

# HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

## FORMER CITY OF BENDIGO ABATTOIR

47 LANSELL STREET

BENDIGO

### Prepared For

Blue Bondi Pty Ltd

### By

Allom Lovell & Associates Pty Ltd  
Conservation Architects  
35 Little Bourke Street Melbourne

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### Updated and Revised by

**Anthemion Consultancies**  
POB 18183 Collins Street East  
MELBOURNE 8003

rgrd@bigpond.com

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### 1.0 Executive Summary

Since 2003 there has been a proposal to redevelop the former Bendigo Abattoir/Country Roads Board site for residential use and in the process the site has been assessed for its heritage value on several occasions and to this date there are no heritage controls over the site. On 8 June, 2006 a Development Plan Overlay was applied to the site as a consequence of Planning Scheme Amendment C34. Insofar as the Schedule 16 to the DPO concerns itself with heritage, all of the requirements have been complied with. This is the only site specific planning control.

As part of the C34 process, on 22 April, 2003, Council resolved "not [to] support the application of a Heritage Overlay over the site as part of Amendment C34 nor consider the retention of the main buildings as necessary"

The heritage significance of the site has been assessed by Heritage Victoria and was found not to be of significance to the State of Victoria. The site was referred to the City of Greater Bendigo for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay but this has not been activated. Instead Council made a recommendation to include portions in the Schedule to the Development Plan Overlay. Presently the City of Greater Bendigo has commissioned the *White Hills & East Bendigo Heritage Study 2013-14* and the site has been included in preliminary presentations and listings. It is considered that the site has been properly assessed for its heritage values in the past; has effectively been dismissed by the Responsible Authority as being appropriate to include in the Heritage Overlay and instead, the responsibility of controlling any new redevelopment has been placed in the DPO 16.

In the light of the history of assessments and considerations of the redevelopment of this site, for the record, this submission again draws together the various decisions, reports, assessments of significance pertaining to the site; provides an overview of the recommendations of previous assessments and considerations of appropriate planning controls for the site and reaffirms its earlier conclusion that no further assessment needs to be made as the question of significance at both the State and local levels has been resolved and that the position hitherto of the City of Greater Bendigo has been clear, consistent and should be affirmed.

Attached to this submission is all of the material which was submitted for the previous assessment together with a summary critique of reports by others. The original heritage assessment of the former Bendigo Municipal Abattoir which was prepared for Birchgrove Properties Pty. Ltd. by Allom Lovell & Associates in 2003 was authored by Robyn Riddett and Kate Paterson. The original assessment was updated for Blue Bondi Pty Ltd by Anthemion Consultancies in 2011 and forms Attachment A.

The updating of the original report was undertaken as part of a review process but no attempt was made to update the survey of other abattoirs in Victoria nor to check on their current status as operational or otherwise as this is not considered to be relevant any longer. However, the Bendigo site was re-inspected in 2011 and no alterations have been made to the existing buildings other than for remediation/protection works related to vandalism, removal of rubbish and the like. No buildings have been demolished. In short the site remains the same as it was in 2002-03.

This submission has been prepared by Robyn Riddett, Director, Anthemion Consultancies in 2013.

## 2.0 Summary of Heritage Assessments

### 2.1 Eaglehawk and Bendigo Heritage Study (1993)

The City of Bendigo Abattoir was identified in the *Eaglehawk and Bendigo Heritage Study* undertaken by Graeme Butler & Associates in 1993. It was graded “C”, which is defined simply as a place of individual and local significance. No citation was prepared.

### 2.2 Heritage Assessment (2003) and Heritage Victoria Process

A heritage assessment of the former Bendigo Abattoir was first prepared in 2003 by Allom Lovell & Associates Pty Ltd. Since then the level of significance of the site has been tested via the process adopted by Heritage Victoria for nominations to the *Victorian Heritage Register*. The determination on the nomination, dated 15 April 2003, was that the Executive Director and the Heritage Council recommended that the site “NOT be included in the Heritage Register” and that it “be referred to the relevant planning authority [City of Greater Bendigo] for inclusion in a planning scheme” via a Heritage Overlay.

### 2.3 Amendment C34 (2006) and Schedule 16 to the Development Plan Overlay

A Panel Hearing in relation to Amendment C34 considered numerous expert heritage opinions and concluded that the site could be redeveloped for residential use and that the application of “a Development Plan Overlay over this site is an effective way to enable development to occur in a logical and efficient fashion”. The Responsible Authority also advised the above bodies that it considered the site to be of local interest only. The site is presently covered by Schedule 16 of the Development Plan Overlay. Schedule 16 to the DPO supports residential development and apart from addressing site layout, infrastructure, landscaping and the like, insofar as heritage is concerned, the requirements have been met.

### 2.4 White Hills & East Bendigo Heritage Study 2013-14

Most recently the City of Greater Bendigo has commissioned the *White Hills & East Bendigo Heritage Study 2013-14* which is being undertaken by Lovell Chen. Upon completion this study will make recommendations for the re-use and protection of places, via the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme, which are considered to have heritage significance at the local level. During the public consultation process it became apparent that the abattoir site was again being considered for assessment and possible inclusion in the Heritage Overlay Schedule of the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme despite previous considerations which had a contrary outcome.

## 3.0 Location

The former City of Bendigo Abattoir is located at 47 Lansell Street, Bendigo (Figure 1).



Figure 1 Location plan

## 4.0 Overview of Heritage Assessments

### 4.1 Nomination to the Victorian Heritage Register

The City of Bendigo Abattoir is **not** included on the *Victorian Heritage Register*.

Following the sale of the site by VicRoads in 2001-2 the site was nominated to the *Victorian Heritage Register* and at that time no in-depth comparative analysis had been undertaken to accurately identify any level of heritage significance in the context of abattoirs across the state of Victoria. Therefore the purpose of the original study (Attachment A) was to make an assessment of any significance which the Bendigo Abattoir might have and to rank it statewide to assess its significance in relation to the threshold for the State *Register*. None of the previous heritage studies, including an assessment of the site for the *Eaglehawk and Bendigo Heritage Study*, included an appropriate comparative study and in any event they came to different conclusions.

A nomination to the *Victorian Heritage Register* was made by Mr Terrence Hunter, and after an investigation the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria formed the view that the site was “not of sufficient significance to warrant inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register”. The Heritage Council concurred with this view. The Statement of Significance prepared as a result of the nomination reads:

The former Bendigo municipal abattoirs are historically significant at the local level. It is an example of an abattoir established by a municipality in response to the provisions of the Meat Inspection Act (1900), which sought by means of a proper inspection process to prevent diseased meat passing into human consumption. Meat inspectors were appointed by the municipality and all inspection was to be carried out at an abattoir registered under the Act. Slaughtering was prohibited in proclaimed ‘meat areas’ except at a municipal abattoir or licensed private abattoir. The Bendigo abattoirs were designed by renowned engineer and architect, Charles d’Ebro. D’Ebro was responsible for a number of abattoirs around Australia. The Bendigo abattoirs, completed in 1912, facilitated the slaughtering of stock for local consumption in two brick buildings – one for beef, the other for sheep and pigs. The process, on the ‘solo’ method of contract butchers, was relatively simple compared to the processes of the mass frozen exporters operating on the low skill ‘chain’ method with utilisation of refrigeration technology. The Bendigo facility finally closed in 1945, when all slaughtering for local consumption passed to a joint export and local slaughtering facility at the Bendigo Inland Meat Authority, enabled by the Inland Meat Authority Act (1942).<sup>1</sup>

### 4.2 Australian Heritage Database

This was formerly the *Register of the National Estate*. The City of Bendigo Abattoir is **not** included on the Australian Heritage Database. There are no statutory powers as a consequence of any listing.

### 4.3 National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

In 2003, prior to the site redevelopment proposal, the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) had a file only (B7193) on the Bendigo Abattoir.

As part of the process, wherein the site was nominated to the *Victorian Heritage Register* c.2003, the site was classified at the State level by the National Trust. The following is the current Statement of Significance contained in the National Trust *Register* and the *Victorian Heritage Database*:

**What is significant?**

The original 1911-12 Charles D'Ebro designed brick Bendigo Municipal Abattoir, comprising twin slaughter and hanging rooms for cattle, sheep and pigs, and two smaller ancillary brick buildings. After the buildings were acquired by the Country Roads Board in 1945, a substantial but sympathetic addition was made to the south-eastern end of the old cattle abattoir.

**How is it significant?**

The abattoir is significant for historic, architectural and technical reasons at a state level.

**Why is it significant?**

The place is of historical significance as a rare surviving municipal abattoir, and represents the development of hygienic slaughtering through municipal regulations, thus improving standards of public health in Victoria. It is historically significant to the City of Greater Bendigo as a key to the primary production industry that centred on this precinct from the 1860s to the mid 1990s; they are an important surviving component of one of the largest regional livestock markets in Victoria.

The place is of architectural significance for its unusual construction and design detailing. The abattoir was designed by noted architect and engineer Charles D'Ebro whose works include Princes Bridge, and many prominent commercial offices and residences, including Stonnington in Toorak. D'Ebro was critically influential in the development of industrial and in particular meat processing buildings, designing major freezing works and abattoirs throughout Victoria and Australia.

The place is of technical significance for the range of building forms which reflect specialised design for hygienic killing and butchering of livestock. The 1945 addition is important for the use of pre-cast reinforced concrete framing in the extraordinary 3-pin concrete arch portal in the larger eastern extension.

**Group**

Manufacturing and Processing

**Category**

Abattoir/ Meat Processing

#### 4.4 Heritage Studies

##### 4.4.1 Eaglehawk and Bendigo Heritage Study

The City of Bendigo Abattoir was identified in the *Eaglehawk and Bendigo Heritage Study* undertaken by Graeme Butler & Associates in 1993. The study identified the complex as C-graded, which is defined simply as a place of individual and local significance. There is no citation covering the history or significance of the site.

Advice from the City of Greater Bendigo in 2013 has been that no further work was done to either identify additional heritage places or to prepare citations for places graded in Volume 5, the Site Schedule, of the *Eaglehawk and Bendigo Heritage Study*.

##### 4.4.2 Thematic Environmental History for Greater Bendigo

In 2013 a new *Thematic Environmental History* for Greater Bendigo was compiled by Lovell Chen et. al., preparatory to undertaking a more up-to-date heritage study, i.e. the *White Hills & East Bendigo Heritage Study 2013-14*. This was adopted by City of Greater Bendigo Council July 31, 2013.

Using *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes*, under the theme "Theme 5: Building Greater Bendigo's industries and workforce", Sub-theme "5.1 Processing raw materials: Animal products and by products", the Bendigo Municipal Abattoir site in Lansell Road is mentioned (p. 82) viz.:

Following residential subdivision of the nearby Lansell estate, calls were made to remove the abattoirs, and in 1912 new abattoirs were opened on the Market Reserve. They were designed by prominent Melbourne architect and engineer, Charles D'Ebro, and included twin slaughter and hanging rooms for cattle, sheep and pigs, and two smaller ancillary brick buildings. (352)

...

The Bendigo Freezing Works opened off Strickland Road on the Heathcote railway line in 1922. The Inland Meat Authority Act 1942 established the Victorian Inland Meat Authority (VIMA) to operate Amalgamated Freezing Co (Victoria), including the freezer works at Bendigo. At the same time, the government proposed the closing of Municipal Abattoirs. In 1945, 11 acres, including the site of the Municipal Abattoirs, was handed over to the Country Roads Board and livestock slaughtering operations shifted to the Bendigo Freezing Works. The operation was enlarged in 1958. (355)

Footnotes:

352 National Trust listing, for 47 Lansell St, Bendigo, Victorian Heritage Database.

355 Vines, G, 'Abattoirs in Bendigo' in Butcher, M and Collins, Y M J (eds), *Bendigo at Work: An Industrial History*, Published by Holland House for the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), Bendigo and District Branch, Strathdale, Vic, 2005, pp. 236-38.

Identified places related to this theme include " abattoirs, tanneries and meatworks". (p.83)

#### 4.4.3 White Hills & East Bendigo Heritage Study 2013-14

This study is currently being undertaken by Lovell Chen. The final thematic history has been completed and was adopted by the City of Greater Bendigo Council on July 31, 2013. The abattoir is included in the history.

The site was illustrated in a Powerpoint presentation prepared by Lovell Chen for a community information session and an Open House for Businesses & Industry Technical Q&A session held on 21 May, 2013.

