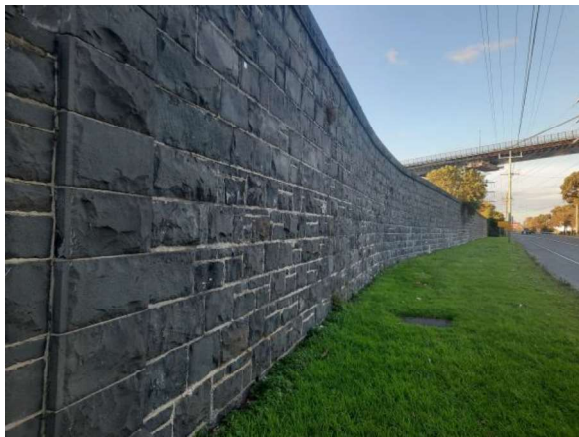


AGM FACTORY COMPLEX (FORMER) HO46

Address	1 (part) Hudsons Road + 1 (part), 8 and 21 (part) Simcock Avenue
Significance	Local
Construction Date	1897, circa 1931, early-to-mid 1950s
Period	Victorian, Federation, Interwar, Postwar
Date Inspected	Early and late 2021



Basalt Wall, Douglas Parade



AGM Company Headquarters, Simcock Avenue



Street Wall, Hudsons Road (north)



Glassmaking Plant, Hudsons Road (north)

Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The *AGM Factory Complex (Former)* across four sites in Spotswood is significant. This vast, densely developed industrial site emerged east of Booker Street during the late Victorian period and expanded west, southwest and north during the early 20th century as a principal site of production for the nationally important company Australian Glass Manufacturers Co Ltd (AGM) (1915-39) and descendent Australian Consolidated Industries (ACI) (1939-98). Due to recent redevelopment, much of the historic built fabric has been lost or compromised; however, some significant elements survive.

The significant components are:

- Basalt Wall (1897), west of Douglas Parade,
- AGM Company Headquarters (1916), Tennis Clubhouse (circa 1916), and WWII Bunker, north of Simcock Avenue, and
- Moulded Plastics Factory, Gabled Workshop, and Glassmaking Plant, (circa 1931), Office Building and Street Wall (early 1950s), and ACI Fibre Packaging Plant (circa 1956), north and south of Hudsons Road.

The extent of the significant fabric of the various buildings differs. In some instances, the building was erected at one point in time and the three-dimensional form remains. In other cases, the extant brick façade was added to the front of a pre-existing shed (such as to some of the buildings on the north side of Hudson Road).

How is it Significant?

The *AGM Factory Complex (Former)* is of local historical, rarity, representative, and aesthetic significance to the City of Hobsons Bay.

Why is it Significant?

The *AGM Factory Complex (Former)* is of historical significance as a long-standing, continuously operating industrial complex, possibly the oldest in metropolitan Melbourne. The present industrial fabric is illustrative of the various phases of the development that characterised its growth from the late 19th century. Charting its progressive expansion from its original holding east to the west of Booker Street and beyond during the interwar year and marked consolidation during postwar years as the place evolved into a colossal, tightly packed quarter of technically advanced factories, administrative buildings, staff amenities, warehouses, and furnaces. The presence and character of which came to define the locale, underlying Spotswood's reputation as a notable industrial suburb in Melbourne. Generations of local men and women have laboured at the complex, which was a major employer for much of its history. The associations of the place with the glassmaking industry and the various iterations of its nationally noteworthy parent company – Felton, Grimwade & Co/Melbourne Glass Bottle Works, Australian Glass Manufacturers Co Ltd, and Australian Consolidated Industries, and its many subsidiaries – is also of note. (Criterion A)

The *AGM Factory Complex (Former)* is of representative significance as an extensive industrial complex with intact building fabric from its key phases of development being the Victorian, Federation, Interwar and Postwar periods. The near-continuous street wall of masonry buildings/facades along Hudsons Road forms a highly evocative industrial streetscape of fabric mainly dating to the Interwar (red brick) and Postwar (cream brick) periods, reflecting the scale of facilities required at the place. As a complex, it consists of an unusually varied range of industrial buildings and staff facilities, for which there is no ready comparison in the municipality and few in Melbourne. Of these, the rare surviving elements are the *Basalt Wall*, *Tennis Club*, and parabolic *WWII Bunker* (Criteria B and D)

The elements of particular aesthetic significance are:

- the *Basalt Wall* (1897, Victorian period), a long and finely made wall with landmark qualities,
- *AGM Company Headquarters* (1916, Federation period), a good and intact example of the Free Style in red brick with a terracotta tiled roof and a symmetrical façade design with an original entrance canopy, and
- *Glassmaking Plant* (circa 1931, Interwar Period), an unusually restrained façade design – articulated with minimal masonry and with large, openable steel-framed windows reflecting the manufacturing function of the building (and the need for good lighting and ventilation).

(Criterion E)

Description

The *AGM Factory Complex (Former)* is comprised of a series of non-contiguous industrial buildings and elements that reflect late Victorian, Federation, Interwar, and Postwar phases of development. These discrete components are predominantly located along the eastern end of Hudsons Road (north side) but also include a cluster of elements on the north side of Simcock Avenue and the east side of Douglas Parade.

These groups are examined below.

Basalt Wall (1897)

Affectionately referred to by locals as the 'The Great Wall of Spotswood', this basalt rubble wall was constructed soon after the establishment of the complex and is a highly visible built element on the west side of Douglas Parade. The majority remains, although the original northern return, which included an entrance, has been removed. The existing north end of the wall was reconstructed around 2000, with some red brick-lined openings omitted (these were related to the former abutting boiler house).

The wall is approximately 120 metres long, extending northwards from the MMBW Spotswood Pumping Station (HO82/VHR-H1555), and has a height of about 4 metres.

The constituent blocks are rock-faced in regular courses (twelve in total). In some random sections, narrower blocks are utilised, although the overall format of the wall was maintained. The coping course is wider, projecting forward (and likely mirrored to the rear) with a margin. There is also a pier with a margin, a defined plinth, and a wide elaborately moulded cap at the southern end.

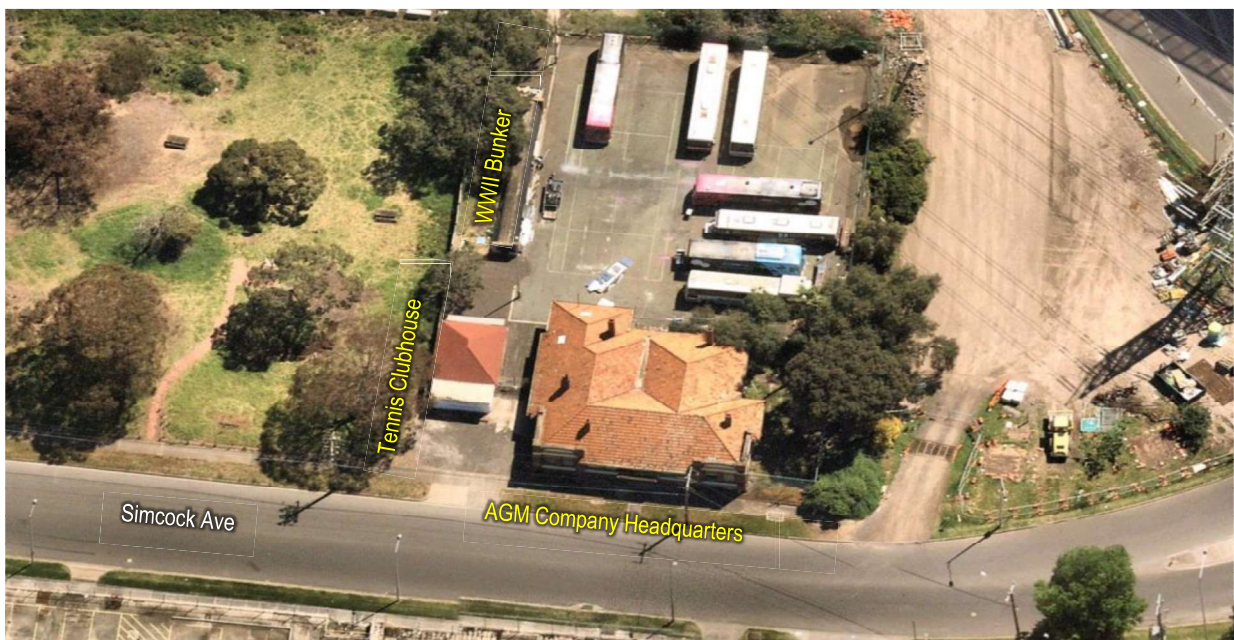
Mortar repair is apparent across the length of the wall; however, some likely original incised and ribbon/strap pointing remains evident in part. Plantings obscure the termination of the wall at the north end.



