvements to the factory. Hobsons Bay Heritage Study Amended 2012 - Volume 3 – Heritage Precinct and Place Citations, Part 2 – Heritage Places) Lovell Chen 2010 for HBCC p2)

The building in Morris St, was originally built as a laundry handling work from the mail boats which was then used to berth at Williamstown. ***It was later taken over by the Centrifugal Chemical Co. and after years of vacancy it was occupied by the Silex Soap Co. and later was again vacant for a number of years.*** Then the Nugget Co.bought the building and (others) in Aitken St with a view to future extension. It was pointed out by Mr Roberts that great care is exercised by the staff against fire, as much of the material handled is of a highly inflammable nature. It was pleasing to report that no fire of a serious nature had occurred in the history of the Williamstown works. (BUSINESS PERSONALITY No. 31 Williamstown Chronical 13 October 1950

**It seems that the Silex Soap Company occupied the building prior to the Centrifugal Chemical Co. So the period of vacancy was likely to be less than the article above reports: See below:**

- 1896 -97: ..... Although described in the Rate Books as a brick laundry of ten rooms, the Sands and McDougal Directory for the years 1896 and 1897 list the occupant as the Silex Soap Co. Lovell Chen 2010 for HBCC)

*By 1895 the steam laundry had fallen on hard times, possibly impacted by a similar steam laundry operating in Yarraville or a downturn in shipping to Williamstown. A proposal was put forward to change the occupation of the site to Silex soap manufacture but this new industry did not last long, two years at the most. (Williamstown Historical Society)*

They used it for several years when it again lay vacant before the Nugget Polish Company bought the building and 'also adjacent properties, in Aitken St' with a view to future extension. The Nugget Company opened on this site in 1909.

*Late in 1908 Reckitts (later Reckitt and Colmans) took over and the site was then known as the Nugget Factory, where the latest machinery was installed and, in a very short time, some 50 local people were employed in the manufacture and distribution of shoe polish, the head office operating out of the second floor. (Williamstown Historical Society)*

*This building may be the last remaining 19th century industrial structure in the immediate locality and, whilst it may not look important, it does possess nearly 125 years of Williamstown history. (Williamstown Historical Society)*

*The history of the building is not documented in the Hobsons Bay Heritage Study which misses out many of our more obscure but old & heritage significant buildings. . (Williamstown Historical Society)*

According to the Lovell Chen heritage appraisal for Hobsons Bay City Council (Lovell Chen Heritage Appraisal Report 2010)

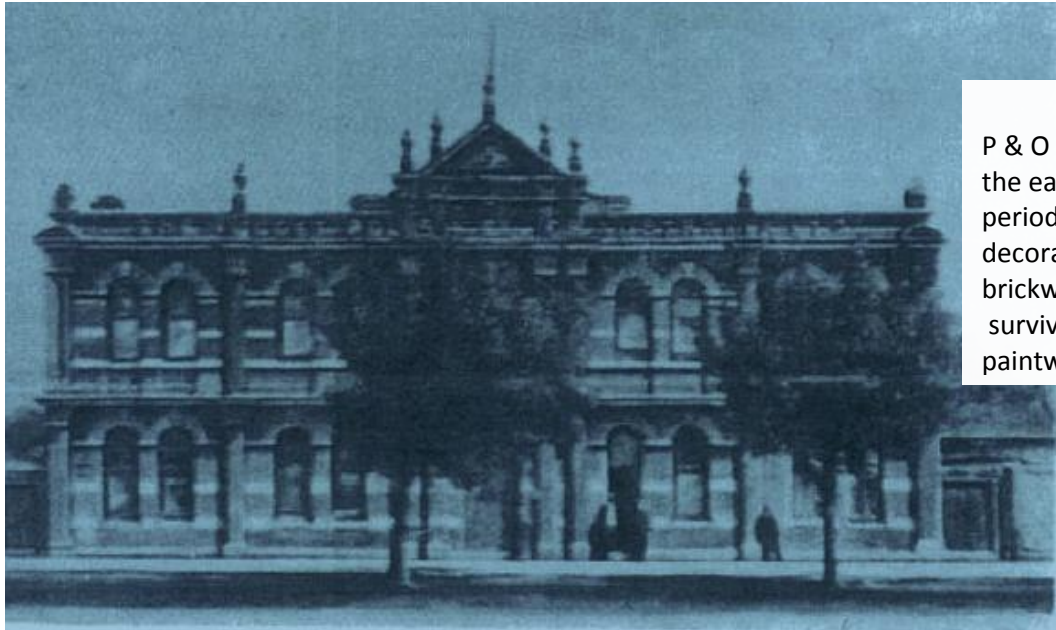


*In its three dimensional form and height the building complements the adjacent Britannia Hotel & reflects the nineteenth and early twentieth century streetscape of Kanowna Street ...*

*The building is of interest historically, however, and in its contribution to the streetscape and the reflection of the industrial origins of the area, would desirably be incorporated into any redevelopment of the former Port Phillip Woollen Mills site. The building would contribute to the setting of the Britannia Hotel and could positively contribute to development along Kanowna Street.*

The point is made by Ms Lardner that:

*Despite three heritage reports concluding that the former Nugget Factory has heritage significance and the specific recommendations of Lovell Chen, now an advisor to the project developer, that it would be desirable for the Nugget Factory to be incorporated into redevelopment along Kanowna Street, the application does not include justification for its demolition. (Helen Lardner Application Review for HBCC P1401/2013 & P3193/2012 VCAT: 2014)*



P & O Steam Laundry in the early Nugget Factory period c. 1908: Note decorative polychrome brickwork which is likely to survive under the present paintwork.