It is understood that Lovell Chen will not be assessing the Lansell Street site as part of this work.

#### 4.5 Planning Scheme: Amendment C34 and the Heritage Overlay

In 2002-03, the City of Greater Bendigo considered Amendment C34 which pertained to the proposed redevelopment of the site. At an Ordinary Meeting of the Environment Management Committee of the Council, held on 22 April, 2003, in the light of advice from Heritage Victoria that the site was not of state significance and drawing upon several expert reports, it was resolved:

That Greater Bendigo City Council:

Supports Amendment C34 in the form exhibited that includes rezoning from Public Use Zone 1 – Service and Utility (part) and Public Use Zone 2 – Education (part) to Residential 1 Zone with a Development Plan Overlay and associated Schedule 13 [now re-numbered to 16] applied over the site.

Does not support the application of a Heritage Overlay over the site as part of Amendment C34 nor consider the retention of the main buildings as necessary.

Supports that in any Development Plan Overlay Schedule developed, appropriate requirements for the archaeological recording of the site and buildings is included.

Nominated: Cr Phillips, Seconded: Cr Williams That the recommendation be adopted. Carried. <sup>2</sup>

The City of Bendigo Abattoir is **not** included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the City of Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme. This Schedule was updated on 07 April, 2011 in response to Amendment C128 (Part 2). The site and buildings are still not included in the 'Heritage Investigation Inventory' nor the list of 'Places not Mapped' now included in Clause 22.06, 'Heritage Policy', in the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme. This Clause was updated on 07 April, 2011 in response to Amendment C128 (Part 2), which was essentially a "tidy up" amendment.

In response to the nomination to the *Victorian Heritage Register*, the City of Greater Bendigo advised Heritage Victoria that as part of the Amendment C34 process a number of expert reports had been considered and that in its view Council determined "that the place was of local interest only" and that it "did not support application of a Heritage Overlay over the site" as determined at the Ordinary Council Meeting of April 22, 2003.<sup>3</sup> Instead of protection of the site via the Heritage Overlay, Council was of the view that "Schedule 13 [now re-numbered as 16] to the Development Plan Overlay can provide a mechanism to explore and fully address a suitable level of heritage recognition".<sup>4</sup> Importantly Council noted that

The potential heritage value of the Abattoir Buildings is something which has been known to the Council and the Council made a conscious decision at the

time of the exhibition of the Amendment [C34]. A number of matters, reports or investigations have occurred since and the Council maintains its view in this respect.<sup>5</sup>

This approach to the site stemmed from the "Review of the Bendigo Residential Development Strategy", prepared by TBA Planners in 1995 and which was a reference document, and which gave rise to the "Bendigo Urban Area – Residential Development Strategy, 1997", also a reference document, and which advocated urban consolidation and residential development, *inter alia*, on the abattoir site<sup>6</sup> and as later confirmed by the C34 Panel.

The conclusions of the C34 Panel were "that the most appropriate use of the major component of the subject land (Lot 2) is for residential purposes and that it is also appropriate for the small portion of the land adjacent to the Roads Corporation (VicRoads) premises (part Lot 3) to be rezoned to reflect the requirements for its existing regional headquarters. The site offers an excellent opportunity for the development of a creative and imaginative residential development...".<sup>7</sup> The Panel was also supportive of a Development Plan Overlay and considered that "the DPO can effectively deal with the heritage issues, providing appropriate wording is included in the Schedule".<sup>8</sup>

It is clear that Council has maintained its position and has not sought to alter the heritage status of the abattoir site despite recent planning scheme amendments which address heritage.

#### **4.6 Development Plan Overlay**

Schedule 16 to the Development Plan Overlay applies to the Lansell Crest Estate, Bendigo. This was applied over the site as a consequence of Amendment C34 on 8 June, 2006 and is set out in accordance with Appendix 3 of the Panel Report. Insofar as heritage is concerned, the requirements are:

Sites of conservation, heritage or archaeological significance and the means by which they will be managed. This work should include but not be limited to:

- The development of an interpretation plan for the site; (Completed. See Attachment B)
- Archival recording of the heritage buildings; (Completed)
- A detailed photographic record to be taken of the abattoir buildings (both external and internal); (Completed)
- Arrangements for the preservation of the photographic or other records of the site in a manner which will maximise their access by the community and for research purposes; (Completed)
- The reinstatement on the site of the original plaque. (Agreed to)

The interpretation plan, prepared by Allom Lovell & Associates and authored by Michelle Kneehans, forms Attachment B. It includes a brief background history based on more detailed information contained in this Heritage Assessment and illustrations and captions for two signs to be located on the site and as shown on an accompanying but separate plan.

The archival recording and detailed photographic record have been combined and have been prepared in accord with Heritage Victoria's standard guidelines for "Photographic Recording for Heritage Places and Objects"

([http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/36831/Photographic\\_Recording\\_Tech\\_Note.pdf](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/36831/Photographic_Recording_Tech_Note.pdf)).

A copy of the black and white contact prints and the 84 negatives taken by Peter Bennetts in November 2005 have been lodged and catalogued at the State Library of Victoria. Accession numbers are in the series H2005.85/1 onwards. The catalogue entry is available by searching on Bendigo Abattoir (Advanced search) and many, or all, of the photographs are available online.

The original plaque will be reinstated on the site as part of the new construction. In addition, materials from the existing buildings are also intended for representative re-use in the proposed redevelopment.

It is considered that the Development Plan Overlay Schedule 16 has been complied with. Importantly Council ratified the DPO again in April 2011 when it voted to keep it in place as part of Amendment C109.

#### **4.7 Critique of the Previous Heritage Reports and Submissions**

Several heritage reports were commissioned for the City of Bendigo Abattoir about the time of its nomination to the *Victorian Heritage Register*. They tended to focus on the history of the site only, without much regard for the overall state-wide context which was relevant in relation to the State nomination.

##### **4.7.1 Nadia Gasparetto. Heritage Assessment of the Former City of Bendigo Abattoirs**

This was prepared by Nadia Gasparetto in January 2001 on behalf of VicRoads. The Executive Summary states that:

The buildings within the study area at 47 Lansell Street, Bendigo are historically significant to the City of Greater Bendigo because of their link to the primary production industry that centred around this precinct from the 1860s to the mid 1990s. They were also an important market to central and northern Victoria. Designed by Charles D'Ebro, an acknowledged expert at this type of building, the abattoir contributed to the facilities available at the neighbouring Bendigo Saleyards. The evolution of the buildings from abattoir to CRB, RCA and then to VicRoads depots and workshops provide a link to the history of road construction throughout Victoria. The buildings are also of architectural significance as they display unusual construction and design detailing.<sup>9</sup>

**Comment:** Charles D'Ebro was in fact a notable architect and engineer, not just an expert at designing abattoirs. To link the abattoirs to VicRoads and road construction and then find this to be significant is naïve. The unusual construction and design detailing presumably relates to the not inconsiderable changes by the CRB to adapt it to a depot.

The Statement of Significance in the body of the report goes on to add that the abattoir buildings reflect the evolution in understanding of public health issues as they relate to food processing and that

The Saleyards precinct spawned a number of related industries in this vicinity, including grain and feed processing plants, skin and tannery works and a series of abattoirs. The existing buildings within the study area remain as evidence of the importance of this precinct to the local Bendigo economy, its association with primary production and its association with the working lives of generations of Bendigo residents.

**Comment:** The co-location of these industries has more to do with their being noxious industries rather than any particular link with their raw materials and processes.

...The abattoir incorporated modern equipment and improved standards in comparison with those previously employed at the market precinct and stand as evidence of the improved understanding of these issues by the early 1900s.

**Comment:** To see significance in the generations of working lives of Bendigo residents is similarly naïve. All the abattoir equipment was removed by the CRB.

The original two buildings are also of architectural significance because of the functional nature of the design and the unusual detailed construction and framework. The 1945 building (architect unknown) is also of architectural significance because of the detailed precast concrete buttressed framework and intricate roof design.

**Comment:** This claim cannot be substantiated by the building fabric.

...The construction and maintenance of Victoria's road network is implicit in all aspects of the economic and social lives of Victorians. The maintenance of good road links is of particular importance in regional areas.

**Comment:** The same could be said of any road in regional Victoria and does not translate into significance in relation to the roads depot.

#### *Conclusion*

This report does not include a comparative analysis of other Victorian abattoirs other than for an incomplete listing of architect, Charles D'Ebro's works, and does not examine the abattoir in a historical sense outside the Bendigo context. It should be noted that the author did not view the Public Works Department drawing for 1945 alterations to the building and has made a number of assumptions regarding the extent of alterations and original fabric. The conclusions which have been drawn cannot not be sustained by any objective examination of the relevant data and are naïve with respect to certain aspects.

#### **4.7.2 David Bick. VicRoads Depot – Former City of Bendigo Abattoirs: Assessment of its Heritage Value.**

This report prepared by David Bick in August 2002 does not explore or contain a succinct Statement of Significance. In discussing the buildings it concludes that the alterations by the Country Roads Board were extensive and 'all that remains of the original Bendigo City Abattoirs are most of the brick walls and the roofs'.<sup>10</sup> The report discusses the previous use of the site for city abattoirs but states that the saleyards, railway branch and supporting infrastructure have been removed from the site. It also states that their value is limited by the removal of almost everything which would show the animal killing process and they are typical of other brick factories of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It concludes that 'this site is of local level heritage at best, and not of greater value'.<sup>11</sup>

**Comment:** While the facts as presented are correct, the report is rather dismissive of what remains on the site but nevertheless arrives at the level of significance which is considered to be appropriate.

It states that Bendigo also contains the existing facilities of the c.1945 Victorian Inland Meat Authority nearby, thus the site cannot be said to contain the only historic brick abattoir buildings in Bendigo. The report also discusses other comparable nineteenth and early twentieth century industrial buildings which are considerably more important than the old Municipal Abattoir. It states that there is no reason to preserve the buildings, rather, they could be recorded.

**Comment:** It is understood that this is basically correct.

#### 4.7.3 Allom Lovell & Associates Pty. Ltd. Submissions.

The submissions prepared by Allom Lovell & Associates are the *Submission in Relation to the Heritage Significance of the Former City of Bendigo Abattoir, 47 Lansell Street, Bendigo and in Relation to the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme Amendment C43* and the original *Heritage Assessment [updated version at Attachment A]*, both prepared for Birchgrove Properties.

Collectively these documents assessed the significance of the Bendigo site itself and in the context of a statewide survey of abattoir sites. This remains the most comprehensive study.

A summary of the salient points of the findings is:

The abattoir is not considered to be of local significance. It is considered to be of some local interest only for the following reasons:

- It has been a roads depot, i.e. for 57 years, longer than it was an abattoir, i.e. for 27 years.
- Its ability to demonstrate its original, purpose, either in terms of its design and/or equipment, has been severely compromised by the changes made by the CRB in 1945.
- It provides little information in relation to D'Ebro's design.
- It has a low level of integrity.
- Without interpretation it is almost impossible to understand the operation of the place other than for the obvious stock ramp.
- Beyond simply being 'the local abattoir' for a short period of time, there is nothing of particular distinction in its history.

The Bendigo Abattoir is of some local interest at best as an abattoir and is only of minor local interest as the location of a CRB depot, a degree of interest which could effectively be dismissed.

It is considered that the demolition of the structures is acceptable and would not have an adverse effect on the cultural heritage significance of Bendigo, as demonstrated by the array of places included under its Heritage Overlay. That is to say, the exclusion of the abattoir would not have any impact on the ability of Bendigo's heritage places to demonstrate its rich and varied history.

It is considered that an archival photographic record of the site would be sufficient to record its presence in Bendigo's history and that retention is not essential or necessary from a heritage perspective.

**Comment:** this is effectively the position which Council finally arrived at. It is again noted that a photographic record has been lodged for the site.

#### 4.7.4 Bryce Raworth. [Heritage report]

A heritage report, referred to in Greater Bendigo City Council. Ordinary Meeting of the Environment Management Committee of the Council, held on 22 April, 2003 was prepared by Bryce Raworth and referenced reports listed above. The conclusions were that "the two key buildings on the site are of limited heritage significance at the local level" and certainly were not of state significance. Nevertheless, at that time (April, 2013) "it would not seem appropriate to assume that the buildings should be demolished, as is suggested in the schematic Development Plan associated with the Amendment" (C34). The report then concluded that taking into account the heritage significance of the buildings any of the following options could be considered: adaptive reuse with partial alterations and additions

or partial or complete demolition to facilitate reuse or appropriate development. In the event of complete demolition a photographic record should be made prior to any demolition.