South end of the *Basalt Wall*

AGM Company Headquarters (1916)

On the north side of Simcock Avenue, between AGM Park and Memorial Park, is the former *AGM Company Headquarters*, a *Tennis Clubhouse* (circa 1916), and a World War II (WWII) air raid shelter (*WWII Bunker*).



Aerial photograph of the former administrative centre, north is top of frame (Source: Nearmap, November 2020)

The *AGM Company Headquarters* is a single-storey office building designed in the Federation Free Style, likely by an architect or skilled company engineer, and built to Simcock Avenue. It has a hipped roof with a broad ridge and is clad in terracotta tiles. Five squat red-brick chimneys are present on the roof. The western chimney retains one tall terracotta pot (initially paired). Much of the roof has an eaves overhang with exposed rafter ends. At each end of the façade is a corner bay with gently curving rendered copings and panels.

The building is constructed of red brick in an English garden bond (three courses of stretchers to each row of headers). There are rendered bands (possibly concrete) at lintel (bay only) and sill heights.

The façade is symmetrical and divided into five bays by engaged piers. The central bay performs as the main entrance. Original elements include its original double timber board doors, cantilevered canopy with modillion brackets, and a highlight window. The other flanking bays feature paired timber-framed, double-hung sashes (the upper pane is smaller than the lower).

There is a small weatherboard volume on the west elevation that is likely a later addition.

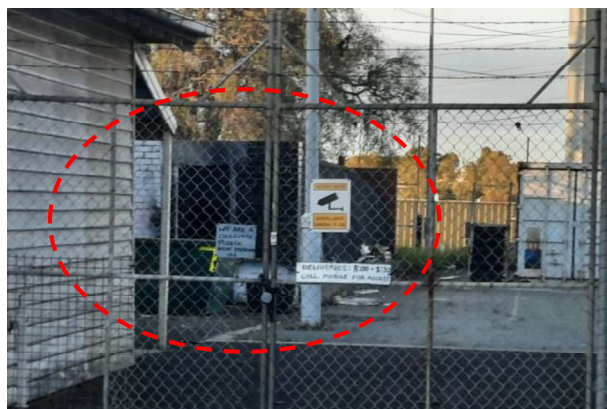


AGM Company Headquarters, Simcock Avenue frontage

The *Tennis Clubhouse* is located west of the office building at a moderate setback from Simcock Avenue. It has a hipped roof clad in corrugated sheet metal with walls clad in timber weatherboard. The building was orientated away from the street towards the rear, where the company's tennis court was located. Attached to the street-facing elevation is a skillion-roofed weatherboard volume. At the rear of the clubhouse is a timber verandah.



Tennis Clubhouse from Simcock Avenue (left)



Brick end walls of the bunker are circled in red with the parabolic core visible behind

Behind the *Tennis Clubhouse* is a *WWII Bunker*. It was installed during the early 1940s as a shelter for anticipated Japanese air raids for staff at the militarily important complex, which became a major producer of munitions during the conflict. The reinforced concrete core of the structure has a distinctive parabolic profile with brick end walls.¹

Hudsons Road Buildings

Lining the north end of Hudsons Road (east of Werribee/Williamstown line), on the north side, is a series of industrial factories and production sheds built to the street from the early 1930s and early-to-mid 1950s. Some of these structures have been progressively modified, likely as their functions have changed. Yet, their 'street walls' are broadly intact and possess a robust/industrial character.

Individual buildings are discussed below.



Aerial photograph of the *Hudsons Road Buildings* with significant fabric shaded yellow
(Source: Nearmap, November 2020)

¹ Documentation pertaining to the bunker is likely located in the archives of the Allied Works Council (1942-45) held at the NNA.

Former Moulded Plastics Factory (circa 1931)

The large *Moulded Plastics Factory* is set back moderately from the northwest corner of Hudsons Road and Booker Street. It has a paired gable roof clad in corrugated sheet metal. The western gabled section was an early addition, provided between the late 1930s and 1945. Each gable is surmounted by a ventilating lantern section.

The original timber-louvres remains visible from Booker Street, although metal sheeting has been installed in the other parts. The southern gable ends are clad in short-length sheeted metal. Its visible wall along Booker Street is constructed of red brick in English garden wall bond.

Fenestration to the building's long east elevation (Booker Street) is generally intact, defined by ten recessed window units, each with concrete lintels, bullnose brick sills and multipaned timber-framed windows (fixed highlights). The upper part of the brick wall has been overpainted.

Between the southern end of the *Moulded Plastics Factory* and the corner of Hudsons Road/Booker Street is an original but modified gabled wing, which is set lower than the adjoining paired gables at the rear.² Due to the extent of visible alterations, this section is not identified as significant.



Moulded Plastics Building (visible parts shaded red) viewed from the intersection of Hudsons Road and Booker Street

Gabled Workshop (circa 1931)

Between the *Glassmaking Plant* (west) and *Moulded Plastics Factory* (east) is a single-storey building with a transverse gabled roof clad in corrugated metal sheeting. Its Hudsons Road-facing wall is of red brick in a garden wall bond (three courses of stretchers, alternating with a course of headers). Puncturing the wall are three steel-framed windows with a central pivoting section. These are early insertions. The double-height section in the west is a later addition.

² At the Hudsons Road/Booker Street corner, a short section of return wall has been constructed, generally continuing the details of the *Moulded Plastics Factory*'s east elevation. The remainder of the Hudsons Road elevation has been re-clad with profiled sheet metal. The windows are timber-framed with wide panes. The highlight panes have timber louvres.



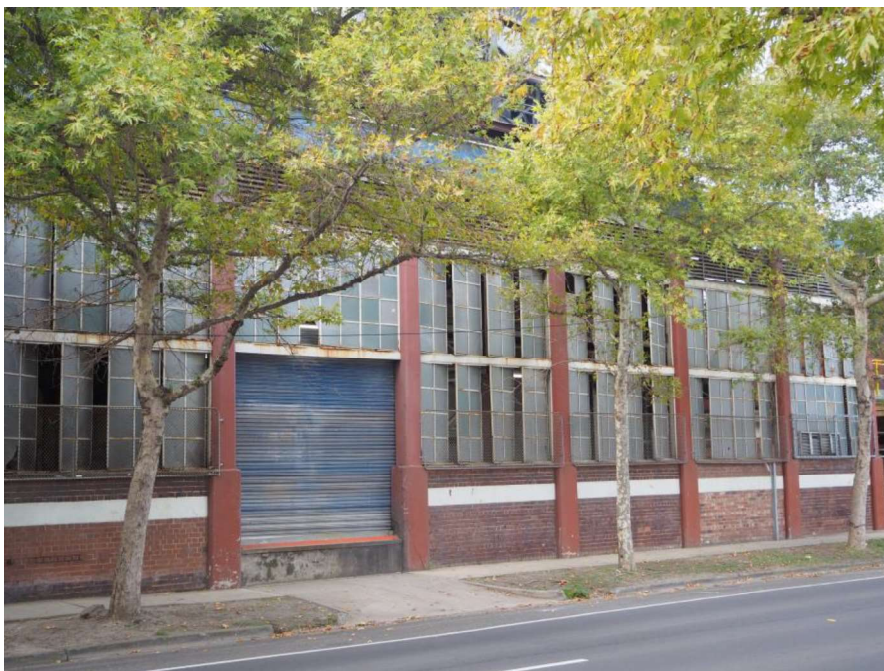
Gabled Workshop from Hudsons Road, facing west

Former Glassmaking Plant (circa 1931)

The *Former Glassmaking Plant* is located on the north side of Hudsons Road and is formed by a double-height (east) and single-storey (west) section.