- **Original building at 16 - 20 Kanowna Street, Williamstown:**

The Nugget Factory building today: It's elegant form still evident even without the decorative elements



*In 1905 the building was being used for the Standard Centrifugal Co. importers and manufacturers-*

*H. Wood as the manager.*



## The Product

The business of the Nugget Polish Company was the manufacture of black and brown waterproof boot polishes. They also manufactured a specialty of 'Nugget white cleaner' for white buckskin shoes and white kid boots and shoes. The claim was that this was the first time that a boot polish product applied to shoes would not wipe off on clothing, particularly useful for the military. This was effective boot polish that displaced the old time coarse but lacking product.

They produced standard lines of black and tan polishes leather polish, cleaning and dressing creams and a floor polish known as Poliflor and a product for car hoods. By 1921 the factory was producing coloured boot and shoe polish, furniture polish, pads, brushes and polish Outfits.

*Figure 6: MMBW Property Connection Plan 1960. (Casey Plumbing)*

*The 1960s plan shows extensive sewer and drainage systems, including three 'stacks' marked 'A', 'C' and 'O'. These are either chimneys, or possibly vent pipes for the sewer or underground storage tanks. MMBW regulations made a requirement that factories separate stormwater and sewage, and discharge only licenced effluent to the sewer. As a result relatively complex sewerage and drainage systems are often encountered on noxious trades sites.*

*Manufacturing undertaken on the site would appear to have involved preparing product from bulk materials, treating, mixing, and processing ingredients (including varieties of wax such as lanolin or beeswax, turpentine, naphtha, dyes, and gum Arabic), then packing, labelling and distributing the finished products. Gary Vines 2013 for HBCC)*

*Originally only shoe polish was manufactured but the factory soon expanded to include more than 50*

*different polishes for cars, floors etc. as well as other well-known products including Pine O Clean. The business expanded after WW2 by purchasing land in Aitken Street and constructing extra buildings. Although dealing with highly inflammable materials not once in its history did a serious fire occur. (Williamstown Historical Society)*

*By 1974 the site could not expand any further so the operations were moved interstate and the business closed its doors in 1976, after 66 years of local industry. (Williamstown Historical Society)*

The Nugget Factory was an important part of the industrial development of Williamstown. It encompasses, not only the maritime connection but also the changing nature of industry and the building's capacity for adaptive reuse: This is shown by the variety of the operations which have taken place in the building and surrounds for the past 126 years.

Historian and Archaeologist Gary Vines believes that this "has potential to be another Little Lonsdale St, with a lot of important early archaeology related to buildings and occupation activities. For example, note all the little buildings marked "C", these are earth closets, with cesspits that would have been filled with rubbish. Aboriginal archaeology is probably less intact, but given the nature of the later development which appears to have involved filling and capping over the old ground surfaces, there is still some potential".

"I think the Nugget factory has been overlooked in heritage protection. I looked at it decades ago in Western Region Industrial Heritage Study and I think it was identified in Graeme Butlers Williamstown Heritage Study but not given Heritage Overlay protection". (Gary Vines 2011)

This building contributed, in its various guises, to the growth of Williamstown and to the early colony and later Melbourne Town. We believe that the building is of significance as a representation of early industrial activity in Williamstown. But not only Williamstown, but Victoria. At the time that it was built, approximately 1888, Williamstown was the main port of Melbourne.

## **The History of Williamstown**

By 1847 only ten years after the first land sales Williamstown's port and industry was flourishing, in 1847 Steam boat Pier was built and a permanent customs house was set up as a home for the water police and customs officers who remained here until the Melbourne Harbour Trust developed river channels closer to the centre of Melbourne in the 1890s.

A bluestone lighthouse was built in 1849–50 to replace the original wooden one and operated as a lighthouse until 1860, when a Pile Light was built and anchored off Shelly Beach, after which it served as a time ball tower.

Following the arrival of dozens of ships in Williamstown carrying the thousands of hopeful gold seekers from all over the world: the settlements growth was phenomenal and for example a Post Office opened on 1 March 1850 and municipal status was granted in 1851 with the first Council elected in 1856.

As well as port activity and residential growth Williamstown was becoming an industrial centre. Between 1857 and 1889, the main railway workshops of the Victoria Railways were at Point Gellibrand and at their height covered 85% of Point Gellibrand. Imported steam locomotives were assembled at the Williamstown Workshops. After 1889 the extensive workshops were moved to nearby Newport.

The foundation stone of the Alfred Graving Dock was laid on 4 January 1868 by HRH Prince Alfred, KG, Duke of Edinburgh who arrived in the Navy's first, ironclad, HMS Warrior.