**Comment:** this not dissimilar to the findings of the Allom Lovell assessment and again is effectively the position which Council finally arrived at. Again it is noted that a photographic record has been lodged for the site.

#### **4.7.5 National Trust of Australia (Victoria). Classification Report, Submission and Powerpoint Presentation to C34 Panel Hearing.**

**Comment:** Ultimately the views expressed in these documents regarding the level of significance of the place were not accepted by the panel. Nevertheless the factual information and illustrations contained in the material remain as useful references.

#### **4.8 Indigenous Archaeological Assessment**

Maya Veres, Heritage Insight Pty. Ltd. *Summary report – Indigneous Archaeological Site Inspection. Lot 2, Lansell Street, Bendigo.* This was commissioned by Foresight Pty. Ltd. and comprised a desktop assessment of the site and also a site inspection “to assess the potential for indigenous cultural heritage” on the site. The report noted that the site had been cleared of native vegetation and that the ground had been severely disturbed. It also noted that no Aboriginal sites were listed in the Aboriginal Affairs Victoria site registry. Finally it was concluded “that there was almost no probability of Aboriginal archaeological sites being located within the property” and that no Cultural Heritage Management Plan was required.

No further research has been undertaken by the author in this submission in relation to any more recent work which might have been undertaken in relation to any Indigenous cultural heritage matters which might pertain to the abattoir site.

#### **5.0 Conclusions**

The former Bendigo Abattoir site has been considered by Heritage Victoria for inclusion on the *Victorian Heritage Register*. The outcome of that assessment was to recommend it to the City of Greater Bendigo for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay. In considering that recommendation, Council came to the position, in 2003, not to include it in the Heritage Overlay and instead to control the redevelopment of the site via a DPO. Since then Council has had ample opportunity to reconsider the application of a Heritage Overlay and indeed in 2011 resolved to keep the DPO in place as part of Amendment C109. Council’s position has been clear and consistent. The site has been thoroughly researched by a number of heritage experts and further research is unlikely to establish any new significant factual information which might be compelling enough to propose the site again for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay. Instead the previous assessments should be accepted and Council’s position not to include the site in a Heritage Overlay should be affirmed.

## **1.0          A Victorian Abattoir Context**

It should be noted that no known secondary sources exist which provide a complete overview of the history of the Victorian meat processing industry. The following information, therefore, has been compiled from a number of primary sources, general secondary sources and some publications which examine the history of particular companies. In many cases, information has been gathered from personal communication with past and present abattoir operators.

### **1.1          Private and Municipal Operations: Side by Side**

Like many cities and towns, the prevalence of livestock-related trades, including markets, abattoirs, boiling down works, tanneries and tallow works, was an early feature of Melbourne and its surrounds. The rapid population growth in the 1850s led to the dramatic expansion in demand for goods and services of all kinds, including animal products. Lack of facilities for preserving meat meant that livestock was often walked great distances to the thriving urban market. As rural communities developed, a parallel trade was established throughout Victoria by single butchers operating small slaughterhouses to service their immediate area.

By the 1860s a successful meat preserving and canning industry had been established in Melbourne and by the 1880s freezing of whole carcasses of lamb and quarters of beef had been effectively carried out. Following these developments, a substantial portion of Australia's meat was shipped to Britain and Europe.<sup>12</sup> In parallel with the export trade, there remained a strong domestic demand for meat and by-products, which was filled by both metropolitan and country works.

In nineteenth century Melbourne and its suburbs the majority of meat processing and allied trades were concentrated in the inner and western suburbs, most commonly within close proximity to the Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers and Merri Creek. A plan and schedule prepared for the 1889-90 *Royal Commission to Inquire into and Report upon the Sanitary Condition in Melbourne* reflects this trend with not only abattoirs, but noxious trades, main drains and rubbish and refuse tips, located in proximity to the available waterways throughout the inner and western suburbs. (Refer Appendix B)<sup>13</sup>

At the time of this report there were seven municipal abattoirs operating in metropolitan Melbourne including the Melbourne City Abattoir in Flemington (1861, extended 1890s-1908), South Melbourne Corporation Abattoirs (1861, rebuilt 1899, added to 1902, 1904, 1908-14), Port Melbourne Corporation Abattoirs (pre-1885), Williamstown Abattoirs (1850s, completely remodelled c. 1903-8), Collingwood Abattoirs, St Kilda Abattoirs (closed by the Board, 1890) and Richmond Corporation Abattoirs (1862). The 1889-90 *Royal Commission* also made mention of six private facilities including Anderson and Co., Saltwater River, Essendon; Dundas Bros.' and Brundell's, both occupying the former Australian Meat Preserving Company works at Saltwater River, Footscray (1870); Greenham's at Braybrook; Morgan's at Williamstown; Collingwood Abattoirs (closed by the Board, 1890), and Pritchard's, Reilly Street, Collingwood.

It is more difficult to ascertain how many, if any, municipal and private operations existed throughout Victorian regional areas at this time as no known thorough state-wide investigation was ever carried out. It is possible that abattoirs, as opposed to small slaughterhouses, existed in at least Ballarat and Geelong and some other larger regional centres. It is known that the question of municipal abattoirs in regional areas was at least discussed during the nineteenth century, as evidenced by minutes of the Hamilton local council dating from the mid 1860s.<sup>14</sup> Prior to the establishment of council-supervised abattoirs in country areas, slaughtering of

animals was generally carried out by individual butchers at their own premises, often in an open rear yard. In other cases a single roomed addition or free-standing building was constructed of brick, stone or corrugated galvanised steel, depending on the prevailing local building materials. The facilities were rudimentary and animals were usually killed on the ground or rear of a dray then hoisted onto gallows for skinning and gutting. Blood generally seeped into the ground and offal and waste were dumped or fed to pigs.<sup>15</sup>

### *Meat Areas*

In 1900 the *Meat Supervision Act* passed through Parliament, enabling, *inter alia*, the establishment of the Metropolitan Meat Area and, with it, the powers of meat inspection. Despite preceding *Acts*, it was the first real attempt to introduce systematic meat inspection into Victoria. An amendment in 1901 provided for the constitution of other meat areas outside the 22 metropolitan municipalities, rights which were taken up soon after by Geelong (1902) and Warrnambool (1906). The 1906 report of the Board of Public Health reporting on the administration of the *Act* concluded that

It was thought preferable to inaugurate a stringent system of inspection of the meat supply of the large centres of population than a more lenient system of control over the whole State...it was considered advisable in the first instance to limit the scope of control to the metropolitan area until its beneficial effect could be demonstrated.<sup>16</sup>

Meat areas were confined to the most densely populated areas of the state but soon grew to include Bendigo, Ballarat, Dandenong, Dunmunkle, Shepparton and Traralgon. Following the creation of meat areas for these places abattoirs were provided by the councils of the municipalities of Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong and Warrnambool and were erected by private companies in Ballarat, Bendigo, Braybrook, Dandenong, Murtoa and Shepparton.

The *Act* had a dramatic impact and widespread implications for the supply and trade of meat throughout Victoria. Although noxious trades had been an area of Corporate responsibility since the earliest days of the colony,<sup>17</sup> the *Act* meant that slaughtering was prohibited in proclaimed meat areas except at municipal abattoirs or licensed private works. It also meant that no new abattoirs could be constructed, or existing facilities enlarged, in a meat area without the consent of the Health Board.<sup>18</sup> The *Act* did, however, provide for carcasses from the slaughtering of animals outside a meat area to be brought into an 'appointed inspection place' to be examined by a meat inspector. A battle by the municipality of Castlemaine to be included under the *Act* as a meat area independent of Bendigo, came about as a result of private slaughter men being required to transport their meat unreasonable distances to be inspected at Bendigo.

Initiating and administering the new scheme involved inspection of the 48 slaughter houses engaged in business in Melbourne, six of which were municipal (Port Melbourne had been shut down prior to the *Act*). Two of the municipal operations, St Kilda Municipal Abattoir and Collingwood Municipal Abattoir, were then ordered to close. Of the 42 private businesses, 33 privately operated slaughter houses were also condemned and ordered to close. As a result of the same inspection, the remaining operations were instructed to make the necessary improvements to obtain a licence from the Board of Health. Many of the businesses recognised that complete reconstruction of their works would be a more economical option than major alterations and they set about constructing new premises in line with the Board's recommendations. By 1905 there remained only seven private operations in the metropolitan area, including the newly approved licence for William Angliss' extensive abattoir and freezing works at Footscray.

The *Act* generated very stringent and wide ranging powers in relation to the requirements of abattoir construction. 'Requirements for Small Abattoir Premises' were issued for the guidance of architects in planning facilities, particularly for the rebuilding of, and improvements to, the seven private abattoirs already in existence. Included were guidelines relating to the provision

of offal rooms which were detached from hanging rooms, lavatory and ante-rooms, sufficient drainage disposal independent of any sewerage system, and the collection of drainage on the property in a catch pit adjacent to the building to be removed regularly.

It should be noted that at none of the municipal abattoirs was the slaughtering carried out by the council, rather the council merely provided the facilities, controlled the premises and the meat inspection via the provision of council paid inspectors. It is also of note that in none of the municipal works were facilities for the cooling or chilling of meat provided.

#### *Government Controlled Works*

The *Primary Products Advances Act* 1919 allowed the Victorian government to make advances to companies engaged in primary production. In 1920 three companies, the Victorian Co-operative Freezing Company Ltd., Bendigo; Ballarat & District Co-operative Freezing Company Ltd.; and the Donald Inland Freezing Company Ltd. (Figure 2 and Figure 3) were formed. All three erected freezing works and Donald also constructed abattoirs, partly financed by government advances and partly by shareholder capital, in order to obtain better returns than sending stock to private companies in Melbourne. In Bendigo the freezing works were constructed in Strickland Road by 1923, not far from the Municipal Abattoir (Figure 4). The extensive works did not comprise any abattoir facilities, however, until the Victorian Inland Meat Authority took control of the site in the 1940s.

The fourth, and final, company to be established to take up the arrangement with the government was the Wimmera Inland Freezing Company Ltd. (Murtoa) Works.<sup>19</sup> It would appear that this last freezing facility was established adjacent to and incorporating the former Murtoa Abattoir constructed in 1911. Like the Bendigo Abattoir, the Murtoa Freezing Works were designed by architect, Charles D'Ebro and, like Donald, featured Monier concrete framing and terracotta lumber walls.