The roof form of the double-height section, originally a series of abutting traverse gables, has been modified into a conspicuously tall – even dramatic – industrial roofscape; however, the southern plane of the original gable-front has been largely retained. This element, visible obliquely from Hudsons Road, is identified as significant. Attached to the east side of the double-height section was a tall industrial chimney. Its removal has left this side effectively open.

The double-height street wall has a concrete parapet that displays moulded edges and projects forward over regularly spaced brackets. Concrete piers frame the wall. These are faceted to the upper part with a capital-like projection to the top edge. The outer piers project above the parapet. Infill panels form a plinth/dado of red brick in an English garden wall bond with a rendered (concrete) band. Above are two levels of steel-framed multipaned windows that pivot centrally. This window bank consists of eight bays, the middle of which includes a metal roller door. Overhead is a band of fixed timbered louvres.



Double-height section of the Glassmaking Plant

The parapet of the single-storey section conceals four original hipped-roof sheds clad in corrugated metal sheeting. The outer hips have both been modified and so only the front section of this building, approximately 6.5 metres back from the street wall, is defined as significant. The façade is comprised of ten bays and displays similar format and detailing, including concrete piers with chamfered edges and a projecting capital-like element (Art Deco motif) and brick plinth/dado. The parapet has a projecting coping course and there is another similar course above the concrete lintels of the windows. Original windows are steel and multipaned with highlights above. Several of these windows have been replaced with aluminium frames. The westernmost bay has a central recessed opening (non-original doors) with a concrete lintel.



Single-storey section of the *Glassmaking Plant*



Junction between single-storey section of *Glassmaking Plant* (red arrow) and the adjoining *Postwar Office Building* (left)

The lack of decoration and extensive banding of the windows, which emphasise the plane's horizontality, counterpoised by the vertical regularly spaced piers of the *Glassmaking Plant's* façade, is reflective of the influence of the Art Deco/Moderne idiom. This internationally-grounded design approach evolved as a popular industrial expression over the course of the 1930s due to its association with progress/modernity and machine-like design. This example is more restrained than most and reflects the practical, industrial application of the style.

Postwar Office Building and Street Wall (early 1950s)

Adjoining the *Glassmaking Plant* façade to the west is a multistorey building – originally likely an office – with a skillion roof and cubic form. Its façade extends to the parapet and is characterised by a generous extent of aluminium-framed glazing, divided vertically, with original textured glazing and some louvred sections. The plinth/dado is cream brick in stretcher bond, while the upper part of the façade is clad in profile metal sheeting. This expression is repeated on the façade of the building to the west. Such a restrained aesthetic, particularly the uninterrupted bank of windows, is indicative of the International Style as employed at industrial buildings during the 1950s.

Separating the *Postwar Office Building* from the *Street Wall* in the west is a recessed loading area. Its presence allows for some of the return/west elevation of the *Postwar Office Building*, a cream brick wall (recently overpainted), to be interpreted from the public realm.



Postwar Street Wall, west of the entrance bay

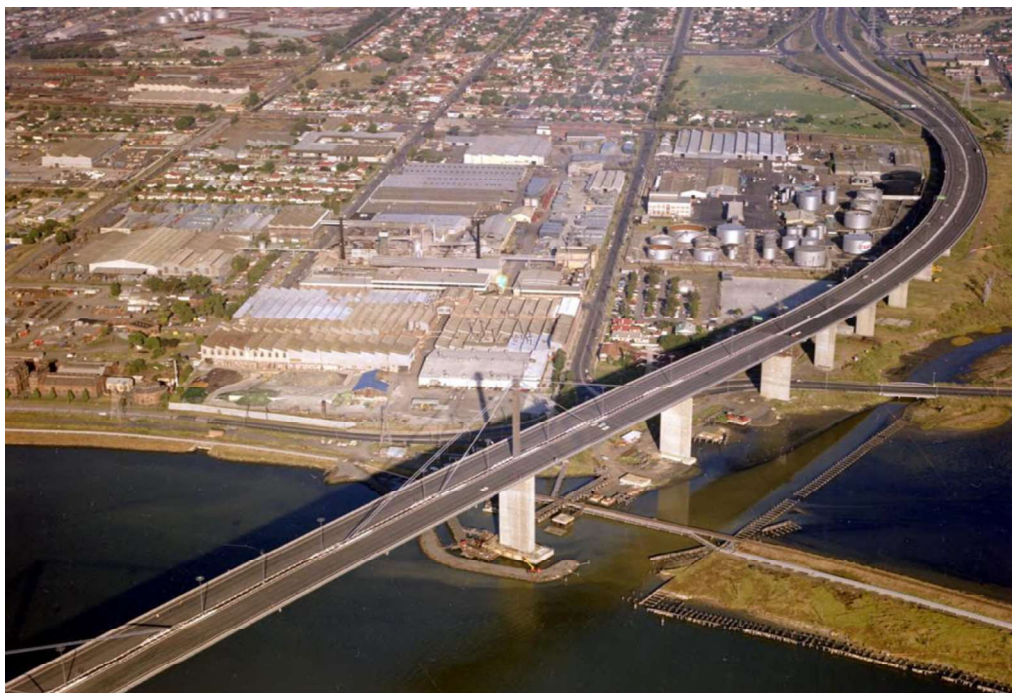
History

Context

The suburb of Spotswood covers the unceded Country of the Yalukit-Willam people of the Kulin nation, whose descents today belong to part of the world's oldest living culture and maintain an ongoing cultural connection to the area. From the late 1830s, this low-lying, flat, riverside environment was alienated for agricultural uses. Active amongst the early landowners was John Stewart Spotswood, who took up 119 acres (48 ha) below Stony Creek in 1841, grazing cattle (mainly for dairying), quarrying basalt for ballast and operating a punt service across the *Birrung/Yarra River*. As a 'pioneer', whose children were also notable locally, Spotswood's family name was eventually bestowed upon the area, replacing the earlier usage of 'Edom' and 'Spottiswoode'.³

Spotswood emerged from the late 1870s as a principal stretch of the industrial belt developing in western Melbourne, between Footscray and Williamstown. Large-scale industrialists flocked to the region, drawn by cheap, level land and proximity to river and rail transport (with its urban and western Victorian linkages). Over the late 19th century, Spotswood developed rapidly into an urban manufacturing centre, with much of its industry noxious. This reputation intensified in the wake of the First World War, with various petrochemical companies setting up vast storage and distribution nodes in Spotswood. The identity of the locality as one of the city's 'most important industrial suburbs' had solidified by the late 1920s.⁴ The postwar period witnessed another surge of industrial construction and, often, site redevelopment.⁵

Speculative modest homes for workers had been built from the late 1880s and a small commercial strip emerged west of the railway. This residential layer later included considerable developments overseen by the Department of Repatriation and then the Housing Commission and company housing. From the late 1940s, the once more isolated locality combined with the suburban sprawl of Western Melbourne, with houses and factory jobs often taken up by postwar immigrants. Spotswood's distinctive industrial landscape of sawtooth and gabled roofs, sprawling factories and warehouses, railway spurs, chimney stacks, and storage tanks began to be rationalised from the late 1990s, a process that continues. The 1991 Australian film *Spotswood* showcased the locality's working-class/industrial character.



1979 aerial photograph of the northern part of Spotswood with the Westgate Bridge in the foreground
(Source: Wolfgang Sievers, NLA, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-160597704>)

³ Spotswood Railway Station (1878) was known as Edom until 1881, then Spottiswoode. In 1905, it was renamed Spotswood.