By 1870, Williamstown was the major cargo port of Victoria, with piers, shipwrights, and gangs of wharfies, all working along the shore opposite Nelson Place. As well, the Customs Department, pilots, the Victorian Navy, and the Harbour Trust all established bases in Williamstown. A laundry to service the ships was built and operated as the first industry in the building now known as the Nugget factory

The Alfred Graving Dock is historically significant as the first graving dock in Victoria and the third in Australia at that time, for its role in the development of the shipping industry in Port Phillip and for its continuous use as a Dockyard since its completion.



In 1885 the hulks moored off Williamstown were ordered to be broken up following several years use as a prison for Victoria's villains including one Ned Kelly. The prisoners were rowed on to shore each day and worked digging bluestone and laying the walls around the foreshore many of which are evident today.

By the time that the Nugget factory building had passed through its phases of a laundry and a soap factory and a actually manufactured Nugget and other shoe products the shipbuilding yards almost opposite were active.

In 1906, one of the largest undertakings attempted by ship repairers in Australia was successfully accomplished at the Williamstown Dockyard. SS *Peregrine*, a 1,660 GRT vessel of the Howard Smith Line, was lengthened amidst hips by 40 feet (12 m). This was perhaps the first jumboising operation undertaken in Australia.<sup>[</sup>

The Shipbuilding Yard at Williamstown was officially opened by the Governor of Victoria on Monday 7 April 1913

By 1904 about the time that the Nugget factory opened the population of Williamstown was about 15,000. One of the local features was the number of hotels available for quiet ale, with about 41 open at that time.

Williamstown Pier Railway Station was opened in 1905 existing mainly to serve the Williamstown docks precinct but would also have brought in workers to the Nugget factory opposite. Others would have bicycled or walked. ( Various sources)

*This area (Nugget Factory area) was part of the industrial area servicing the ports. At one stage of Williamstown history the immediate area of Morris Street included, from the corner of Nelson Place, the Prince of Wales hotel, Matthews blacksmith shop, a substantial 2 storey stone boarding house (originally a restaurant), the Dock hotel, the Britannia hotel and the P & O laundry. (Williamstown Historical Society)*

## The Company

The Nugget Polish Company was an English firm, with headquarters at Kensington Oval London, who took on the property on a five year Lease with the option of further purchases. They also had factories in New Zealand, Ireland, South Africa, Belgium, Germany, USA and Holland.

The company built a tennis court for staff use and it is reported that there was a good working relationship between staff and management. During the great depression the company's output remained 'healthily progressive'. It was said that the modern machines were capable of filling 15,000 tins per hr.

## The Location

Williamstown was assessed as having the natural advantages enjoyed in few places in the metropolitan area offering steam ferry to convey produce across the river to the city and to shipping on the other side. The saving in time by this shorter route was of utmost importance enabling deliveries to vessels and warehouses to be made and backward loading to be taken.

A Williamstown Council (approx 1910) meeting noted that the roadway around the river was capable of improvement and hoped that Dudley St would proceed without delay.

## Employment

Of significance is that this factory offered work to women, something which other manufacturing plants, such as the dockyards and the Railway Workshops in Newport, did not.

Workers came mainly from Williamstown district, many of them women. Many current locals had mothers, grandmothers and Aunts who worked there. Stories of one grandmother whose job was to put the silver paper on the nugget tins, another resident's Aunt placed the cap on.



- closer photo of building with barn type roof; Later addition, possible 1950s



- Original building on Kanowna Street plus the higher building (1950s) with the barn type of roof;

#### Status of Victorian Heritage Register listed places and buildings in Williamstown & Hobsons Bay:

##### 27 Heritage Victoria listed places in Williamstown:

- Timeball Tower: **1850 -52**, Battery Road, WT: **VHR H1649**;
- Former Clarendon Hotel: **1855**: 231 Nelson Place, WT: **VHR H0231**;
- 12, Cox's Garden (St Heliers): **1855**: off Ferguson Street, WT: **VHR H0560**;
- Former Manse: **1856-57**: 27 Lyons Street, WT: **VHR H0229**;
- Lindsay's Slipway: **1857**: Nelson Place, WT: **VHR H7822- 0392**;
- 11, Cox's Garden (for Samuel George Cox): **1858**: off Ferguson Street, WT: **VHR H0487**;
- Mandalay: **1858**: 24 The Strand, WT: **VHR H0232**; Demolished;
- Tide Gauge House: **1858**: Commonwealth Reserve, Nelson Place, WT: **VHR H1513**;