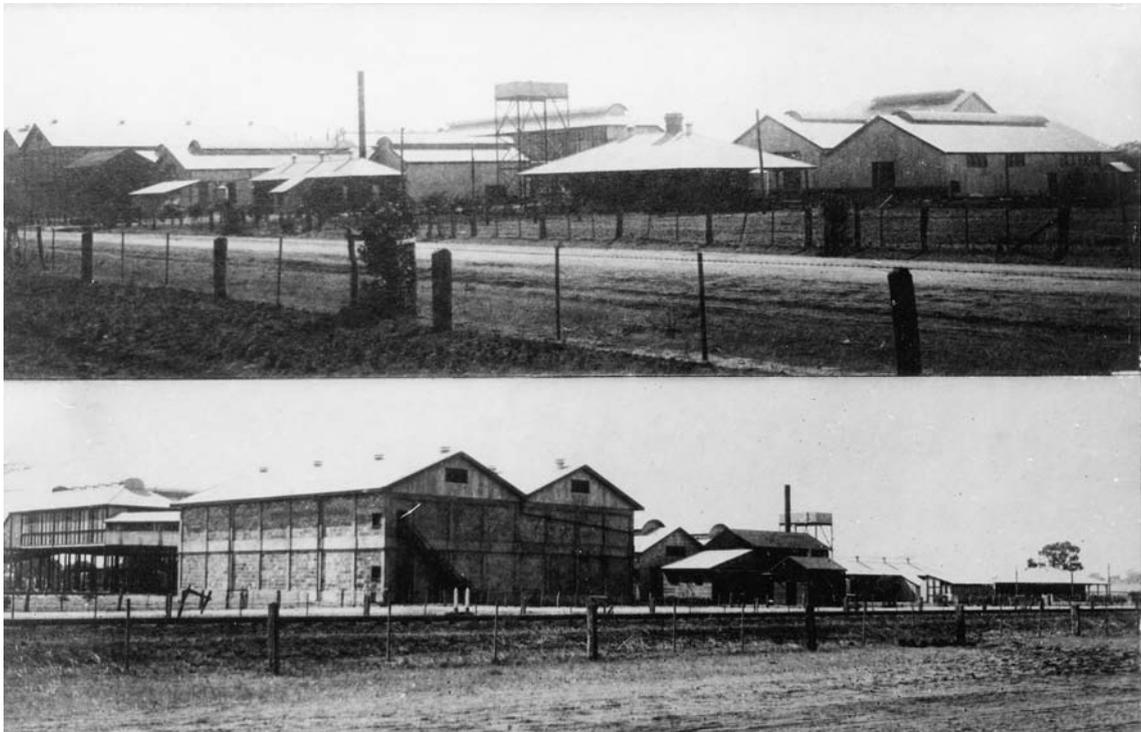


Figure 2 Exterior, Donald Inland Freezing Co., c.1920  
Source: Donald Historical Society



*Figure 3 Interior, Donald Inland Freezing Co., 1920  
Source: Donald Historical Society*



*Figure 4 The Victorian Co-operative Freezing Co Ltd, Bendigo, 1923.  
Source: State Library of Victoria Picture Collection.*



Figure 5 Wimmera Inland Freezing Company Ltd (Murtoa)  
 Source: Donald Historical Society

The co-operative operations were generally financially unsatisfactory in the first half of the 1920s due to a slump in London prices, which were governed by Imperial Meat Contract pricing. The Victorian government recommended that the four companies be amalgamated to improve business power if further funding was to be forthcoming. In June 1926 the four co-ops merged to create the Amalgamated Freezing Company (Victoria) Pty. Ltd. The Murtoa works were immediately sold under receivership.

*The Victorian Inland Meat Authority*

From as early as 1890, a system of country-killed meat was being advocated in government reports. The *Sanitary Condition of Melbourne* suggested, that

...we fully appreciated the advantages which would accrue from the development of a system of country-killed meat supply, we stated that in our opinion an abattoir would, in any circumstances, be required in or near the metropolis.<sup>20</sup>

A policy of inland killing was investigated seriously by the Department of Agriculture from the late 1920s in order to encourage decentralisation, consolidate the industry in country districts, do away with unsatisfactory killing operations and provide for adequate volumes so that appropriate chilling facilities could be established. All existing country works, including the Bendigo municipal works, were considered unsatisfactory with regard to killing methods employed, carcass cooling and chilling and by-product processing facilities. Deputations were received by the Premier from the Victorian Country Party, in particular, and a number of municipal delegations.<sup>21</sup>

In 1931 the Bendigo Council requested that the existing 1920s Bendigo Freezing Works be used for the slaughtering of stock to relieve congestion of the metropolitan facilities as a response to the proposed new municipal facilities at Laverton. Like petitions from Wodonga and other inland areas, nothing concrete came of the suggestion immediately, however a small scale trial was established at Bendigo in 1931-32. Extensive criticism of the antiquated Bendigo Municipal Abattoir during the mid 1930s led to council being asked to consider closing the

works so that the Amalgamated Freezing Works could undertake all trade in the area. The council was reluctant to close, given the loss in revenue however by the 1940s the figures had sharply declined. Plans for improvements to the Amalgamated Works had been prepared by the world expert in abattoir design, W McDonald.

The major hurdle that inland killing faced was the large, extremely competitive export works in Melbourne and Geelong which had rendered the country works unprofitable once factors such as transport were taken into consideration. To address this the government passed the *Inland Meat Authority Act* 1942 and the Victorian Inland Meat Authority (VIMA) was established. The Authority operated the Amalgamated Freezing Co. (Victoria) works at Ballarat, Bendigo and Donald and Bendigo was the first district declared an Inland Meat Area. The Authority was able to compulsorily acquire any abattoir, including municipal works, within a declared area. Inland Areas were constituted in Morang, Huntly, Strathfieldsaye, Maldon, Metcalfe and the Borough of Castlemaine by the first annual report in 1944 and many others had been considered. It is unclear how successful the venture ultimately was, as by the 1960s the market was still controlled by the large players and Victoria was considered to have a centralised system whereas New South Wales was successfully decentralised.

### *Abattoir Typology*

The origins of an identifiable abattoir building typology are unclear, although it is likely that early Australian examples could have been based on any number of models from Great Britain, the United States of America and Europe. William Angliss built the first of the 'modern' abattoirs in 1904-5 on a site in Footscray, not far from Melbourne's major selling centre, the Newmarket Saleyards. After unsuccessfully appealing to the government and Melbourne City Council in 1900 for more refrigerated storage space at the City Abattoirs, Angliss set about constructing his own works.

He soon left Australia to study the most up to date methods of slaughtering, refrigerating and storing meat and was impressed by large scale operations in Chicago, a 1% profit on huge turnover, and the processing of all by-products 'except the squeak of the pig'.<sup>22</sup> In Great Britain and Europe he studied the scientific and hygienic processing of by-products. He processed and arranged his observations and thoughts on his long trip home and on his return he passed these to his architect, Charles D'Ebro, to prepare plans.

D'Ebro was establishing himself as a specialist in freezing works design at the time and by 1905 had also prepared plans for works at Geelong, Portland, Footscray (1905) and Echuca (1897).<sup>23</sup> D'Ebro was also responsible for the Freezing Works at Thomas Borthwick & Sons, Brooklyn (1907), Murtoa (1911), Adelaide's central facilities at Gepps Cross (1911-12), Bendigo Municipal Abattoir (1912), Ballarat Municipal Abattoir (1913) and Government, later Vestey's meat Works, Darwin (1913-19).<sup>24</sup> D'Ebro was not the only architect of his day designing abattoirs. Thomas Matthews designed a slaughterhouse in Caulfield (1882); Lloyd Tayler & Fitts designed freezing works in Melbourne in 1892; Ballarat architects, Clegg & Miller, designed an unsuccessful proposal for the Murtoa works in 1911 and a bacon factory at Ballarat East in 1937; and Percy Everett designed the Geelong Municipal Abattoirs in 1915.

The works constructed for Angliss were extensive and it is difficult to understand exactly which portions were built to D'Ebro's designs. Illustrations indicate a variety of building types, the majority of which appear to be of masonry construction with gabled roofs featuring louvres, ventilated lantern lights and highlight windows like Bendigo (Figure 6 and Figure 7). Some buildings are multi-gabled like those found at South Melbourne, Ballarat, Donald and Murtoa.

Internally the Angliss slaughter rooms appear to be finished similarly with bluestone floors, hard rendered walls to door head height with limewash finish to brickwork above and arched highlight windows. In all cases, carcasses were suspended for dressing from rails spanning between open trussed roofs.

There is no doubt that a similar overall building typology was employed throughout abattoir construction in Victoria, the differences were generally just a matter of scale and small detail. It was size, rather than different typological models, which distinguish the various early to mid twentieth century operations. With the exception of small single-man solo slaughterhouses, abattoirs were generally using the same killing and dressing method, ie. solo slaughtering, and all had to comply with the same functional requirements of the *Act*.

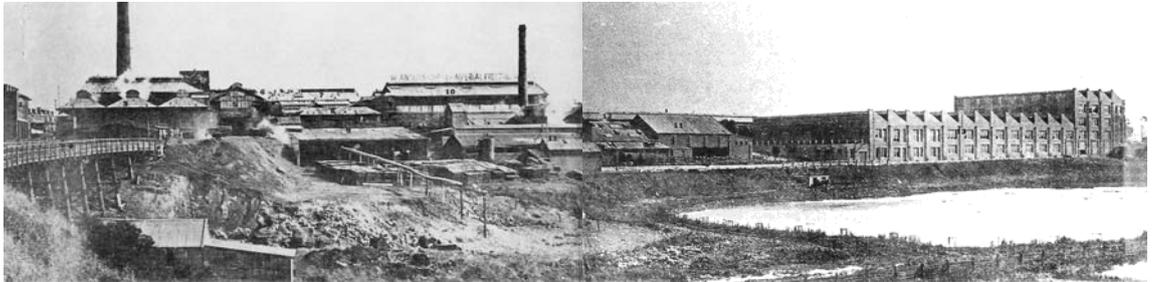


Figure 6 *William Angliss' Imperial Freezing Works, Footscray, c. 1920s*  
Source: *Sir William Angliss*

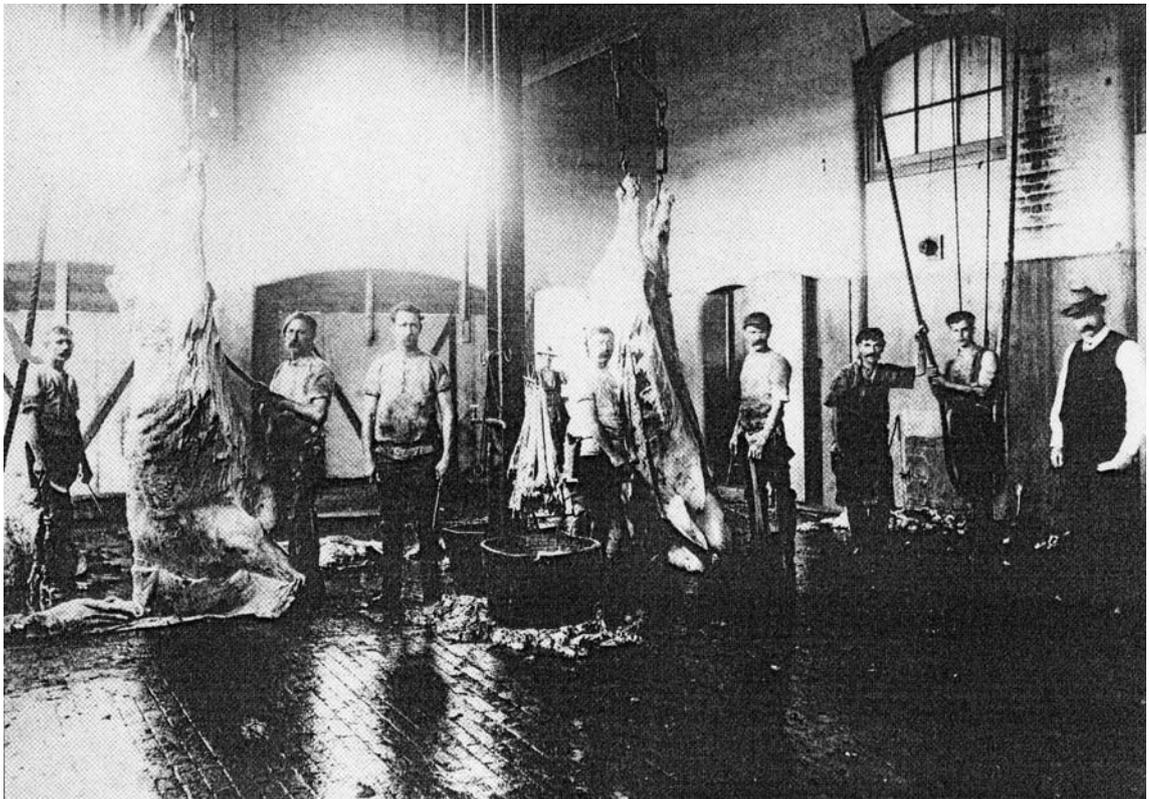


Figure 7 *Interior view of trimming room, Imperial Freezing Works, c. 1910*  
Source: *Sir William Angliss*



Figure 8 Cora Lynn Cheese Factory, Cora Lynn.  
Source: Birchgrove Properties Pty Ltd, January 2003.

In research prepared for the Heritage Victoria nomination, Professor Miles Lewis states that ‘the building does not look to me to be of any architectural or technological interest, so it must rest on its merits as an abattoir’ and further commenting on a brief comparative analysis undertaken with limited research, ‘only Murtoa could be compared with Bendigo, but it is certainly more technically interesting’.<sup>25</sup>

The buildings in which the abattoir process is housed are not unlike many other historic industrial or manufacturing buildings, in that the building is merely a shelter over the process. In this regard, the building type employed for the Bendigo abattoirs is no more distinguished or identifiable than that used for butter or cheese factories. This can be demonstrated throughout Victoria’s manufacturing industry with examples such as Cora Lynn in Gippsland (1910) which, without its signage, could appear from the outside to be an abattoir (Figure 8). This demonstrates that when devoid of its site context, distinguishing design features and internal fittings and meat processing equipment, the Bendigo Abattoirs does not demonstrate the abattoir process.