⁴ 'Spotswood Progress', *Williamstown Chronicle*, 12 January 1929, p2

⁵ For a summary of industrial development in Spotswood see Graeme Butler & Associates (Jill Barnard), *Altona, Laverton and Newport Districts Stage 2, Volume 2: Environmental History*, section 3; and Gary Vines, *Industrial Heartland: Introduction to the Western Region Industrial Heritage Study*, Melbourne's Living Museum of the West, 1990, passim

Place-specific

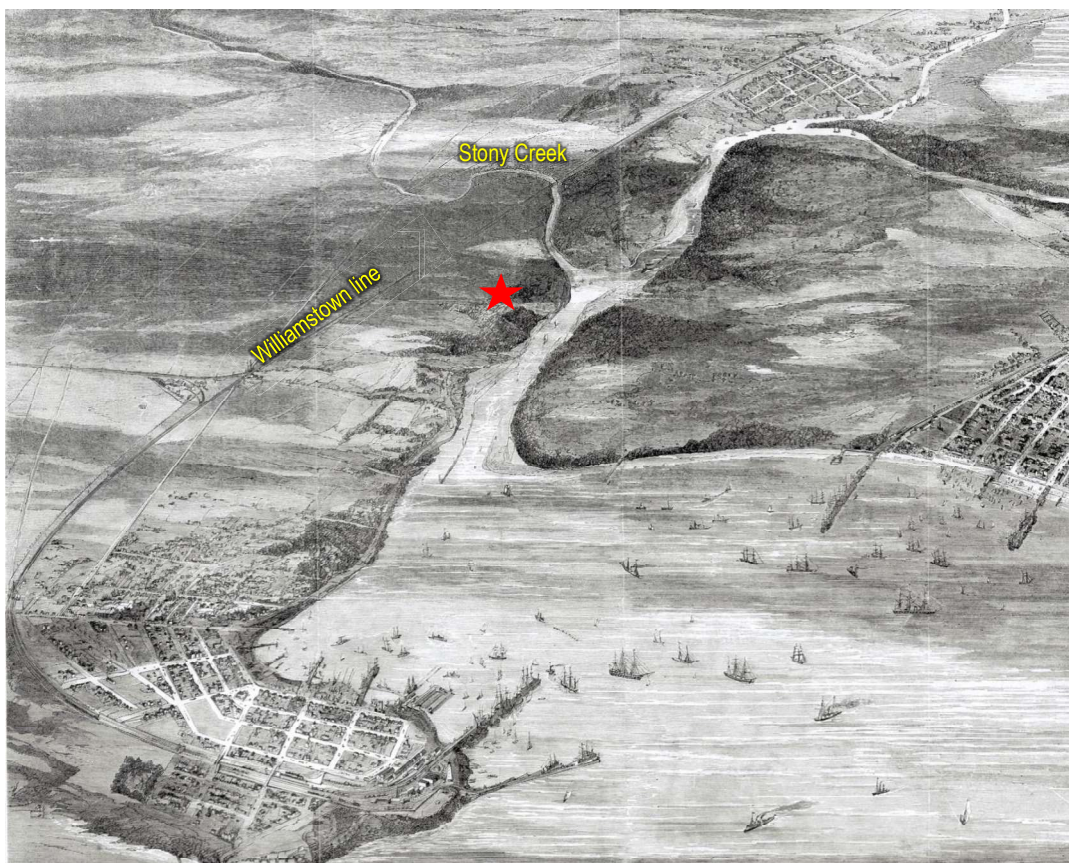
A comprehensive and broader history of the place is provided by David Moloney's *A History of the Glass Bottle Works site* (2012). This work examines glass production and technology, the company's evolving culture and structure, principal figures, its large multi-ethnic workforce, noteworthy industrial disputes, and its community presence/role in detail.

The company that owned and developed the place until the late 20th century underwent three major rearrangements and sectionalisation's during its history:

- Felton, Grimwade & Co (FGC) established the Melbourne Glass Bottle Works (MGBW) in 1872 by on Graham Street, South Melbourne
- MGBW relocates to Spotswood, 1889/9
- FGC become the Australian Glass Manufacturers Co Ltd (AGM) following interstate merges, 1915 – the new name reflected their national operation and effective monopoly of glass production for the next several decades
- AGM reformed into Australian Consolidated Industries (ACI) in 1939 (ACI International from 1981)

During this time, the *AGM Factory Complex* was responsible for manufacturing a wide diversity of bottles, glassware, sheet glass, engineering products and plastics.

The subject land derives from an assemblage of allotments in Section 7 of the Parish of Cut-Paw-Paw, County of Bourke, an area that formed part of the district's characteristic flat, swampy landscape.⁶ This locale was taken up by the Spotswood family as a dairy and ballast quarry from the early 1840s.



Extract from a panorama depicting Williamstown (bottom left), dated 1873 – Spotswood is shown as largely underdeveloped. The approximate location of the place is marked by the red star.
(Source: Albert C. Cooke, NLA, <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-230007895>)

⁶ Specifically – Crown Allotments 47, 48; portions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 of Crown Allotments 57 and 58; part of Crown Allotment 49; and part of portions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 of Crown Allotments 56 (Section 7).

In 1885, the fast-growing pharmaceutical firm of Felton, Grimwade & Co. purchased 11 acres (4.45 ha) of riverside land at Spotswood as a 'greenfield' site for the relocation of their South Melbourne-based bottle works plant, the Melbourne Glass Bottle Works (MGBW).⁷

Basalt Wall

The first MGBW complex at Spotswood was located between Booker Street and the *Birrung*/Yarra River, as depicted in the MMBW plan below. It consolidated rapidly as a thriving industrial plant over the late 19th century. The only known above surface remnant of this formative layer is the tall basalt perimeter wall along Douglas Parade. It was constructed from locally quarried stone in 1897 and has long defined the eastern boundary of the place, attaining the status of a local landmark.⁸

In the mid-1990s, the northern end of the *Basalt Wall* collapsed, revealing the foundations and basement of the former boiler house on the west side. There were infilled red-brick lined openings in the damaged section of the wall associated with the boiler house; however, these were left out when reconstruction of the northern end occurred. It is possible that other foundations and underground stores related to the early phase of the complex survive adjacent to or in the vicinity of the wall.⁹



MMBW plan, no. 19, dated 1899, showing the MGBW complex (circled in dashed green) at the turn of the century. The original extent of the basalt wall is identifiable along the east boundary of the site with boiler house adjacent (Source: SLV, Town of Williamstown, scale 400 feet to inch, <https://viewer.slv.vic.gov.au/?entity=IE7325845&mode=browse>)

⁷ David Moloney, *A history of the Melbourne Glass Bottle Works site: including its industrial context Spotswood, Victoria*, Museum Victoria, 2012, p11

⁸ S G Garnsworthy, *History of ACI*, unpublished manuscript, 1964, pp22-23 in Moloney, *A history of the Melbourne Glass Bottle Works site*, p12)

⁹ Graeme Butler & Associates, *Altona, Laverton & Newport Districts Heritage Study Stage Two, Volume One*, City of Hobson Bay, 2000, Place Identifier 1539



Photograph of the *Basalt Wall* (red arrow) with MGBW complex in the background, taken from the river or opposite bank, 1908
 The northern section has been removed
 (Source: SLNSW MLMSS 5146 139X via MV Tours, Spotswood Industrial Heritage Walk)

AGM Company Headquarters

In 1916, the AGM acquired at auction 4.5 acres (1.8 ha) of land on the north side of Simcock Avenue (initially 'The Avenue', then 'Bay View Avenue') opposite their original site. That year, the company constructed their new company headquarters at the new holding.¹⁰ Around the same time the *Tennis Clubhouse* was built, a tennis court was formed, and – in the 1920s – staff accommodation was provided (since removed) at what is now AGM Park.