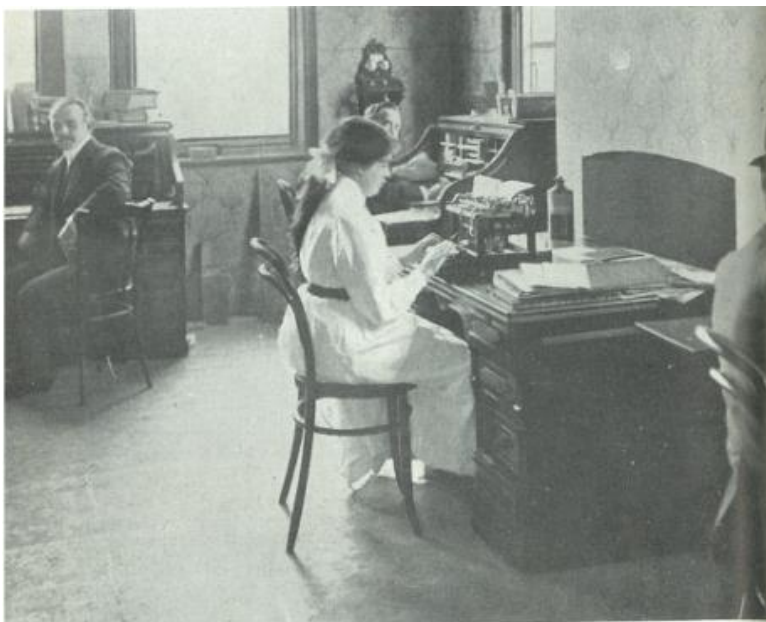
- Former Morgue **1859**, Ann Street, WT: **VHR H1512**;
- Williamstown Railway Complex, Hanmer Street, WT: **VHR H1599**;
- Gellibrand and Breakwater Piers: **1859 – 1910**: **VHR H1088**;
- Former Bridge Hotel: **1862**: 72 Thompson Street, WT: **VHR H1792**;
- Alfred Graving Dock: **1864 – 73**: Point Gellibrand: **VHR H0697**;
- Holy Trinity Church and Hall: **1871**: 255 Nelson Place, WT: **VHR H 1734**; (Hall since demolished);
- Former Customs House: **1873 – 75**: Nelson Place, WT: **VHR H0894**;
- Wilkinson Memorial Drinking Fountain: **1876**: Nelson Place, Commonwealth Reserve, WT: **VHR H1733**;
- Former Bank of Australasia: **1876**: 189 Nelson Place, WT: **VHR 1769**;
- Williamstown Primary School: **1878**: 111-119 Cecil Street, WT: **VHR H1639**;
- Tudor House: **1884**: 52 Pasco Street, WT: **VHR H1857**;
- Former Williamstown Advertiser Building: **1885 – 88**: 205 Nelson Place, WT: **VHR H0865**;
- Former Harbour Trust Workshops **1887**: Ann Street: **VHR H1790**;
- Former Royal Hotel: **1890**: 85 Nelson Parade, WT: **VHR H1770**;
- Blunt's Boatyard, 150 Nelson Place, WT: **VHR 1885**;
- Fort Gellibrand, Battery Road, WT: **VHR H1837**;
- Williamstown Botanic Gardens, 97 Osborne Street, WT: **VHR H1803**;
- Prince Albert Hotel, **1915**: 149 Douglas Parade, WT: **VHR H1793**;
- Dressing Pavilion: **1936**: 26 Esplanade, WT: **VHR H0927**

**There are additionally just three Heritage Register listed places in the rest of Hobsons Bay: These are:**

- the Newport Railway Workshop and
- Newport Railway Workshops Manager's house in Newport and
- MMBW Main Outfall Sewer in Brooklyn.

**Of the 27 VHR listed places and buildings in Williamstown, none are industry based. Another reason to put this extant industrial building on the Victorian Heritage Register.**

Upstairs room identified from c. 1908 photograph of the Nugget Factory office and the same room in 2014 below. Both windows are the same and the fireplace has obviously been boarded up.





The visual and historical relationship of the Point Gellibrand Heritage park and the nearby C19th streetscapes with a history of maritime service activities reinforces and enhances the value of the whole historic Maritime Precinct which is noted as being of not only local, but of regional and state significance.





References:

- Helen Lardner HLCD; Statement of Evidence and VCAT appearance for Hobsons Bay City Council; 2014;
- Gary Vines: Report; and VCAT appearance for Hobsons Bay City Council; 2013
- Lesley Alves: Historical and heritage assessment for Hobsons Bay City Council 2012; Co-authors: Architect, Louise Blake, and Architect, Nadia Gasparetto;
- Williamstown Historical Society;
- Bryce Rayworth: Statement of Evidence and VCAT appearance for the owner of the site, Nelson Place Developments p/l; 2014;
- Robin Riddett: Statement of Evidence and VCAT appearance for the owner of the site, Nelson Place Developments p/l; 2014;
- Gary Vines: Western Region Industrial Heritage Study 1989;

**Summary** of the opinions regarding the demolition and heritage value of the former Nugget Factory by four expert witnesses who gave evidence and answered questions at the 20 day VCAT hearing in February 2014, with a continuation at the end of May 2014:

:VCAT heard evidence on Stage 2 of the proposed high rise, high density development at the Woollen Mills site in Williamstown. This Stage includes the former Nugget Factory: the applicant asks for demolition of the Nugget Factory and construction of an 11 storey tower and 41 three and four storey townhouses. The decision on this VCAT hearing has not yet been released.

**M Helen Lardner:** Statement of Evidence and VCAT appearance for Hobsons Bay City Council; 2014;  
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“A recent heritage Assessment Report by Biosis, dated 21 October 2013, has provided further information and assessment of the former Nugget Factory at 16 – 20 Kanowna Street, adjacent to the former Britannia Hotel (HO162). Despite three heritage reports concluding that the former Nugget Factory has heritage significance, arguments have not been made as to why it couldn't be retained and redeveloped (Refer to Appendix 4 (Ms Lardner's report) for the three reports by Biosis, Lovell Chen and Alves.