### 1.1.1 Ballarat Municipal Abattoir, 1913

The following in-depth account is given of the former Ballarat Municipal Abattoir, due to its remarkable integrity and comparative construction date.

It would appear that municipal abattoirs had operated from the same site in Gillies Street, Ballarat from the 1870s.<sup>26</sup> A contract was let to R H Brown in 1913 for the construction of a new joint ‘Municipal Abattoir & Co.’ in Gillies Street, Ballarat. The total sum for the abattoir’s construction including stables, pens and yards was £15,578 and the facility was designed by notable architect, Charles D’Ebro.<sup>27</sup> Its construction followed a protracted battle during 1911 between the Ballarat East and Ballarat West councils with regard to a suitable site. Ballarat East

in association with the Bungaree Shire, where a number of much condemned abattoirs were located, pressed for a site north of the city. Ballarat West naturally lobbied for a site in the south-west, near the existing saleyards. Compromise was impossible so the Central Board of Health was called in to make a recommendation, ultimately finding for the West.<sup>28</sup> The site eventually selected was the site of an earlier abattoir, constructed around 1878.<sup>29</sup> According to an early survey plan (refer Appendix B), the original buildings comprised two killing and hanging buildings, one for beef and one for pork and mutton, sheep and cattle lairages, pig sties, condemned meat room, stables, staff rooms and offices. Separate contracts were also let for bluestone lanes, stables and timber yards, which, in their heyday, were extensive absorbing almost the entire block from Napier Street to Winter Street, through to Learmonth Street. The site was closely related to the Ballarat municipal saleyards, which are located only a matter of 100 metres to the south, and the Ballarat Cattleyards Branch Railway Line, which divided the two sites.

The complex operated as the only large abattoir in Ballarat, as opposed to smaller private slaughterhouses, until the Victorian Inland Meat Authority (VIMA) established a meat works in the 1940s. The declaration of a 'meat district' in Ballarat at this time meant that the old City Abattoir was forced to close. The property continued to remain in Council ownership and both the original killing house and cool stores were used variously for storage and workshops. They are now used for storage of council records and an RSPCA animal shelter. Extensive lairage sheds to the rear of the main brick buildings are occupied by a wood-chipping and timber milling company and the VIMA site remains intact adjoining the rear of the site.

The now relatively compact site retains the original 1913 beef, mutton and pork killing and hanging rooms, sheep and cattle lairages and ramps, and bluestone laneways. The beef building (Figure 9 to Figure 12) is a single-storey red face brick and reinforced concrete building on a rectangular plan with triple gabled roof clad with non-original corrugated galvanised steel. Each gable decreases in size towards the rear of the building and the roof framing extends to form clerestories which contain later timber-framed fixed sash windows. Though the building is tall in height, it is single-storey in volume.



*Figure 9* Beef Building, former Ballarat Municipal Abattoir  
Source: Allom Lovell & Associates, January, 2003



*Figure 10* *Bluestone rear lane alongside blood tramway with sheep building at rear, former Ballarat Municipal Abattoir*  
 Source: Allom Lovell & Associates, January, 2003.



*Figure 11* *Covered platform (left) and original louvered openings (right), Ballarat Municipal Abattoir.*  
 Source: Allom Lovell & Associates, January, 2003.



*Figure 12 Interior, beef building, former Ballarat Municipal Abattoir*  
Source: Allom Lovell & Associates, January, 2003.

The main, or east, elevation is screened by a wide steel-framed skillion-roofed canopy which extends the full width of the building over a timber-framed loading platform. It contains two pairs of timber board-lined sliding doors with louvered fanlights and three large window openings which have been sheeted over externally with corrugated polycarbonate, behind which remain original steel louvers.

Both the north and south elevations contain large, regular window openings, some of which have been altered by the sheeting over with clear corrugated polycarbonate sheeting, while others retain their original steel louvers. The west, or rear, elevation is divided into three bays with the two outer bays screened by a wide steel-framed eaves overhang or canopy. Each outer bay also contains a pair of window openings, some of which retain original steel louvers, and a single door opening leading to a concrete ramp which has been truncated.

Alongside each ramp is a large concrete drain which presumably lead to the blood drainage system. The ground level falls away on the western side of the building with the lower level containing wide openings, some of which have been bricked in, to a former rail cart system which ran along beneath the buildings.

The interior of the building remains largely intact. The walls have an over-painted brick finish although in some areas an original lime-wash finish is evident. The open steel-framed trusses remain exposed with raking strapped fibro ceilings above. Later lighting has been installed throughout the building. The original bluestone pitched floors have recently been topped with concrete, though one section of the building is finished with a timber floor. The building now contains rows of steel-framed archive shelving.

Located to the south is the mutton and pork killing building (Figure 13 to Figure 16). It, too, is a single-storey red face brick and reinforced concrete building on a rectangular plan with triple gabled roof clad with non-original corrugated galvanised steel. In this case, however, the gables are uniform in size.



*Figure 13*      *Pork & Mutton Building, former Ballarat Municipal Abattoir.*  
Source: Allom Lovell & Associates, January, 2003.



*Figure 14*      *Offal rooms above roadway off Pork & Mutton building*  
Source: Allom Lovell & Associates, January, 2003.



*Figure 15*      *Remnant drainage features, Pork & Mutton Building, former Ballarat Municipal Abattoir*  
Source: Allom Lovell & Associates, January, 2003.



*Figure 16*      *Interior, Pork & Mutton Building. Note the floor drainage.*  
Source: Allom Lovell & Associates, January, 2003.

The ground level slopes away to the west, providing a sub-floor area through which rail tracks pass for the former 'blood tramway'. Each opening is framed by Monier concrete columns and beams and some have been bricked in. Three bays project from the western side of the building, spanning the bluestone pitched laneway beneath. Large cast iron drainage pipes are regularly spaced along the length of the elevation which drain into an open, concrete-lined bluestone drain. Projecting from the north-east corner of the building is a single gabled bay, which may have been associated with the slaughter of pigs. A reinforced concrete ramp with wrought iron hoops over the top connects the north-western corner of the bay with an area adjacent to a large corrugated galvanised steel lairage shed. The original pattern of fenestration throughout the pork and mutton building is evident, however the original windows have been removed and in some cases the openings have been bricked in.

The interior has been largely refurbished throughout, although many of the original features are still evident. The original walls have a smooth rendered finish to approximately 1800mm above floor level and an over-painted brick finish above and some new partition walls have been constructed of concrete block and timber framing. The open steel-framed trusses are evident throughout, with the exception of a small number of areas which have recently been lined with plasterboard. The unaltered raking ceilings are lined with strapped fibro. The majority of floors have been topped with concrete with a coved skirting however one section retains original raking concrete floors, complete with channel drainage.

### **1.1.2 Murtoa Freezing Works**

In 1908 T W Durant arrived in Murtoa from New Zealand to manage Mitchell Bros. He pointed out that the large number of fat lambs being produced in the district provided a good case for the establishment of a local freezing works and set about gathering local support. The first meeting of interested delegates occurred during 1908 and it was then that it was decided to approach Charles D'Ebro to prepare plans for the facility. A Mr Quale was the successful tenderer and the works were opened by the Governor of Victoria, Sir John Fuller in 1911. Despite the enthusiasm and support, the works' initial success was short-lived and they ceased operation around 1924.

The establishment of the Wimmera Inland Freezing Company Ltd. (Murtoa) Works on the site soon after meant that the facility was expanded to include freezing facilities alongside the existing abattoir. The facility was designed by Charles D'Ebro and comprised buildings with footings, columns, beams and parapets constructed of reinforced concrete along the Monash system. Though degraded in parts and non-operational, the Murtoa works survive to a degree which demonstrates the early twentieth century process of animal slaughtering and freezing.

### **1.1.3 Donald Inland Freezing Company, 1920**

Plans were prepared for an abattoir and freezing works in Donald in January 1920, although it is uncertain who the building was designed by, and the foundation stone was laid in September 1920. An extensive description of the facilities and process of slaughtering was published in the *Donald Times* in 1921, presumably shortly after the completion of the works.<sup>30</sup> According to the article, the works had a capacity of 2,500 a day with storage capacity of 40,000 carcasses. They comprised a killing room containing sheep pens for killing and trimming, hanging room, freezing chambers, storage changer, tallow house, offal digesters, and ancillary rooms for engines and offices. The works were connected by a railway spur and three lines from the main line. The timing of the construction of the works is rather remarkable, given that they were built during the pressures of War time building and labour restrictions and shortage of both building materials and livestock.

#### 1.1.4 Other early Twentieth Century Municipal Abattoirs

##### *Box Hill Municipal Abattoir*

Box Hill Municipal Abattoir (1909-10), in Melbourne's outer eastern suburbs, was constructed under mounting pressure from the central Board of Public Health for council to forcibly remove the privately operated Edward Lloyd's Slaughter Yards. Lloyds was located in the centre of town and considerable community disquiet erupted around 1901 when it appeared that the site might expand from its small concern into a major municipal abattoir to service the eastern suburbs. The new municipal works, located at a reasonable distance from the centre of town in Woodhouse Grove, were opened in September 1910. The municipal involvement in a commercial enterprise, unusual for Nunawading, was a financial failure and the works closed in 1924.<sup>31</sup> The works were finally demolished. Further south-east, the Oakleigh & Mulgrave Municipal Abattoir was constructed around the same time. Opened in 1910, the works were established jointly by the adjoining municipalities, but by the 1950s they were operated solely by Oakleigh council. The works were decommissioned in c.1988 and the site was completely cleared in the late 1990s for use as an army reserve depot.

##### *Geelong City Abattoirs*

The city of Geelong was well serviced by local abattoirs, including two private and one municipal works, in the early twentieth century. The Geelong meat area was proclaimed in 1902, prior to which slaughtering was carried out in neighbouring Corio by both Jacksons and Herds and by the municipal Geelong City Abattoirs, located adjacent to the Geelong saleyards and established over 20 years before. The establishment of the meat area meant that extensions were made, including a beef house, to the municipal works in order to accommodate the complete requirements for the area. The adjoining municipality of Corio attempted to have the areas containing the private works included in the Geelong meat area so that they could continue to supply to the city, however this request was denied.

##### *Warrnambool Municipal Abattoir*

The Warrnambool meat area was declared on 7 November 1906 however the provisions of the *Act* were not enforced for a number of months due to the difficulty the municipal council had with establishing their works. An abattoir was eventually opened in 1907 at Merrivale on the outskirts of town which operated until the 1970s in a virtually unchanged state. Massive reconstruction works were then undertaken and the abattoir passed into private ownership.

##### *Colac Municipal Abattoir*

Colac Municipal Abattoir was considered 'one of the most enterprising and courageous [decisions] ever made by the Colac Shire Council'.<sup>32</sup> Until construction commenced in 1924 most of the local butchers had their own slaughter house and it became increasingly difficult for the one inspector to supervise both town and country operations. The municipal works were established to bring control to the chaotic state of the smaller private premises. A site adjoining the lake was selected and the architect, D C Dunoon was engaged to prepare plans. Following the opening in October 1925, the abattoir grew to service not only Colac but Winchelsea, Apollo Bay and Terang, becoming a major employer in the town. It eventually passed into private ownership but reverted to council control with the view to upgrading and selling the site as an export facility.

##### *Hamilton Abattoir*

As previously mentioned, the Hamilton council had regularly discussed the establishment of municipal works from as early as the 1860s. In 1928 land was purchased on the western side of

the Portland Road and the works were opened in August 1929. The operation was a great success, as were the municipal saleyards, which grew to become one of the major selling centres in the state. From the late 1960s the works were leased to a private operator and were eventually sold in 1975.

#### *Ararat Municipal Abattoir*

Ararat Municipal Abattoir was established in the late 1930s. Little is known of the history of the place. The majority of the buildings remain distinguishable, although they have been refitted internally and are surrounded by later additions. Apparently constructed along the same English model as Ararat, Horsham Municipal Abattoir was constructed by Rupert Anderson in 1939 at a cost of approximately £8,000. The facilities were run by the council until they were leased by a co-operative of local butchers in 1967. When the seven year lease expired, the co-operative purchased the site, ending 37 years of council control.