The red brick office (*AGM Company Headquarters*) remained utilised as such until 1932, when management was relocated to Spencer Street, Melbourne. The building remained occupied by the AGM's accounting wing (until 1955) and accommodated a social club for the complex's workforce. In the second half of the 20th-century, Bruntons Bright Steel (est. circa 1939), a major subsidiary of the AGM, utilised the building as an office. In October 1970, it was commandeered as a base to organise rescue efforts at the site of the West Gate Bridge collapse.¹¹

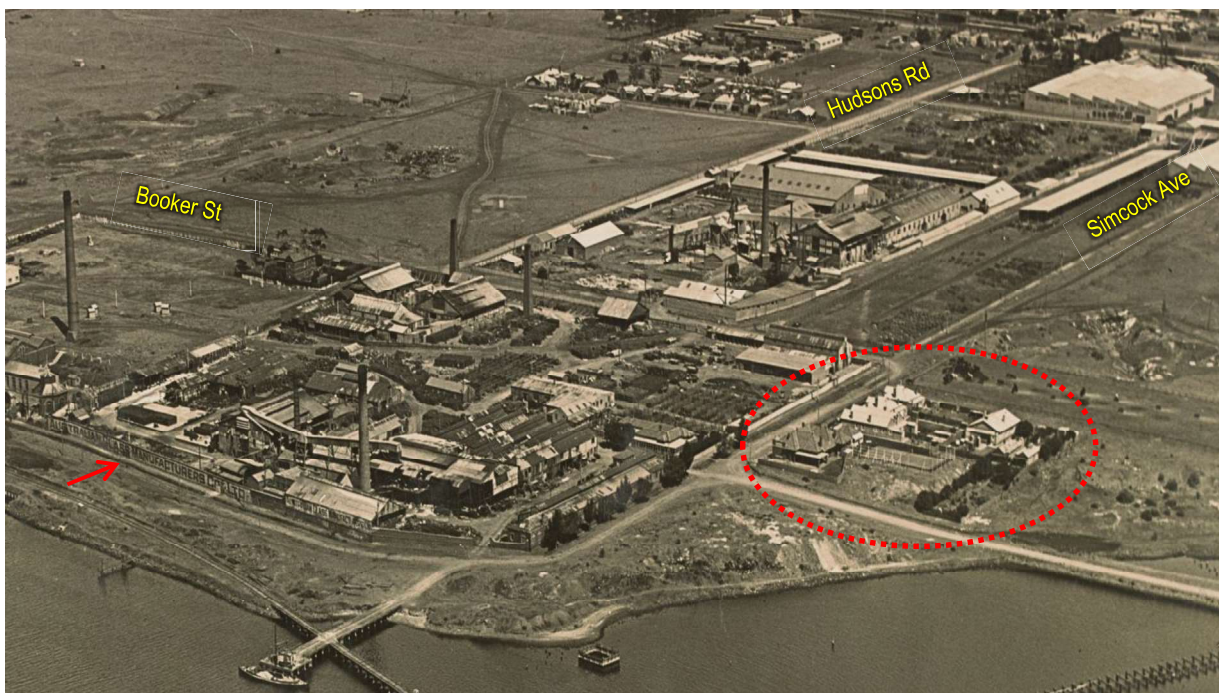
During WWII, much of the Spotswood complex east of Booker Street was adapted into a mass production munitions centre under the Australian Government's commercial annexe program.¹² As these buildings were demolished in 2012, one of the last tangible reminders of the place's associations with wartime activity is the circa 1941 bunker, which was constructed in place of the tennis court. It was installed to provide staff at the vital munition works shelter in the case of Japanese air raids. Other bunkers were provided elsewhere at the complex but appear to have been removed. In the postwar period, the shelter at the *AGM Company Headquarters* was utilised for record storage.¹³

¹⁰ Moloney, *A history of the Melbourne Glass Bottle Works site*, p51

¹¹ Moloney, *A history of the Melbourne Glass Bottle Works site*, p161

¹² See Moloney, *A history of the Melbourne Glass Bottle Works site*, chapter 4

¹³ Peter White interview, 26 June 2012 in Moloney, *A history of the Melbourne Glass Bottle Works site*, p107



Aerial photograph of the Spotswood Complex from across the river, dated 1930

Note the *Basalt Wall* (red arrow) with hand-painted advertising, facing Douglas Parade

The *AGM Company Headquarters* is circled in red – note the *Tennis Clubhouse*, tennis court and adjacent staff housing

(Source: Charles D. Pratt, *Aerial View of the M.M.B.W pumping station at Spotswood*, SLV, <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/308321>)

Hudsons Road Industrial Buildings

Between 1908 and 1912, vacant land west of Booker Street had been acquired for the MGBW. This block – bounded by Simcock Avenue in the north, Hudsons Road in the south, and Raleigh Street in the west – emerged over the 1920s and 1930s as the core of the AGM's highly advanced, mass, mechanised production of glass products.¹⁴

Comparisons between various aerial photographs show that *Moulded Plastics Factory* at the corner of Booker Street/Hudsons Road, the *Gabled Workshop* along Hudsons Road, and the adjacent *Glassmaking Plant* were all constructed between 1930 and 1931. By the latter, four (then five) large, corrugated metal sheds with paired gable roofs were also erected further west, facing Hudsons Road at a moderate setback. A second gabled wing was provided at the *Moulded Plastics Factory* by 1945.

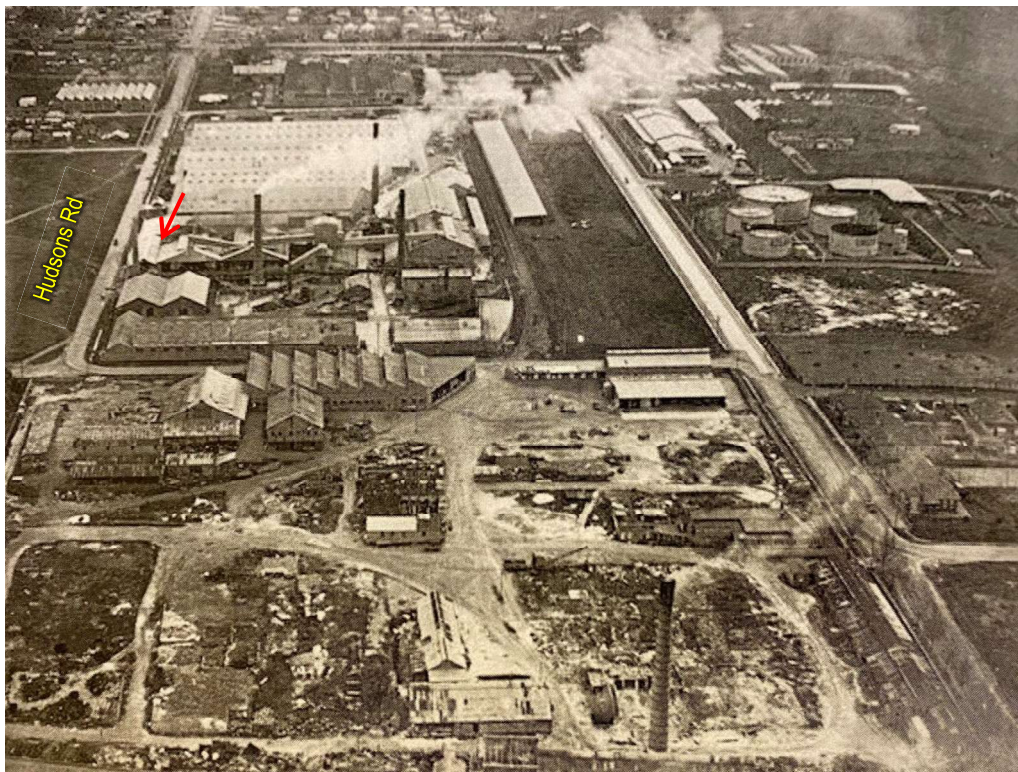
¹⁴

By 1908, the Spotswood works employed nearly 500 hands manufacturing over 30,000 gross (over 4.3 million) aerated water bottles and enormous quantities of other various bottle types per year. (Moloney, *A history of the Melbourne Glass Bottle Works site*, p8, 16)