The former Nugget Factory should be recognised as a contributory building to the Government Heritage Precinct (HO8). Buildings facing Kanowna Street which are part of the



former Nugget Factory should be incorporated into the redevelopment and will help to determine the appropriate streetscape forms with regard to shared characteristics with the former Britannia Hotel (HO162). The former Nugget Factory should be recorded on the Victorian Heritage inventory as an archaeological site.

The loss of the former Nugget Factory also impacts on the setting of the former Britannia Hotel (HO162). There is a strong visual relationship between the two buildings; both are on the street boundary and have strong horizontal lines at ground, first and parapet levels.

The Lovell Chen heritage appraisal report for Council, December 2010, page 3, stated with reference to the former Nugget Factory:

*The building is of interest historically, however, and in its contribution to the streetscape and the reflection of the industrial origins of the area, would desirably be incorporated into any redevelopment of the former Port Phillip Woollen Mills site. The building would contribute to the setting of the Britannia Hotel and could positively contribute to development along Kanowna Street.*

For the reasons set out above, planning applications PS1226025 with amended plans as substituted by the Tribunal and PA1225139 are not supported on heritage grounds. Substantial design work is required to reduce the height and mass of the residential tower, to redesign the townhouses to Cecil Street and to Kanowna Streets, and to incorporate parts of the former Nugget Factory. The design needs to be more responsive to the cultural heritage values and the planning policy framework with regard to Williamstown's heritage."

**Mr Gary Vines:** Statement of Evidence and VCAT appearance for Hobsons Bay City Council; December 2013

## 6.1 Recommendations (Page 27 - 28)

"The Nugget Factory is in a relatively sound state. It demonstrates its historical significance and has considerable archaeological potential. It has heritage significance that should be taken into account in any planning and permit decisions. Decision guidelines are set out in clause 43.01 of the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme. Of relevance to the current site are:

*Before deciding on an application, in addition to the decision guidelines in Clause 65, the responsible authority must consider, as appropriate:*

- *The State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.*
- *The significance of the heritage place and whether the proposal will adversely affect the natural or cultural significance of the place.*

Demolition of the Nugget Factory buildings would adversely affect the significance of the place, the place being the extent of the 19th and early 20th century buildings and archaeological features. While the Nugget Factory does not have a site-specific Heritage Overlay and the precinct Heritage Overlay does not recognise the Nugget Factory as a contributory building, my assessment is that these are both omissions, and that the place has individual significance and significance in relation to the Precinct heritage place, which will be adversely affected, by demolition of the Nugget buildings.

Planning policy frameworks generally promote the retention, conservation of significant

heritage places. Particular note is made of redundant industrial buildings with a strategy stating:

*Where redundant heritage buildings such as former industrial buildings and hotels cannot be retained, encourage and support their adaptive use to recognise and protect the physical and cultural heritage significance of the building and its contribution to development of Hobsons Bay.*

It is therefore recommended that the buildings be retained and protected either under the existing precinct heritage overlay or a site specific heritage overlay, and further that it should be recorded on the Victorian Heritage Inventory as an archaeological site.

If works to the buildings are proposed, including alterations, excavation, new openings in walls, removal of underground services or contaminated soil, etc. there should be appropriate investigation, recording and mitigation action commensurate with the nature and level of significance as follows:

- *Archival recording (b/w negative and colour transparency, scaled photography (also digital imagery) site mapping and architectural drawings of buildings and all structural elements prior to alterations.*
- *Photographic recording of works in progress, particularly where removal of finishes, fittings and structure may reveal earlier or concealed fabric and features.*
- *Further research and recording of the site, including preparation of detailed site history, collation of historic plans, operation procedures, oral history interviews with past workers, & co.*
- *A Consent to excavate and/or Consent to disturb must be obtained before undertaking any further demolition or excavation works on the site.*
- *Archaeological test excavations to determine the nature and extent of surviving archaeological deposits, including further underground tanks, drains and plant, foundations of former buildings or buried structures, occupation and waste deposits, etc.*
- *On the basis of the results of the test excavation, further archaeological salvage may be required.*
- *An archaeological watching brief should also be undertaken to record structural and archaeological details revealed during demolition (this should be phased in stages e.g. after removal of roofing,*
- *after clearance of walls,*
- *after removal of floors and footings.*
- *Preparation of documentation with archival record for lodgement with Council, State Library Victoria,"*

**Mr Bryce Rayworth:** Statement of Evidence and VCAT appearance for the owner of the site, Nelson Place Developments p/l; January 2014;

**Summary of Views: Page 3**

“In summary, I find the proposed demolition and redevelopment of the subject site to be acceptable, with regard to heritage considerations, for the following reasons:

- The former Nugget Factory located on the subject site is a heavily altered nineteenth century building of limited historical and architectural value. In my view it does not warrant an individual heritage overlay control, nor does it make any important contribution to the heritage values of the surrounding heritage overlay precinct (HO8).
- The site also supports a range of post war factory buildings of no identified heritage interest.  
**(Note: these buildings are not part of this application for Heritage Register Listing. It is only the original 1888 building.)**
- The low heritage values of the subject site and contiguous streetscapes are such that demolition and redevelopment would not have the same adverse impact had the works been taking place in the more intact and cohesive parts of HO8.  
**(Note: The Nugget Factory is next door to the Britannia Hotel (HO162) and approximately 60 to 80 metres away from the Cecil Street and Kanowna Street heritage precincts.)**
- The proposed demolition and redevelopment will result in a substantial degree of change, but no commensurate degree of adverse impact, upon the associated heritage overlay precincts and the other heritage listings associated with neighbouring places.