#### *Wangaratta Municipal Abattoir*

Wangaratta Municipal Abattoir was also completed in the late 1930s and is remarkable as the only known example of an operational municipal abattoir still in council ownership.

### **1.1.5 Other Private Operations**

As discussed, private abattoir establishments have always co-existed alongside municipal works. They range from the smallest single butcher slaughterhouse to the largest of Victoria's meat processors. Numerous examples exist throughout the State from both classes and scales as well as many which have grown from former municipal works.

#### *Thomas Borthwick & Sons*

The English Company, Thomas Borthwick & Sons, one of the world's largest meat processing companies, purchased its first Australian acquisition, an existing abattoir facility in the western district town of Portland, in 1903. The original abattoir had been constructed in 1897 by the Portland and Western District Freezing and Cold Storage Company. In 1963 the kill was approximately 450,000 sheep and lamb and 15,000 cattle. Borthwick's other Pacific operations included an abattoir at Brooklyn (1908), west of Melbourne, the first works actually constructed by the company with a kill exceeding Portland of 800,000 sheep and lamb and 20,000 cattle; Moreton Works, Brisbane, completed in 1912 with a kill each of 50,000 sheep and cattle; and two works in new Zealand - the Waitara Works in the Taranaki district of the North Island, purchased in 1902 from the Waitara Freezing and Cold Storage Company and Belfast (Canterbury) Works built by the company between 1914 and 1916.<sup>33</sup>

#### *R J Gilbertson*

R J Gilbertson, Altona North, had begun with a single butcher's shop in Essendon in 1901. In 1948 they purchased a 35 acre site near the present one and commenced construction of an abattoir. Meanwhile the smallgoods section, marketed under the iconic label 'DON', had begun production on the present site in 1941. During the 1960s the company relocated its entire plant and operation to the Kyle Road site. The site is significant to its municipality as one of the few remaining meat processing plants in the area and as a complete plant with intact elements illustrating the process.

## **1.2 Conclusions**

A thorough investigation of Victorian abattoirs reveals that very few works of a comparative scale and history to the former Bendigo Municipal Abattoir remain standing and/or intact. While many other municipal and other works were established both prior to, during and after the

period in which the Bendigo works were built, few remain. The very nature of the industry, its associated sanitary requirements and development in production techniques, meant that buildings and systems were constantly upgraded. In parallel, the inefficiencies within municipal operations often meant that they soon ceased operation or were traded into the hands of private operators.

An in depth investigation has been carried out into the former Ballarat Municipal Abattoir due to its relative age, scale and history. This has found that a rather more intact, and hence demonstrative, example has been identified which retains features such as louvered window openings, offal and blood transport systems, ramps, drainage systems, lairages and bluestone paved lanes. Its buildings, both individually and collectively, more fully demonstrate the history of the abattoir process in a large regional centre, particularly given their proximity to the municipal saleyards, branch railway and later VIMA facility.

## **2.0 The Former Bendigo Abattoir**

### **2.1 History of the Site & Building**

The previous *Heritage Assessment of the Former City of Bendigo Abattoirs*, prepared in January 2001 by Nadia Gasparetto has been relied on for a large amount of the historical information relating to the site. The following history is an overview of that information and information gathered from other primary and secondary sources as noted.

Bendigo's [Sandhurst's] first Municipal Council was elected on 11 January, 1856 and the municipal cattleyards were opened on 17 June 1861.<sup>34</sup> The market proved to be a great source of revenue for the municipality and possibly one of the most profitable in the state according to the *1862-63 Report into Municipalities and Charitable Institutions in Victoria*

‘...a great accession to the trade of the town. The Sandhurst market, which is perhaps the most successful of any, cost, including the cattleyards, abattoirs, and weighbridge, the sum of £3,250, and produces a revenue, from all sources, of over £3,000 a year; a sum to pay all the working expenses of the corporation...’<sup>35</sup>

The area was formally gazetted in 1883 as a ‘Market Reserve to be used by the Mayor, Councillors and Citizens of the City of Sandhurst’.<sup>36</sup> The reserve was intended to be permanent and to replace the extensive informal trading which was occurring in the town centre. In November 1886 the City Surveyor condemned an abattoir which had been established adjacent to the cattleyards, following reports on its physical condition and quality of its produce. He stated that it should be completely demolished and replaced with a new building on higher ground to the east of the cattleyards. The new abattoirs were complete by the end of 1888.<sup>37</sup> In 1891 they were described as

‘constructed to the latest and most improved design, are very complete in character, and the arrangements at the yards generally have been perfected in a manner in keeping with the importance of Bendigo as the centre of Northern Victoria’<sup>38</sup>

Before long, related industry was being established in the vicinity of the market reserve including grain and feed processing factories and skin and tannery works.<sup>39</sup>

The 1888 abattoirs were replaced in 1911-12 for a number of reasons, but not without great opposition. Residents surrounding the proposed abattoir site appealed regularly via the Public Health Department and local press. Opposition was based on the site being reserved for cattle market purposes only and that the site was now surrounded by fine residential sites on the recently subdivided Lansell estate. It would also suffer when hot prevailing winds blew from the north, blowing dirt and contamination from the adjoining sale yards. This, along with a defective design,

‘...was the reason why the old city abattoirs failed. Meat killed there would not keep good owing to these insanitary conditions, and because of the additional heat given off from a large herd of animals enclosed in the immediate vicinity.’<sup>40</sup>

In addition, it was stated that Allotment 6, Section F1, City of Bendigo is reserved for abattoir purposes and ‘is a decidedly superior site’.<sup>41</sup>

The new abattoir presented the most up-to-date sanitation and labour-saving facilities and equipment, while doubling its capacity. It was able to hang 80 carcasses of beef, 500 of mutton and of pork and external covered pens had a capacity of 200 cattle, 1,200 sheep and 50 pigs. The eastern, and larger, building was used for the slaughter of cattle and the western building for the sheep and pigs. Features included electric hauling machinery and an overhead trolley system to convey carcasses to the hanging room. The plant was able to operate at night due to electric lighting and electric fans cooled the spaces. The abattoir also used a patented system which piped blood from the slaughter rooms to trucks, where it was conveyed to large concrete tanks and converted to manure. Water was provided to every room, so that floors could be washed down, a fly-proof room was constructed to store condemned meat and extensive staff facilities were also provided.

Designed by Charles D’Ebro, a noted Melbourne architect, and architect of at least 9 other freezing works and abattoirs, the buildings were ultimately erected at a cost of just over £9,000. The scheme, however, required substantial reworking after tenders of £12,000 received by D’Ebro far exceeded the architect’s initial estimates of £7,500. This had surprised the architect as the scheme was almost identical to that designed by him for new central abattoirs in Adelaide. The design was subsequently modified to delete the proposed basement system of drainage and offal removal, which may have been designed along the lines of that constructed at Ballarat.<sup>42</sup> In this regard, the Bendigo abattoirs were possibly not constructed to the most up-to-date accepted procedures.

*The Bendigonian* reporting on the opening ceremony held on 2 May 1912, quoted Mr W Ewing, president of the Bendigo Master Butcher’s Association. He stated that although his organisation had been against the facility in the beginning, they now recognised that council had to ‘obey the mandate of Parliament’ and that the abattoirs had been erected to protect the public from consuming diseased meat.<sup>43</sup> The works were not without controversy during their procurement, construction and operation. Delays were caused by the architects estimates and revisions as stated above, and were coupled with the withdrawal of successful tenderers, inadequate provision for the disposal of drainage and offal, complaints of inadequate sheep penning accommodation by the Master Butchers’ Association and the like.

The original reserve diminished in size throughout the early to mid twentieth century with a section along the eastern side excised in 1914 for use as a recreation reserve. While the abattoir closed in 1939, the Bendigo Saleyards continued to operate from the reserve until the mid-1990s. Following closure of the saleyard, the *Act* which had permanently reserved the land for market use was revoked and the land was transferred to the Minister for Tertiary Education and Training.

District headquarters of the CRB had been established in Bendigo in 1925.<sup>44</sup> Following the closure of the abattoir in 1939, the site remained unused until the Country Roads Board (CRB) came to an arrangement with the council to use the southern section of the site as a depot. In December 1945 the Bendigo Council returned the Crown grant over the land which enabled the CRB to establish the depot. The transition involved the retention of the abattoir buildings but included major modifications and alterations to provide a workshop; machine shop with welding bay and tool store; carpenter’s shop; blacksmith’s shop; engineer’s, tyre and general store; and a paint shop and sign board store in the sub-ground rooms. The works were undertaken in accordance with plans prepared by the Public Works Department in Melbourne in consultation

with the PWD Northern District Architect and various officers and managers of the CRB engineering department. In summary:

#### *Eastern (Cattle) Building – CRB Workshops Building*

Externally, the building was altered by the replacement of all timber-framed timber louvered windows and replacement with steel-framed windows, installation of skylights, bricking in of some existing openings, cutting in new openings and installing steel roller shutters, removal of cattle race and platforms, removal of existing steps and construction of new external stairs, and the exterior painted.

Internally, fixtures and fittings including overhead rails were stripped out, the floor gutters were filled in and the whole of the killing room floor was concrete topped, concrete floor in carpenters shop was broken up to install new hardwood floor, new openings, doors and ramps were formed between rooms, cattle pens were removed, lighting was replaced and the interior painted.

In addition, to the west of the building a new mess room and amenities building was constructed after demolition of two original smaller ancillary buildings – possibly offices or condemned meat stores – and large additions including tool store and blacksmith's shop were made to the eastern end of the workshop.

#### *Western (Sheep & Pig) Building – CRB Stores Building*

Externally, every alternate set of timber louvers were removed from the sawtooth clerestory and replaced with wired glass, the timber-framed timber louvers were removed and replaced with new steel-framed glazed windows, installation of skylights, bricking in of some openings, and installation of new sliding doors (north elevation) and the exterior painted. A ramp was constructed on the west elevation at a later date.

Internally, fixtures and fittings including overhead rails, were stripped out, the elevated pig slaughtering platforms were removed, the floor gutters were filled in and the whole of the killing room floor was concrete topped. The concrete floor in the general store room was broken up to install new hardwood floor other concrete floors were made good after removal of services and drains, stock pens were removed from eastern side of killing room (ultimately the western side was removed), openings were enlarged and new doors were provided, lighting was replaced and the interior painted. The original carcass cooling fans were retained at this stage but were removed at a later date.

At the same time the freestanding dining room and convenience buildings to the north west of the western building, roofed lairages and yards were removed from the site. Other alterations included the removal of bluestone pitching from the cattle pen areas and from the lane between the buildings.

## **2.2 Physical Survey**

The complex comprises two former abattoir buildings which are surrounded by a number of later additions and freestanding buildings constructed by the Country Roads Board. This physical survey only addresses in detail the two buildings of any interest, namely, the former cattle killing and pig and sheep killing buildings and their associated features.

#### *Eastern (Cattle) Building – CRB Workshops Building*

Externally, this building is the taller of the two, reflecting its original use for processing cattle. The single-storey red face brick building comprises three original sections, or bays, on an essentially rectangular plan, which are flanked by later CRB additions to the east and west. Each section has a gabled roof form clad with corrugated galvanised steel and the original

roofscape of the southern section features a gabled lantern light. The central section of roofscape retains original galvanised steel roof ventilators. Non-original skylights punctuate the roofscape of the southern and central bays.

The long south elevation of the building is divided into the original (western) half and post-1945 (eastern) sections. Both contain bays of non-original steel-framed multi-paned fixed and hopper sash windows with weatherboard cladding above. This arrangement is repeated in the west and east elevation of the building, with the weatherboard cladding extending into the gable ends. The windows in this case flank non-original steel roller shutters. The south elevation is also screened by a non-original cantilevered canopy.

The central and rear sections of the building are similarly constructed and detailed, though the original east elevation is completely obscured by 1940s and later CRB additions. The central bay of the west elevation contains a pair of large window openings with original timber-framed fixed sash windows above later steel framed multi-paned windows. The rear section contains two smaller window openings with later steel framed window sashes. The original north elevation is divided by pilasters and has been altered with substantial changes to fenestration and openings. It contains timber-framed and lined doors and highlight level windows with timber-framed fixed sash windows.