Aerial photograph of the AGM complex, 1931

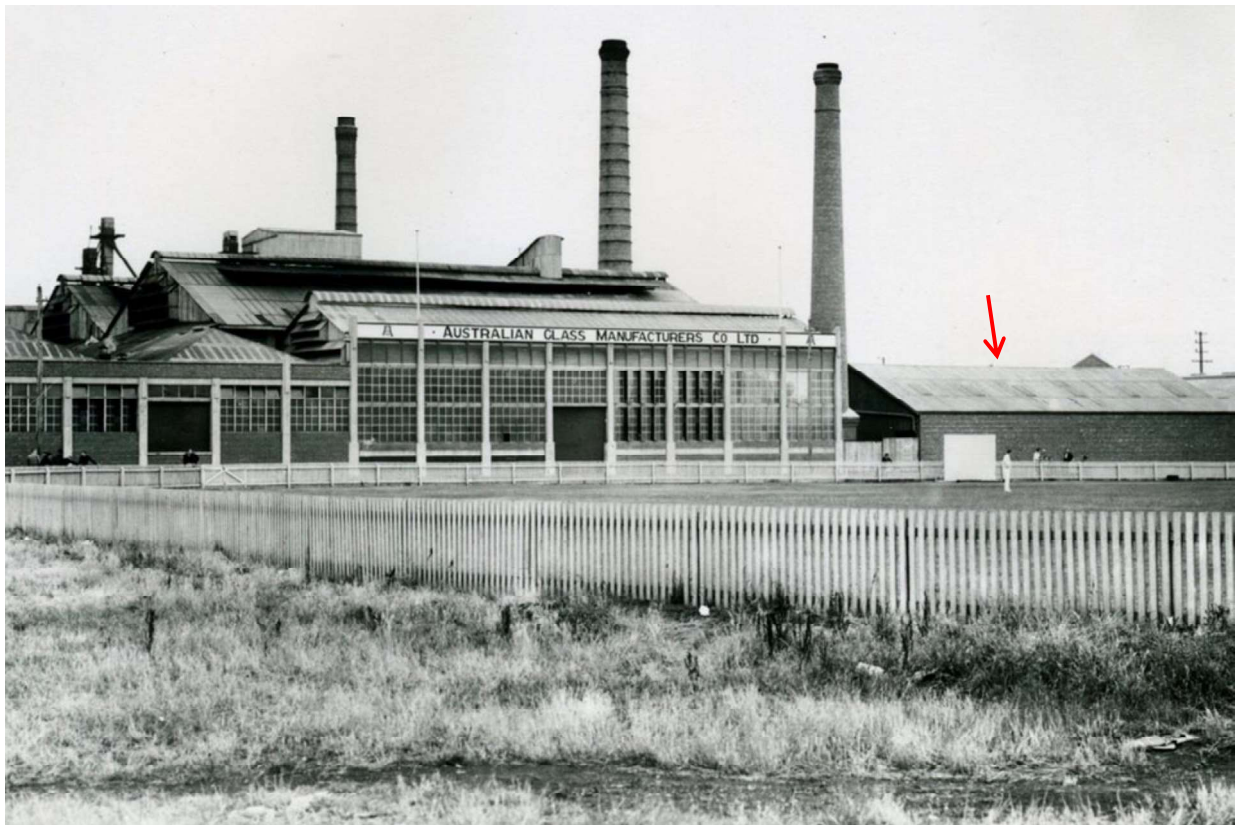
Note that the presence of the *Moulded Plastics Factory*, *Gabled Workshop*, and *Glassmaking Plant*. The fifth (westmost) shed has not been built (Source: *Maldon Prison 1931*, Frame 11, Landata)



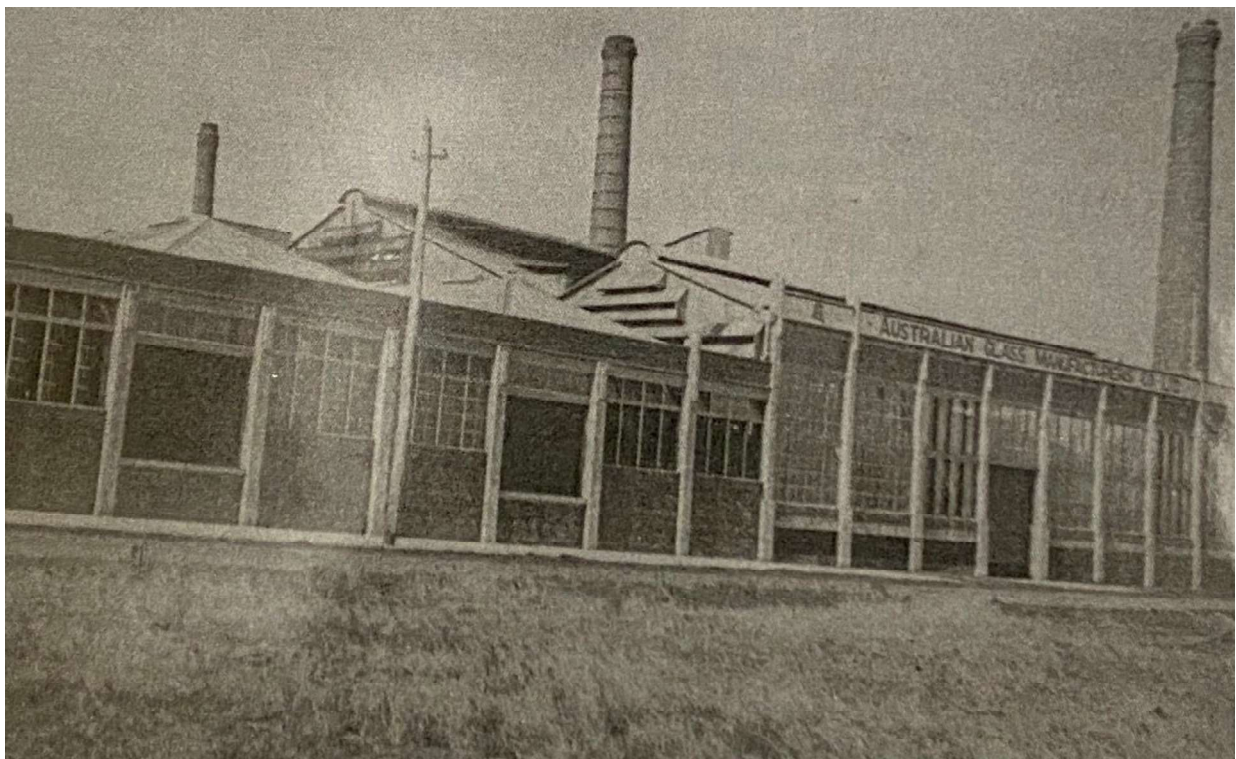
Aerial photograph of the complex, viewed from the east, 1933-35

Note the moderate setback of the four (later five) sheds from Hudsons Road

The original series of gabled roofs set behind the Moderne street-wall of the *Glassmaking Plant* are apparent (red arrow)
(Source: Tom Marshall Collection via Moloney, *A history of the Melbourne Glass Bottle Works site*, p56)



Glassmaking Plant (left) with the Gabled Workshop (red arrow – note the street-facing wall is blank), undated but presumably late interwar
(Source: Tom Marshall Collection via Moloney, *A history of the Melbourne Glass Bottle Works site*)



Photograph of the Glassmaking Plant's Hudsons Road frontage, 1946

Note that bay three and six of the single-storey section appear to have originally been loading bays – these were later adapted into steel-framed windows replicating the other bays

(Source: SLNSW, ACI Pix Acc., Box 1, 124 via Moloney, *A history of the Melbourne Glass Bottle Works site*, p151)