#### **Conclusion: Page 35**

- In summary, the former Nugget Factory on Kanowna Street, Williamstown has been substantially altered in appearance and is of limited architectural or historical distinction. In my view it does not warrant an individual heritage overlay control, nor does it make any important contribution to the heritage values of the surrounding heritage overlay precinct (HO8). It does not warrant an individual heritage overlay control, nor does it make any substantial or essential contribution to the heritage values of the surrounding area, which in any case is no longer intact.  
**(Note: The Nugget Factory is next door to the Britannia Hotel (HO162) and approximately 60 to 80 metres away from the Cecil Street and Kanowna Street heritage precincts. It also fronts the Point Gellibrand Coastal Heritage Park and is diagonally opposite the Heritage Registered Time Ball Tower.)**
- The contrasts in scale and character that are already in evidence at this particular site suggest that this is a case in which a great deal of discretion can be exercised with regard to the appropriateness of new works. It is an environment of low heritage significance, which can readily absorb the scale and modernity of the proposed apartment tower and townhouses. Clearly the proposed scheme will bring about change. However, this change is acceptable from a heritage perspective given the mixed character of the area.
- On this basis, the proposal has been prepared with sufficient regard for the objective of Clauses 43.01 and 22.02 of the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme. The proposal is a considered and appropriate development, will result in an acceptable outcome relative to the cultural significance of the surrounding heritage overlay precincts, and should be considered appropriate with regard to heritage considerations.”
- **Ms Robin Riddett:** Heritage Statement of Evidence and VCAT appearance for the owner of the site, Nelson Place Developments p/l; January 2014;

“In my opinion, no case has been made which would indicated that the former Nugget Factory is of any heritage significance. The existing building has been so defaced that it is difficult to appreciate that it once had a distinctive and handsome ornate façade. In my opinion it has been comprehensively and irretrievably altered.

- While there have been claims that has historical significance and social significance, the information put forward is more by way of an historical account of the site rather than one establishing significance. In my opinion, the arguments are somewhat unbalanced and are unconvincing.
- The period put forward as being of significance is only approximately half of the life of the building while the other half remains undocumented.

**Note: Built in 1888, P & O laundry, chemical factory, soap factory, shoe polish factory, BAE / Transfield /Tenix training facility, warehouse, boat storage, sail making: these are all well documented in local newspapers, Rate books, wills and inventories and directories over the whole period from 1888 to the present. Really has been in use for most of this time.)**

- There is no tangible evidence of any particular use or activity and there is no machinery interpretable space which would demonstrate uses as a laundry or boot polish factory. **(Note: There is evidence put forward by other expert witnesses which I will detail in other parts of this application.)**
- In my opinion, the building is of no heritage significance and could be demolished without having any adverse or measurable effect on the heritage precinct, HO8.
- The development is in a part of Williamstown whose character is defined by industrial buildings and vacant sites and as a consequence, there is minimal heritage interface with the surrounding heritage place. As such the site is appropriate for development such as this while being in a Heritage Overlay.”

**(Note: The Nugget Factory is next door to the Britannia Hotel (HO162) and approximately 60 to 80 metres away from the Cecil Street and Kanowna Street heritage precincts. Other buildings with Heritage Overlay: Prince of Wales Hotel, Stevedore Club (HO35) Aitken Street, Telegraph Hotel (HO) cnr Aitken and Ann Streets, Timeball Tower, Point Gellibrand Coastal Heritage Park), Cecil Street and Kanowna Street C19th cottages, Stags Head Hotel, cnr Cecil and Ann Streets. All of these places are within a couple of minutes walking distance from the Nugget Factory building.)**

#### **4.2.1: Assessment of the Significance of the former Nugget Factory building and consideration of its demolition: Page 14 – 24**

**(Note: This is a very lengthy section with many photographs. The conclusion is almost the same as the Summary of Opinions cited above.)**

## **Statement of Significance**

### **What is significant?**

The building at 16 – 20 Kanowna Street (formerly Morris Street) is situated in an area of Williamstown which was part of the industrial area servicing the port of Williamstown in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. It was extended and renovated on adjacent land at 1 – 7 Aitken Street from 1920 until after World War II.