The 1940s and later additions to the east of the building are generally of single-storey red face brick construction with a parapeted flat roof and contain small steel-framed multi-paned fixed sash windows. The single-storey mess rooms and amenities block to the west of the building is of timber-framed construction clad with fibre-cement sheeting with gabled roof clad with corrugated galvanised steel.

Internally, the eastern building varies slightly from section to section in its construction, finishes and integrity. The original portion of the southern section comprises a large open volume with concrete floor, over-painted brick walls with rendered dados and timber truss-framed roof with raking timber-lined ceiling. The later addition to the east is framed with reinforced concrete portal frames and is finished with concrete floor, over-painted brick walls and unlined ceiling.



Figure 17 Eastern (cattle) building from the south-west  
Source: Allom Lovell & Associates, February 2003.



*Figure 18 Eastern (cattle) building from the south-west. There has been no change to the building since 2003.*  
Source: Anthemion Consultancies, August, 2011.



*Figure 19 CRB additions to the eastern building*  
Source: Allom Lovell & Associates, February 2003.



*Figure 20*      *Additions to the eastern (cattle) building from the north-east*  
Source: Allom Lovell & Associates, February 2003.



*Figure 21*      *A similar view showing that there has been no change to the structure since 2003.*  
Source: Anthemion Consultancies, August, 2011.



*Figure 22 Eastern (cattle) building and additions from the north-east*  
Source: Allom Lovell & Associates, February 2003.



*Figure 23 A similar view showing that there has been minimal changes to the brick elements. The asbestos cement sheet section has been demolished.*  
Source: Anthemion Consultancies, August, 2011.



*Figure 24* Interior, southern section of beef building  
Source: Allom Lovell & Associates, February 2003.



*Figure 25* A similar view showing no change to the structure since 2003.  
Source: Anthemion Consultancies, August, 2011.

The central section is finished with non-original concrete floor, over-painted brick walls with rendered dados and open timber truss-framed roof with raking timber-lined ceiling. The rear section differs by having non-original hardwood floors. The original meat processing fixtures, pens, lights, fans and fittings have been removed throughout all three original sections of the building.

#### *Western (Sheep & Pig) Building – CRB Stores Building*

The slightly smaller scale and height of the western building reflects its use for processing smaller animals, however the general form and construction mirror that of the eastern cattle processing building. Like the eastern building, the single-storey red face brick building comprises three original sections, or bays, on an essentially rectangular plan, which are flanked by the later CRB mess room block the east. Each section has a gabled roof form clad with corrugated galvanised steel and the roofscape of the southern section features a gabled lantern light / ventilator. The central section of roofscape projects to form a clerestory highlight. Non-original skylights punctuate the roofscape of the southern and central bays.

The long south elevation of the building contains bays of non-original steel-framed fixed sash windows with timber clad infill below and weatherboard cladding above. This arrangement is repeated in the east and west elevations of the building, with the weatherboard cladding extending into the gable ends between brick piers. The south elevation is also screened by a non-original cantilevered canopy.

The central and rear sections of the building are similarly constructed and detailed. The central bay of the west elevation, however, contains no fenestration. The smaller rear section is essentially symmetrical in its arrangement, with two small window openings with later steel-framed window sashes and arched heads to the east and west elevations, and pair of arched head door openings with pair of timber-framed and lined doors flanking a central window opening with non-original steel-framed windows to the north elevation.

Located to the west of this bay is an original brick and concrete stock ramp, however a corresponding ramp to the east has been removed. Further west is a c.1940s-50s red brick building with skillion roof clad with corrugated galvanised steel.

Internally, the building generally follows the construction and finishes of the cattle building. The southern section is finished with non-original hardwood floors, over-painted brick walls with rendered dado and open timber-trusses roof with timber-lined ceiling. The central and northern bays are similar although some of the original concrete floors remain, albeit made good where original gutters and pens were removed. The central bay is divided into two areas and the smaller western room was converted into a tyre storage area by the CRB. Steel-framed tyre storage racks dating from this period remain throughout this area.

Beneath the north west corner of the building three small sub-floor rooms are finished with concrete or non-original hardwood floors and over-painted brick walls.

## **2.3 Conclusions**

Constructed to the amended design of noted abattoir and freezing works architect, Charles D'Ebro, the buildings are typical of other meat processing facilities and, more broadly, other food processing and manufacturing buildings being constructed throughout Victoria at the time. The buildings do retain a small number of features typically incorporated into nineteenth and early to mid twentieth century abattoirs such as open trussed roofs, clerestory and lantern lights, roof ventilators and a stock ramp, however the majority of distinguishing fixtures and features have been removed. These include louvered windows, brick paved floors, floor drains and gutters, internal pens, and ramps. The site and broader context of the abattoirs has also been

dramatically altered with the complete removal of lairages and stockyards and the adjoining municipal saleyards and railway siding.



*Figure 26* Western (sheep & pig) building from the south-east  
Source: Allom Lovell & Associates, February 2003.



*Figure 27* A similar view showing no change to the structure since 2003.  
Source: Anthemion Consultancies, August, 2011



*Figure 28 Eastern building viewed from the north-west*  
Source: Allom Lovell & Associates, February 2003.



*Figure 29 A similar view showing no change to the brick structures since 2003. The asbestos cement sheet section has been demolished.*  
Source: Anthemion Consultancies, August, 2011.



Figure 30 North elevation, sheep and pig building  
Source: Allom Lovell & Associates, February 2003.



Figure 31 A similar view showing no change to the brick structures since 2003. Some elements have been sheeted over to prevent vandalism.  
Source: Anthemion Consultancies, August, 2011.



*Figure 32 Eastern building west elevation*  
Source: Allom Lovell & Associates, February 2003.



*Figure 33 A similar view, including the sheep and pig building, showing no change to the brick structures since 2003.*  
Source: Anthemion Consultancies, August, 2011.



*Figure 34 Interior, southern and central section, sheep and pig building*  
Source: Allom Lovell & Associates, February 2003.



*Figure 35 A similar view showing no change since 2003.*  
Source: Anthemion Consultancies, August, 2011.



*Figure 36 Interior, northern section, sheep and pig building*  
Source: Allom Lovell & Associates, February 2003.



*Figure 37 A view of the same and adjacent areas showing no change since 2003.*  
Source: Anthemion Consultancies, August, 2011.



*Figure 38* While there has been minimal change to the built fabric, extensive site remediation works have been undertaken. View looking east.  
Source: Anthemion Consultancies, August, 2011.



*Figure 39* Looking west over the cleared site.  
Source: Anthemion Consultancies, August, 2011.



*Figure 40 The Lansell St frontage. The sheep and pig building is on the left and the cattle building is on the left.*  
Source: Anthemion Consultancies, August, 2011.

### **3.0 Summary of Findings**

The Bendigo Municipal Abattoir is one of a reasonably-sized group of municipal and private abattoirs constructed throughout metropolitan and regional Victoria during the first forty years of the twentieth century, following the introduction of the *Meat Supervision Act* in 1900. It is a representative example of the period when more stringent control of meat processing came into being through the introduction of metropolitan and inland ‘meat areas’.

The abattoir replaced an earlier, 1880s facility which had been constructed in the market reserve. As such, the 1912 facility continued a former function of the site until its closure in 1939. The city of Bendigo was, and remains an important regional trading and business centre. The abattoirs, however, were less than desirable in their operation and turnover, reflecting the belief, among many, that in most circumstances, private operators were far more successful in the meat processing arena than local or state government. The abattoir function was then relocated to the site of the Victorian Co-operative Freezing Co Ltd. by the Victorian Inland Meat Authority. The lifespan, therefore, of the 1912 works was relatively short – 27 years. By contrast, the occupation of the building by the CRB in its various iterations spans 57 years, more than double the time that it operated as an abattoir.

The abattoir is located on the former market reserve, a contentious point in itself, however nothing remains to suggest its original context. The gradual removal of saleyards, revocation of the reserve land grant and subdivision of the land on which non-related industry and business stands, has completely removed the historic context of the site. Today it sits amongst a modest native garden to the front and veritable wasteland to the rear. While it is acknowledged that

related industry such as tanning and feed processing has remained in the vicinity, a strong relationship is not readily appreciable. Historically, there was not a strong functional connection between these industries which necessitated their co-location which, more often than not, was a function of their noxious waste.

The use of the site as a depot for the Country Roads Board (CRB) since 1945 has not been addressed in detail as the subject of this report as it is not considered to be anything other than minor local interest and any claims to the contrary can simply not be sustained. The existing abattoir buildings were largely altered to meet the storage, workshop and office functions of the CRB and demonstrate nothing in particular of the function or process of the organisation. Their operations could have been housed in any industrial or warehouse building type which provided a variety of large spaces and plenty of land. On the contrary, the alterations made by the CRB to convert the abattoir into a depot were so extensive as to considerably change the appearance of the abattoir buildings and, as a consequence, they have a very low level of integrity. The lack of equipment also further obfuscates their original function.

There are better examples of abattoirs in Victoria which may be worthy of inclusion in the *Victorian Heritage Register* as described in Appendix C. Perhaps the best example is the Ballarat Municipal Abattoir which was also designed by Charles D'Ebro and which dates from 1913. The buildings and infrastructure of this facility remain largely intact, and relate to the adjoining saleyards and railway siding. The Monier concrete frame is also of some technological interest and may prove to be significant in the light of further research. Ararat and Horsham, both dating from the 1930s, are also fairly intact including their setting. Likewise, the Castlemaine Bacon Company would appear to be a better example than the Bendigo Abattoirs and also has the distinction of being linked with a household brand name. Both the Murtoa and Donald Freezing Works which both date from 1919-'20s would also appear to be a more appropriate candidate for inclusion on the state register than Bendigo as they similarly retain a high degree of integrity, infrastructure, setting and also have the distinction of being of some architectural interest.

### 3.1 Assessment Against Heritage Victoria Criteria For Assessment Of Cultural Heritage Significance

These are the criteria against which the site was assessed previously. It should be noted that these criteria have since been updated but the essential meaning of each criterion is the same.

**HV A** *The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object.*

**Comment:** Like other abattoirs it is associated with the meat industry but it was neither influential, a major processor or especially noted for its products. Rather it simply supplied a local market, like many other similar establishments.

**HV B** *The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness.*

**Comment:** It is neither rare or unique.

**HV C** *The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage.*

**Comment:** Its ability to educate or demonstrate aspects of the killing and meat processing industry is minimal without considerable interpretation and imagination.

**HV D** *The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as a part of a class or type of places or objects.*

**Comment:** It exhibits very few characteristics of the meat trade at all.

**HV E** *The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.*

**Comment:** Any good design or aesthetic characteristic which it might have had at the hand of D'Ebro has been obliterated as a consequence of the extensive alterations made by the CRB.

**HV F** *The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements.*

**Comment:** Other than at one time demonstrating a phase of the killing and meat handling process it demonstrates very little in its existing condition.

**HV G** *The importance of the place of object in demonstrating social or cultural associations.*

**Comment:** Other than having a general association with Bendigo at large and with those individuals who worked there, there are few social or cultural associations which would lend a degree of significance to the place.

**HV H** *Any other matter which the Council considers relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance.*

**Comment:** Not applicable.

### 3.2 Conclusions

It would appear from the extensive research and comparative survey undertaken in relation to the Bendigo Abattoirs that it is not the most appropriate abattoir to be included on the *Victorian Heritage Register*. There are other examples which are comparable in terms of designer/architect and age and which are more intact in terms of their own fabric and also their infrastructure and setting. Its ability to demonstrate its original purpose either in terms of its design and/or equipment has been severely compromised by the changes made by the CRB in 1945. The Bendigo Abattoir is of some local interest at best as an abattoir and is only of minor local interest as the location of the CRB depot, a degree of interest which could effectively be dismissed. To accord it a level of state significance cannot be substantiated. While it meets several of the criteria at the most basic level it is not over the threshold which would normally indicate a level of cultural heritage significance which would require recognition through inclusion in the *Victorian Heritage Register*.

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- 33 Godfrey Harrison, *Borthwick’s: A Century in the Meat Trade*, p. 65.
- 34 G Mackay, *History of Bendigo*, p. 123.