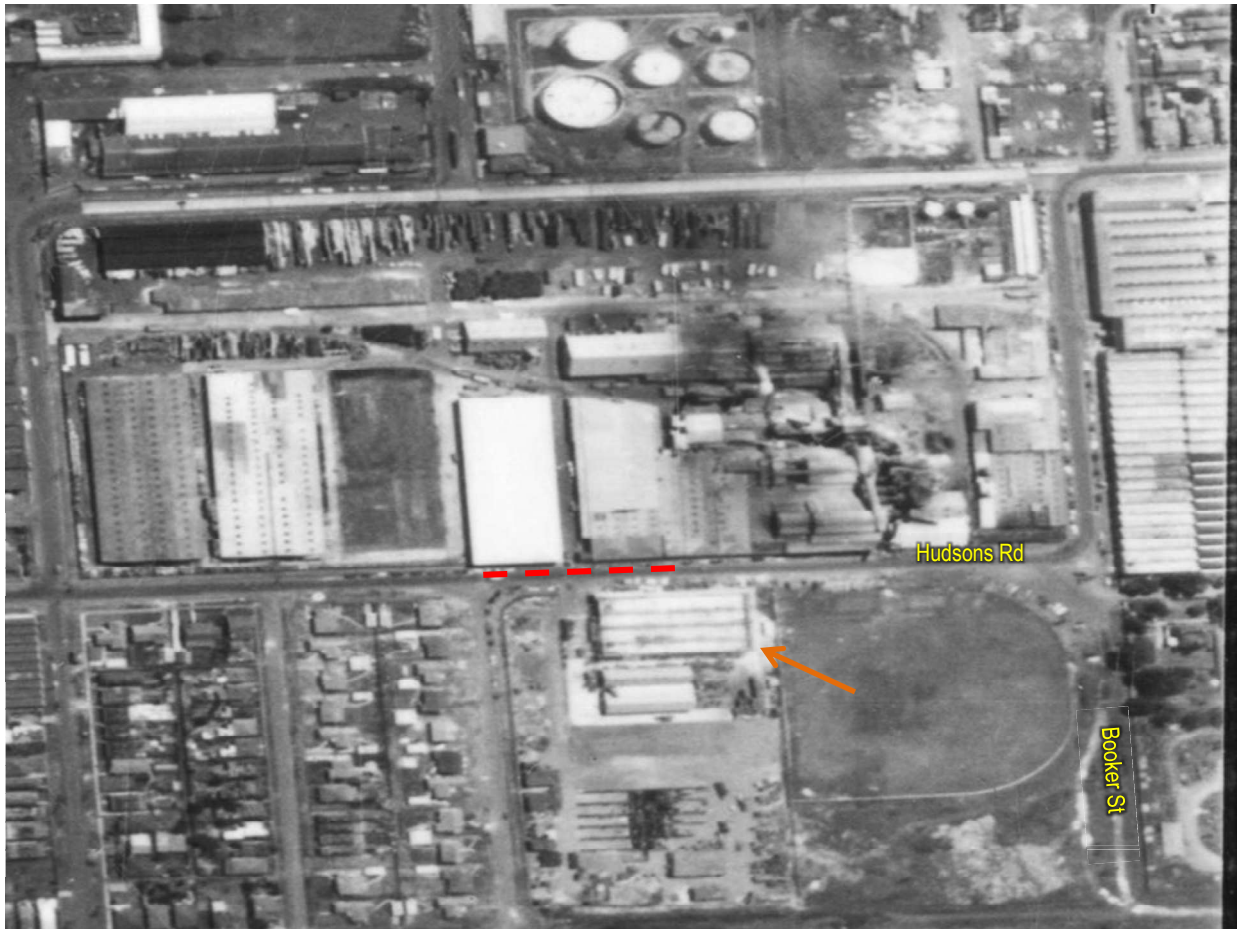
The ACI extended and/or replaced the four interwar corrugated sheds up to Hudsons Road during the postwar period, infilling the original setback. In what was likely an effort to improve the presentation of the complex to the public realm, a double-height cream-brick and glazed street wall – designed in the International Style – was provided. In light of the continuation of wartime rationing into the late 1940s, this wall was likely erected during the early 1950s, a phase of intensive redevelopment at the complex.



View to three of the corrugated sheds across Hudsons Road, likely the late 1930s – prior to their concealment by the cream brick facades/buildings (Source: Tom Marshall Collection via Moloney, *A history of the Melbourne Glass Bottle Works site*)



Aerial photograph of the central part of the ACI complex, dated 1945 – north is top of the frame
Note the western gabled wing is apparent at the *Moulded Plastics Factory* – set back of the metal sheds from Hudsons Road remains unfilled (Source: *Melbourne and Metropolitan Area Project*, Run 22, Frame 58646, Landata)



1956 aerial photograph of the ACI Complex – north is top of the frame

The easternmost corrugated sheds have been extended forward and the *International Style Street Wall* appears extant (dashed red line)

The *ACI Fibre Packaging Plant* has also been constructed south of Hudsons Road (orange arrow); see discussion below

(Source: *Melbourne Outer Suburbs Project*, Frame 2, Landata)

Over the late 1950s, this street wall continued along the front of the adjoining metal sheds in the west (except the corner building). This section of the street wall survived until circa 2020, when a contemporary industrial building replaced it.

ACI Fibre Packaging Plant

In 1920, the AGM had purchased about 12 acres (4.85 ha) of vacant land on the south side of Hudsons Road. This block was bounded by Craig (south), Bernard (west), and Booker streets (east). During the mid-1930s, the company established a sports ground with a turf pitch in the north-east corner of the holding, which was utilised by the in-house cricket team (men and women's) and other community sporting bodies.¹⁵

From the mid-1950s, the sports ground gave way to an expansion of the complex south of Hudsons Road, including the construction of the substantial *ACI Fibre Packaging Plant* in circa 1956.¹⁶ It was originally involved in the production of boxes for packaging glass products and was joined to the *Glassmaking Plant* opposite by an overhead conveyor belt that crossed Hudsons Road (see below, since removed). This building was later purchased and used by Amcor, an Australian packaging company.¹⁷

The *ACI Fibre Packing Plant* had been earmarked for major modifications at the time of assessment and, accordingly, has not been attributed with heritage significance.

¹⁵ Moloney, *A history of the Melbourne Glass Bottle Works site*, p55, 161

¹⁶ A conjoined pair of gabled sheds, southeast of the *ACI Fibre Packaging Plant*, also remain from the postwar war period; however, they appear to have been modified and have become relatively subsumed by an enormous 1970s gabled shed in the south.

¹⁷ Moloney, *A history of the Melbourne Glass Bottle Works site*, p151



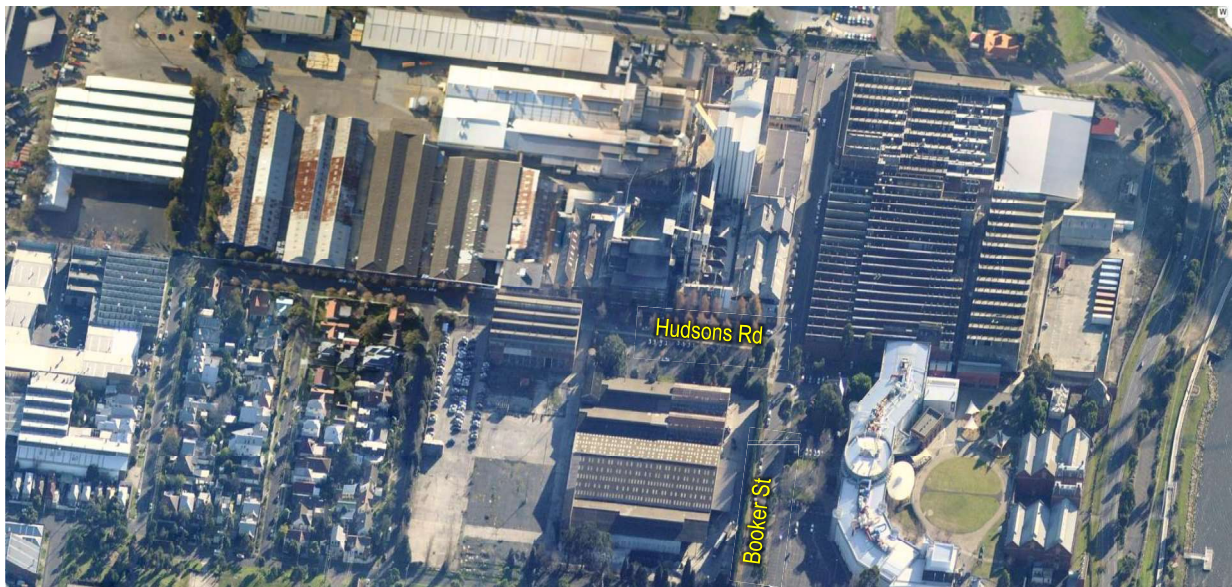
Aerial photograph of the ACI Complex, viewed from the north, 1964
The *ACI Fibre Packaging Plant* is indicated by the red
(Source: Wolfgang Sievers, NLA, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-160410488>)



The ACI Complex, viewed from the west, 1979
(Source: Wolfgang Sievers, NLA, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-160330823>)

As depicted in the above aerial photographs, the section of the complex east of Booker Street (the original site) had been wholly redeveloped over the late 1930s as a multifaceted service and engineering centre.

