

NR & NEW INTERNATIONAL SELECTION DOCUMENTATION MINIMUM FICHE

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Wp/ref no

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composed by working party of: Australia

DOCOMOMO Australia



1 Identity of building/group of buildings/urban scheme/landscape/garden

1.1	current name of building	Signs Publishing Company	3
1.2	variant or former name		4
1.3	number & name of street	3485 Warburton Highway	5
1.4	town	Warburton	6
1.5	province	Victoria	7
1.6	zip code	3799	8
1.7	country	Australia	9
1.8	national grid reference		10
1.9	classification/typology	Industrial	11
1.10	protection status & date	RAIA National Register 2003 Heritage Register of Victoria No. H0619 National Trust, State level, file No. G13039	

2 History of building

The Signs Publishing Company first began as the Echo Publishing Company, in North Fitzroy, a suburb of Melbourne. By 1889 the Echo Publishing Company employed 83 people and was the third largest Seventh-day Adventist publishing house in the world. In 1906 the business moved to Warburton.

Changing its name to the Signs Publishing Company it remained in its new premises until 1934, when a severe flood in the valley ruined a large part of the machinery and building.

In 1935 a new brick factory was built on higher ground for £23,000.

2.1	original brief/purpose	Factory for the production of printed material	13
2.2	dates: commission/completion	Interwar Period (1919-1939): Moderne Style	14
2.3	architectural designers	Edward Fielder Bilson (1892-1985)	15
2.4	others associated with building	Contractor: T R & L Cockam Pty Ltd	16
2.5	significant alterations with dates	Modified and extended many times Significant extensions added in 1979	17
2.6	current use	Printing business	18
2.7	current condition		19
3	Description		
3.1	general description	Rectangular in the plan with a two level administration block facing the road.	
3.2	construction	Steel framed with reinforced concrete floors	21
3.3	context	The factory was constructed at the eastern edge of the township of Warburton between the main road and the Yarra River. It is set in parkland of mature trees.	22
4	Evaluation		
4.1	technical	The complex was unusual because it incorporated its own hydro-electric power generated supply which it shared with the Sanitarium Health Food Company factory next door.	23
4.2	social	The complex was an embodiment of the Church's commitment to healthy living and the removal of church assets from major cities.	24
4.3	cultural & aesthetic	It is significant for its considerable aesthetic qualities, derived largely from the crisp architectural detailing and contrasting materials, the mature garden setting, and the focus of the buildings as dramatic punctuations in a predominantly forested setting.	25
4.4	historical		26
4.5	general assessment	With the Sanitarium factory next door it is significant for its skilful assembly of contrasting geometric, brick-clad forms and as an early example of the small group of non-residential buildings which successfully emulated European Modern architecture (particularly W M Dudok) and hence created a precedent for Australian post-war commercial and industrial architecture.	27

5 Documentation



- 5.1 principal references
- 5.2 visual material attached
- 5.3 rapporteur/date

Billson architectural drawings, State Library Victoria
Images from www.warburtonadventists.com
Peter Johnson, July 2008

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