*Local architect, C J Polain, prepared the plans and advertised for tenders to construct the steam laundry in August 1887 and the buildings were soon finished for Mrs Eliza Black by early 1888.*

*Mrs Black, a widow, had operated the temporary steam laundry near Railway Pier since its inception in 1882. Only recently she had sold the original machinery for 153 pounds, via John Morgan, a local auctioneer. Polain's fees for designing the new building and supervising construction came to 110 pounds and 10 shillings. (Williamstown Historical Society) 2012*

1896 -97: ..... Although described in the Rate Books as a brick laundry of ten rooms, the Sands and McDougal Directory for the years 1896 and 1897 list the occupant as the Silex Soap Co. Lovell Chen 2010 for HBCC)

Standard Centrifuge Co, importers and manufacturers then occupied the building.

1907: the building was again advertised in The Argus as 'formerly used as a steam laundry' and describes the fitting including 'Drying room, Hoist and hand lifts. Upstairs – Large room, 1200 square feet, and large compartment fitted with clothes rails, heated by steam-pipes, and drying room overhead

That the former Nugget Factory is still in use is an indication that the building is still in good condition. Apart from cosmetic changes to the exterior, it is intact and the form of the original building is still evident.

### **How is it significant?**

The former Nugget Polish Factory is of historical, architectural and social significance to Williamstown and the State of Victoria.

### **Why is it significant?**

In the early days, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, it was linked with maritime activity and the life of the port by its use as a steam laundry for P & O shipping company. The Nugget building is a reference to an iconic Australian Brand: The association with P & O as part of the company's laundry, along with other extant pubs and factories gives the site considerable historical significance. The industrial character of the Point Gellibrand area was once a critical part of Melbourne, but is in danger of disappearing altogether. It is also of historical significance as evidence of the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> Century industry development around Melbourne and is possibly the last existing 19<sup>th</sup> C manufacturing site in the port area of Williamstown. It is a rare example of the industries which were current at the period of the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

It is significant in that it exists side by side with residences in a layout typical of the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Williamstown. Its position adjacent to the former Britannia Hotel references the HO 162 Hotel, sits comfortably with it, and continues the architectural methods of that time whereby new buildings fitted into the existing streetscape.



The original building was constructed in 1889 and was in almost continuous use in various guises until a few years ago. Its uses range from being a steam laundry for P& O ships arriving in Williamstown, an importer and manufacturer of chemicals, a soap factory, a manufacturer of shoe and other polishes, was used as a secure training facility by the Shipbuilding complex nearby and, even now, it is a boat yard and sail making facility.

The initial years show the importance of British capital in the development of Victoria's industry. Machinery was regularly updated to cope and improve processes. It was reported in the Williamstown Chronicle in 1909 that one machine was capable of filling 15, 000 tins of polish per hour. The various physical changes over the years were probably a result of deterioration of the decorative features of the building and changing fashions in architecture. Nevertheless the current building still maintains its form and

The highly successful Nugget polish production played an important role not only in local life: the product was successfully exported throughout the world. It was an important large employer of working class Williamstown people, particularly women, many of whom were widows with large families.

The former Nugget Factory was a centre point of the community: Its social significance continued as a local football club was called the Nuggets because players were employed in the manufacture of the polish. "Some of the Push (gangs) names indicate the extent to which these young men were economically integrated, such as the Williamstown Nuggets (whose members were drawn from the boot polish factory, but most took their names from local streets and landmarks which marked their territory, such as: the Hoddle Street Lairs of Collingwood, the Moore Street Push of Footscray, the Rowena Parade Rats of Richmond, the Woolpacks (whose base was the Woolpack Hotel) of Carlton and the Primrose Push of Fitzroy."

By 1976 the factory was to close and go interstate thus continuing the cycle of prosperity and decline of industry.

## Statement of Comparison

**The Swallow and Ariell** building at Rouse Street Port Melbourne. (Photograph below)

- Swallow and Ariell produced biscuits in Port Melbourne for a long period of time. The building's facade has been maintained but not the interior. The building covers a whole block. It is set close to Port Phillip Bay but not on the Bay. Women were employed in the manufacture of biscuits. The Nugget Factory was also an employer of women at a time when this was a rarity. Port Melbourne, like Williamstown has a long maritime and industrial history.
- Unlike the Swallow and Ariell factory, the Nugget Factory had a more direct connection to maritime history through its connection with P & O shipping (laundry services).
- The Nugget Factory building was mainly used in polish production but prior to this served a variety of purposes, namely steam laundry, chemical importation and manufacture, soap production and shipyard training.
- One of the polishes produced in the Nugget Factory was used in the armed forces as a boot polish. The formula was a major improvement on previous brands. It preserved shoe leather, made it shine, and restored colour. By the time Kiwi Dark Tan was released in 1908, it incorporated agents that added suppleness and water resistance. Australian-made boot polish was then considered the world's best. Black and a range of colours became available, and exports to Britain, continental Europe, and New Zealand began.
- The Nugget Factory is associated with corner pubs and other factories as an important part of the industrial complex at Point Gellibrand. At one stage of Williamstown history the immediate area of Morris (Kanowna) Street included from the corner with Nelson Place, the Prince of Wales Hotel, Matthews Blacksmith shop, a substantial 2 storey stone boarding house (originally a restaurant, the Dock Hotel, Britannia Hotel and the P& O Laundry (Nugget Factory). The Nugget Factory sits between the Britannia Hotel which remains in Kanowna Street, and Cecil Street. The Nugget Factory and railway employees were the clientele for these and other pubs.
- The Nugget Factory directly faces the Bay with only the wild and windswept Point Gellibrand Coastal Heritage Park between it and the water. Steam engines were assembled on the Point in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Little evidence remains that this activity ever took place so it is vital for an understanding of European immigration in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Williamstown that this last remaining piece of industrial history be preserved.
- Rather than change the use of the Factory to residential (as in the case of Swallow and Ariell building), it would be great to use it for another wave of industry, artistry or commercial endeavour.