In 1998, ACI was acquired by the American-based Owens Illinois (OI). The portion of the site east of Booker Street was closed and sold to the State Government in 2012. Soon after, all of its buildings – except for the *Basalt Wall* – were demolished. Much of the western part of the complex has also been redeveloped in recent years.



Aerial photograph of the former ACI Complex, June 2011
(Source: Nearmap)



Aerial photograph of the former ACI Complex, October 2021
(Source: Nearmap)

Moloney, as part of his study, examined the vast ACI Collection, which is archived at the State Library of NSW, noted there to be no apparent record of architects/designers or building plans.¹⁸ Presumably, the company utilised their own in-house engineers for the majority of industrial designs.

¹⁸ Moloney, *A history of the Melbourne Glass Bottle Works site*, p302

Thematic Context

David Helms, *Hobsons Bay Heritage Study Volume 1: Environmental History*, 2003:

- Theme 3: Developing Local, Regional and National Economies

Comparative Analysis

The area of Spotswood, east of the Werribee/Williamstown railway line, has been a predominantly industrial zone since the late 19th century. In recent decades, a number of substantial manufacturing sites, particularly along Hudsons Road and Booker Street, have been demolished and/or redeveloped. A small residential pocket (between Hudson Road and Craig Street) was established during the late 19th century and was expanded in the postwar period to provide workers housing for employees of the AGM. The latter in Bernard and Robb streets is also proposed as a heritage overlay – the *Australian Glass Manufacturers' Housing Heritage Precinct*.

One building in the proposed extent of the heritage overlay dates to the Federation period, with the others having been constructed in the interwar and postwar years. A few comparative examples from these periods in the municipality survive, though some have been demolished in the recent past.

The *AGM Company Headquarters* compares with the former Federation period Gatehouse at the east side of the Newport Power Station (HO81) in terms of scale but served a different purpose. The address is Douglas Parade; however, it is located at the north end of the Strand. This small Federation Free Style (or Edwardian Baroque) pavilion has channelled render, an elaborate parapet, and multipaned timber openings.

There is only one prominent surviving comparative building from the 1920s listed in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay, though three others have been demolished. In addition, one small building is recommended as part of this project.

- *Victorian Railways Stores Branch Complex and Trees*, 1 McLister Street, Spotswood (HO185) – built in 1924-27 to a design by James Fawcett. This substantial single-storey building, probably constructed from concrete block (not rendered as noted in the citation), expresses a Free Classical mode with pediments to the lateral bays of the parapet and multipaned steel-framed windows. It is very different in character from the relevant building at the subject site.
- *Pumphouse*, Drake Street (recommended for a HO by this Study) – the place is located at the former Commonwealth Oil Refineries Company site in Spotswood. The building has a gable roof, clad in corrugated sheet metal clad, and eaves lined with sheeting, with a timber fascia and eaves gutters. The palette of red brick walls in stretcher bond with concrete lintels is typical of industrial buildings of the early part of the Interwar period.
- *Commonwealth Oil Refinery Complex (former)*, 32-54 Toll Drive, Altona North (HO303) – circa 1921, single-storey red brick administrative building with a gambrel roof with some short sections with a parapet breaking through the roofline. It has been demolished.
- *Vacuum Oil Company Ltd Depot (former)*, 29 Francis Street, Yarraville (HO130) – there had been a few 1920s buildings at this place, including two parallel, large red brick, gabled roofed structures. These have all been demolished. The street gable ends have corbelled/dog-toothed parapet and were divided into three bays (evident on GSV until 2014). Details of the others are not known.
- *Hugh Lennon Agricultural Implements Works*, 35 Raleigh Street and Hudsons Road and Hall Street, Spotswood (HO153) – From GSV (up to 2019), there was a large sawtooth roof building, fully clad in corrugated sheet metal, though to date to the Interwar period. Few openings were evident to Hudsons Road except for an upwardly canted band of windows (probably metal framed) to the front sawtooth, whereas the windows to Raleigh Street elevation were timber-framed. Now demolished.

There are two Moderne-style industrial buildings in the municipality that both date to the later part of the Interwar period:

- *Red Robin Hosiery Factory (Former)*, 119 Pier Street, Altona (HO256) - built in the early postwar period, circa 1949, and designed in the Moderne style. It also has a rendered façade with a long, narrower band of windows but features a concrete hood above the entrance. However, the façade of the *Red Robin Hosiery Factory* is more ornate than the *Glassmaking Plant* at the AGM Complex. The off-centre entrance bay is similarly emphasised as a vertically orientated unit. In this case, by its fenestration pattern and stepped parapet featuring tripartite geometric mouldings with fin-like projections that extend above the parapet.
- *W Goetz & Sons Ltd Complex (Former)*, 136 Hall Street, Spotswood (HO139) – this is a large factory complex with brick administration building designed in the Moderne style during the late Interwar period, circa 1939. The lower part/dado of the

walls is manganese brick, while the upper part is in contrasting cream brick with dog toothed corbels to the parapet. The central band of metal-framed windows have a concrete lintel which contributes to the overall horizontal emphases of the design. The entry bay is centrally located and features fins, quoining and a frieze. Overall, it is more decorative than the *Glassmaking Plant*.

There is only one other key Postwar example currently included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay, with another proposed as part of this Study, although the latter is smaller and designed in a Functionalist mode rather than being indicative of the International Style:

- *BP Australia Complex and Canary Island Palm Tree*, 431 Douglas Parade, Spotswood (HO89) – consists of the blending tower, warehouse and office complex constructed in 1959. The front two-storey administration building has cuboid form in cream brick with large areas of continuous glazing with spandrels. The landmark tower has a fully glazed façade, with the long north wall clad mainly in metal sheeting. Other buildings set further back are also cream brick with minimal openings. This complex dates to a specific time rather than being the result of evolution. The design is also broadly indicative of the International Style.
- *Baco Foods, Craig Street, Spotswood* (recommended for a HO by this Study) – a single-storey Functionalist style administration and factory building, constructed in 1948, consisting of two hipped-roof sections concealed behind masonry façades, both clad in corrugated sheet metal. The verticality of the entry bay is juxtaposed with the general horizontal emphasis established by the band of windows, which is further enhanced by the ribbed panels between the regular fenestration pattern of the administrative section.
- Administration Building, Part of the *Standard Vacuum Refining Company Complex* (Former), 351- 381 Millers Road, Altona (HO202) – designed by Stephenson & Turner in circa 1955, representative modernist design but had been altered and since demolished.

Previous Assessment

- Sections of the recommended *AGM Factory Complex (former)* were previously within the non-contiguous boundaries of the *Melbourne Glass Bottle Works (former)* listing (HO46). Some of the buildings associated with the latter have been demolished, including a former gabled shed that fronted Hudson Road in the west, a chimney (or similar structure) located in the block bounded by Booker and Raleigh streets, Simcock Avenue, and Hudson Road, and a small gatehouse that fronted Booker Street. These removed elements have been excised from the revised for the boundary of the *AGM Factory Complex (former)*.¹⁹

Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls

External Paint Controls	No
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings and/or fences	No
Prohibited Use	No
Aboriginal Place	No

¹⁹ Refer to RBA Architects + Conservation Consultants, *Spotswood Activity Centre Structure Plan Heritage Review 2021*, October 2021, section 5.2

Extent of Heritage Overlay

The proposed extent of the heritage overlay (HO46) is outlined approximately below.



Recommended extent of heritage overlay – north is frame right
NB - shaded red relates to the existing extent of HO46
(Source: Nearmap, October 2021)