- 35 As published in National Trust of Australia, *Former City of Bendigo Abattoirs: Classification Report*, 2002.
- 36 N Gasparetto, op.cit., p. 5.
- 37 ibid, p. 6.
- 38 G Mackay, *History of Bendigo*, p. 123.
- 39 N Gasparetto, op.cit., p. 5.
- 40 'City Abattoirs', *The Bendigo Advertiser*, Saturday, 9 April, 1910, p. 4.
- 41 ibid.
- 42 'The Proposed Abattoirs', *The Bendigo Advertiser*, Saturday, 13 August, 1910, p. 7.
- 43 As published in National Trust of Australia, *Former City of Bendigo Abattoirs: Classification Report*, 2002.
- 44 N Gasparetto, op.cit., p. 7.

## SHORT HISTORY OF THE BENDIGO ABATTOIR

Like many cities and towns, the prevalence of livestock-related trades, including markets, abattoirs, boiling down works, tanneries and tallow works, was an early feature of Melbourne and its surrounds. The rapid population growth in the 1850s led to the dramatic expansion in demand for goods and services of all kinds, including animal products. Lack of facilities for preserving meat meant that livestock was often walked great distances to the thriving urban market. As rural communities developed, a parallel trade was established throughout Victoria by single butchers operating small slaughterhouses to service their immediate area.

Bendigo's first Municipal Council was elected on 11 January, 1856 and the municipal cattleyards were opened on 17 June 1861.<sup>1</sup> In November 1886 the City Surveyor condemned an abattoir which had been established adjacent to the cattleyards, following reports on its physical condition and quality of its meat. He stated that it should be completely demolished and replaced with a new building on higher ground to the east of the cattleyards. The new abattoirs were complete by the end of 1888.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to the establishment of council-supervised abattoirs in country areas, slaughtering of animals was generally carried out by individual butchers at their own premises, often in an open rear yard. In 1900 however, the *Meat Supervision Act* passed through Parliament, generating very stringent and wide ranging powers in relation to the requirements of meat inspection and abattoir construction.

The 1888 Bendigo abattoirs were replaced in 1911-12, and the new abattoir presented the most up-to-date sanitation and labour-saving facilities and equipment, while doubling its capacity. It was able to hang 80 carcasses of beef, 500 of mutton and of pork, and external covered pens had a holding capacity of 200 cattle, 1,200 sheep and 50 pigs. The eastern, and larger, building was used for the slaughter of cattle and the western building for sheep and pigs. Features included electric hauling machinery and an overhead trolley system to convey carcasses to the hanging room. The plant was able to operate at night due to electric lighting and electric fans provided cooling. The abattoir also used a patented system which piped blood from the slaughter rooms to trucks, where it was conveyed to large concrete tanks and converted to manure. Water was provided to every room, so that floors could be washed down, a fly-proof room was constructed to store condemned meat and extensive staff facilities were also provided.

Designed by Charles D'Ebro, a noted Melbourne architect, who had designed at least nine other freezing works and abattoirs, the buildings were ultimately erected at a cost of just over £9,000.

In 1931 the Bendigo Council requested that the existing 1920s Bendigo Freezing Works be used for the slaughtering of stock to relieve congestion of the metropolitan facilities, and the abattoir function was then relocated to the site of the Victorian Co-operative Freezing Co Ltd. by the Victorian Inland Meat Authority. The Bendigo Abattoir was officially closed in 1939.

The original reserve diminished in size throughout the early to mid-twentieth-century, with a section along the eastern side being excised in 1914 for use as a recreation reserve. While the abattoir closed in 1939, the Bendigo Saleyards continued to operate from the reserve until the mid-1990s. Following closure of the saleyard, the *Act* which had permanently reserved the land for market use was revoked and the land was transferred to the Minister for Tertiary Education and Training.

District headquarters of the Country Roads Board (CRB) had been established in Bendigo in 1925.<sup>1</sup> Following the closure of the abattoir in 1939, the site remained unused until the CRB came to an arrangement with the council to use the southern section of the site as a depot. In December 1945, the Bendigo Council returned the Crown grant over the land which enabled the

CRB to establish the depot. The transition involved the retention of the abattoir buildings but included major modifications and alterations to provide a workshop; machine shop with welding bay and tool store; carpenter's shop; blacksmith's shop; engineer's, tyre and general store; and a paint shop and sign board store in the basement rooms.

#### *Eastern (Cattle) Building – CRB Workshops Building*

Externally, the building was altered by the replacement of all timber-framed timber louvred windows and replacement with steel-framed windows, installation of skylights, bricking in of some existing openings, cutting in new openings and installing steel roller shutters, removal of the cattle ramp and platforms, removal of existing steps and construction of new external stairs, and the exterior was painted.

Internally, fixtures and fittings, including overhead rails, were stripped out, the floor gutters were filled in and the whole of the killing room floor was topped in concrete. The concrete floor in the carpenter's shop was broken up to install a new hardwood floor, new openings, doors and ramps were formed between rooms, cattle pens were removed, lighting was replaced and the interior painted.

In addition, to the west of the building, a new mess room and amenities building was constructed after demolition of two original smaller ancillary buildings – possibly offices or condemned meat stores – and large additions, including a tool store and blacksmith's shop, were made to the eastern end of the workshop.

#### *Western (Sheep & Pig) Building – CRB Stores Building*

Externally, every alternate set of timber louvres were removed from the sawtooth clerestorey and replaced with wirecast glass. The timber-framed timber louvres were removed and replaced with new steel-framed glazed windows, and skylights were installed. Some openings were bricked in, and new sliding doors were installed (north elevation) and the exterior was painted. A ramp was constructed on the west elevation at a later date.

Internally, fixtures and fittings including overhead rails, were stripped out, the elevated pig slaughtering platforms were removed, the floor gutters were filled in and the whole of the killing room floor was topped with concrete. The concrete floor in the general store room was broken up to install new hardwood floor other concrete floors were made good after removal of services and drain. Stock pens were removed from the eastern side of killing room (ultimately the western side was removed), openings were enlarged and new doors were provided. Lighting was replaced and the interior was painted. The original carcass cooling fans were retained at this stage but were removed at a later date.

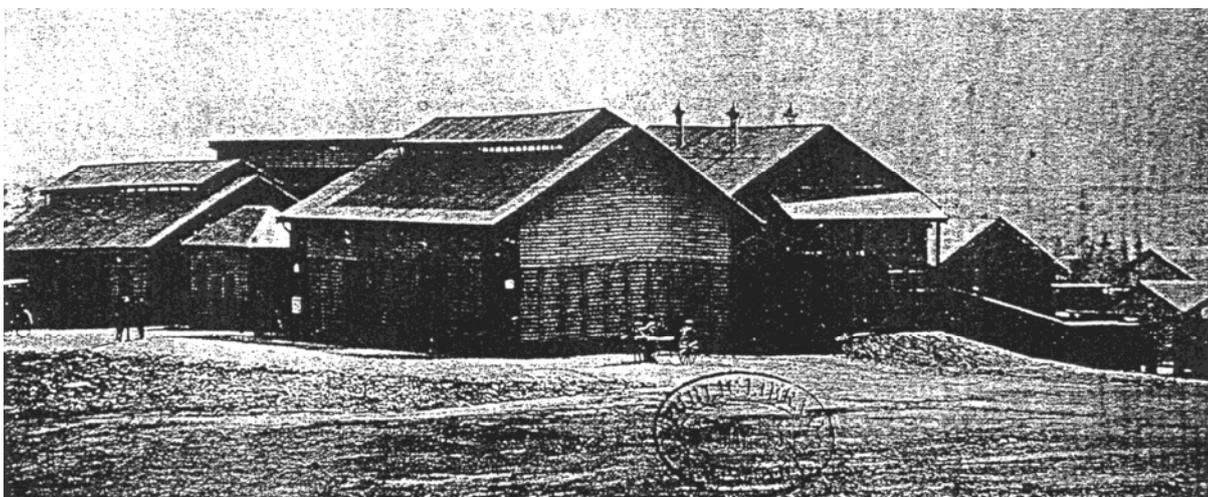
At the same time the freestanding dining room and ablutions buildings to the north-west of the western building, roofed lairages and yards were removed from the site. Other alterations included the removal of bluestone pitching from the cattle pen areas and from the lane between the buildings.

Prepared by Lovell Chen from 'The Former City of Bendigo Abattoir Heritage Assessment', November 2005.

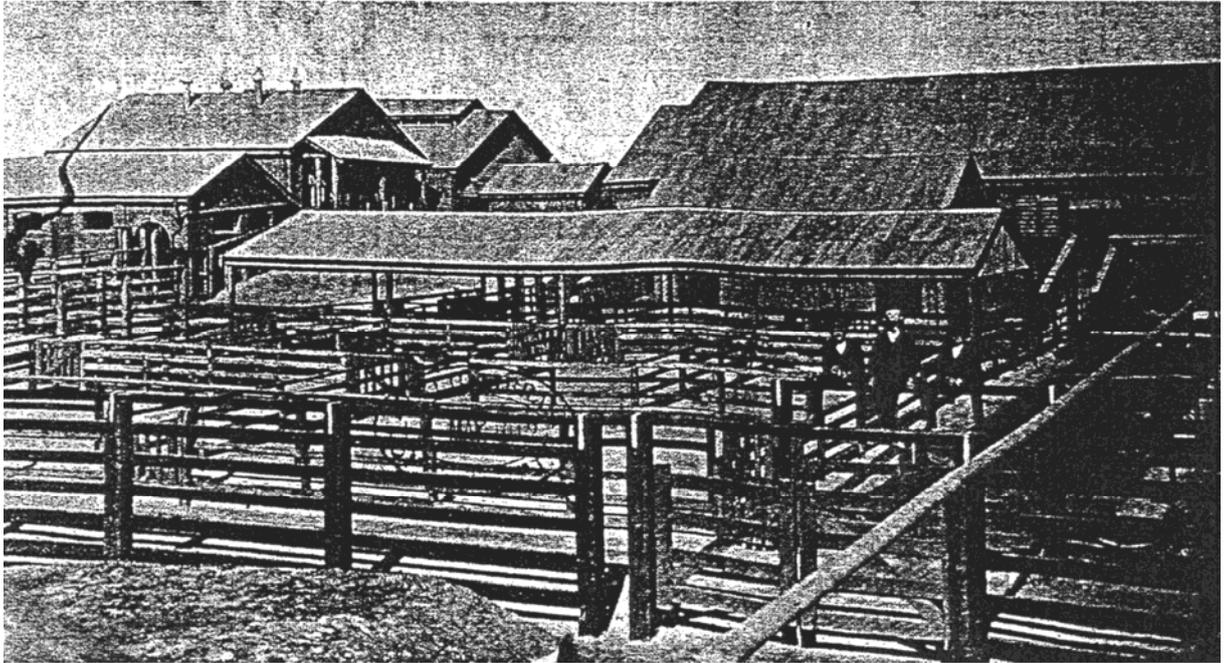
## INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE

Sign 1:

The Bendigo Abattoir was officially opened on 2 May 1912, and was constructed to replace the old slaughterhouse, which had been completed in 1888. Among the many new features, the new abattoir contained an overhead trolley to convey the slaughtered cattle to the hanging room, which provided room for more than 150 carcasses. Electric lighting and fans were installed, and water was reticulated to every room enabling the floors to be flushed as required. The yard accommodation was also more than doubled from the old site. Cattle were slaughtered and butchered in the eastern building, while sheep and pigs were slaughtered in the smaller western building, which provided hanging space for 500 sheep and 150 pigs. The abattoir was in use for 27 years, and was officially closed in 1939.



*Exterior view of the abattoir, 1912.*  
The Bendigonian, 7 May 1912.



*The abattoir pens*  
The Bendigonian, 7 May 1912.

Sign 2:

Although the district headquarters of the Country Roads Board (CRB) had been established in Bendigo in 1925, the use of the former abattoir as a depot for the CRB did not occur until 1945. Following the closure of the abattoir, the site remained unused until the CRB negotiated with the council for use of the southern section of the site. This transition retained the abattoir buildings, but included major modifications and alterations to provide a workshop, machine shop, carpenter's and blacksmith's shops, and a paint shop and sign boards store. The pens, ramps, rails, drains, platforms and bluestone pitching associated with the abattoir were removed, and new fixtures were provided throughout. In 1983, the Road Construction Authority (RCA) replaced the CRB, and in 1989, the RCA merged with the Road Transport Authority (RTA) to form VicRoads. After 57 years of occupation by the CRB in its various iterations, the site was sold in 2002.