## **Criteria for former Nugget Factory building Williamstown - Application to Heritage Victoria for listing 2014**

### **Criterion A: Importance to the course or pattern of Victoria's history;**

The former Nugget Factory was built in 1888 and is in the HO8 Government Survey Precinct in the city of Hobsons Bay. The Nugget Factory is situated in part of the area which was surveyed between 1837 and 1855 by Robert Hoddle, using a grid subdivision pattern in the same manner as the secondary streets included in the design of the Melbourne Grid.

It is of historical significance as a rare survivor of the industrial period of the Western Suburbs and Victoria.

It played a significant part in the early establishment of Williamstown and contributed to the economic and social wellbeing of Victoria.

- Retention of the nugget building would maintain a direct link to the shipping supply and service history of the area, particularly to the P & O well appointed "mailboats", carrying passengers, and contracted to carry the UK mails / gold etc, up to the Air Mail era;
- The Peninsula and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P & O) was important to local prestige and along with the Orient Line, their departure to Port Melbourne in the mid 1890s was symbolic of the loss of commercial confidence in the depression of the 1890s.

### **Criterion B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history;**

The Nugget Factory possesses uncommon aspects of Victoria's cultural history in that it.....

The former Nugget Factory is endangered by encroaching high rise development at the Woollen Mills site. VCAT has yet to make a decision as to whether or not demolition of the former factory should be allowed. Hobsons Bay City Council (HBCC) refused the permit for demolition and construction of Stage two of the Nelson Place Development and say that the Nugget Factory ought to be retained.

HBCC is also in the process of applying to the Department of Planning for an amendment to the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme (C99) for the Nugget Factory to have an individual heritage overlay (HO317)

- ***Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme Amendment C99: Former Nugget Factory, 16-20 Kanowna Street, Williamstown***

*A Directions Hearing in relation to the above Amendment was held on 16 May 2014 at Altona. The Amendment proposes to apply an individual place Heritage Overlay to the former Nugget Factory in Kanowna Street and make related changes to the Planning Scheme and the supporting Heritage Study for the municipality. The site is already included in a precinct Heritage Overlay (HO8) and thus planning permission is required for demolition as well as for new works under the overlay. The building is currently identified as non-contributory to the precinct, however, and the Amendment seeks to afford greater protection to the building which has separate heritage values recently identified by the Council. (See Appendix Seven for further details).*

The loss of the former Nugget Factory building would have a significant negative impact on the visual history of the port and HO8 overlay area of Williamstown.

### **Criterion C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history**

The building was very significant in its relationship with the maritime history of Williamstown. The soap making and the boot polish manufacture both used wool and sheep by-products which were shipped in and out of the port of Williamstown. Boot polish was used by British and Australian troops to keep their feet dry during World War One.

*Perusal of MMBW Connection plans shows that an archaeological survey would reveal information that will add to our understanding of Victoria's cultural history, particularly with respect to sewerage and drainage systems and Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works regulations.*

*Figure 6: MMBW Property Connection Plan 1960. (Casey Plumbing)*

*The 1960s plan shows extensive sewer and drainage systems, including three 'stacks' marked 'A', 'C' and 'O'. These are either chimneys, or possibly vent pipes for the sewer or underground storage tanks. MMBW regulations made a requirement that factories separate stormwater and sewage, and discharge only licenced effluent to the sewer. As a result relatively complex sewerage and drainage systems are often encountered on noxious trades sites. (Gary Vines 2013 for HBCC)*

**Criterion D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places / objects;**

The former Nugget Factory still retains its elegant form in spite of having lost some of the more decorative features. It continues to display major characteristics of the late Victorian period. Its location next to the Britannia Hotel is set directly on to the footpath, its substantial form, fenestration, roof and intactness are easily recognisable and make reference to the other corner Hotels.

**Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics;**

The former Nugget Factory shows the aesthetic character and form of the prevailing architecture in Victoria;

**Criterion G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to indigenous people as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions;**

The former Nugget Factory was a centre point of the community: Its social significance continued when a local football club was called the Nuggets because players were employed in the manufacture of the polish. "Some of the Push (gangs) names indicate the extent to which these young men were economically integrated, such as the Williamstown Nuggets (whose members were drawn from the boot polish factory, but most took their names from local streets and landmarks which marked their territory, such as: the Hoddle Street Lairs of Collingwood, the Moore Street Push of Footscray, the Rowena Parade Rats of Richmond, the Woolpacks (whose base was the Woolpack Hotel) of Carlton and the Primrose Push of Fitzroy." By 1976 the factory was to close and go interstate thus continuing the cycle of prosperity and decline of industry.