Location:
1 BROOKE STREET (CALDER HWY) INGLEWOOD, Loddon Shire

Heritage Status / Level of Significance:
Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number: H0276
Listing Authority: VHR

Heritage Overlay Number: HO64

Statement of Significance:
What is Significant

The Jones Brothers Eucalyptus Distillery, established c1900, is on a large block next to the northern highway approach to Inglewood. The factory features fabric from two main phases in the development of eucalyptus distilling technology. The earlier vat distillation technology is represented by three in ground brick-lined distilling vats with associated lids and crane made from bush timber, a condenser, bush-pole and corrugated iron buildings and dam. The later stage of truck-mounted vat distillation is represented by the gantry carrying the truck vat lid, adjacent condensers, collection apparatus, pumps, water pre-heaters and associated pipe-work, the Cornish boiler and redistillation apparatus.

The eucalyptus oil industry flourished in the Blue Mallee areas around the Whipstick, Kingower, Inglewood and Wedderburn in the late nineteenth century and by World War One this was the premier oil-producing region in the State. The stands of Blue Mallee produced the best quality pharmaceutical grade oil in the country. Phil Jones senior first distilled oil north of Kingower, then worked from his home in Inglewood. His oil won a prize at the Paris International Exhibition. He moved to the current factory site soon after, and the business was continued by his son Ernest from the early twentieth century, followed in turn by Ernest's sons Phil junior and Albert who operated into the 1980s. A succession of technologies of extraction were employed, from hand loaded in-ground vats to a system using a metal vat mounted on the back of a truck. At the same times the Jones had moved from hand harvesting to machine harvesting using a Yoeman Titter (similar to a forage harvester). These changes were a response to the growth of the worldwide eucalyptus industry and increasing labour costs. The development of the truck mounted vat system by the Jones was an early advance in the general move in the industry towards the use of mechanical harvesting and mobile vats.

The system of cultivation, harvesting and distillation of oil from Blue Mallee occupies an unusual intermediate position between conventional agricultural practices such as grain growing, and industries based on harvest of natural vegetation such as timber, charcoal and wattle bark. The eucalyptus oil industry was open to small owners who had little capital and who could make use of the intermittent nature of the industry. The industry provided an important source of labour for the itinerant rural labour force. The Jones brothers business represents the smaller owner operated part of the industry in contrast to the larger companies such as Felton Grimwade. How is it significant?
The Jones Brothers Eucalyptus Distillery is of historical and technological significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Jones Brothers Eucalyptus Distillery is of historical significance as for its capacity to represent an industry which has played a significant role in the economy of central Victoria from the 1890s.

The Jones Brothers Eucalyptus Distillery is of historical significance for its capacity to demonstrate aspects of rural life in Victoria in the twentieth century, where many activities were subject to the vagaries of climate, landscape, and the global economy.

The Jones Brothers Eucalyptus Distillery factory is of technological significance for its capacity to demonstrate the specific technologies developed for an industry based in the poorer rural areas of the state which was largely operated by local owners with limited capital.

Through all phases of the development of the Jones' factory, ingenious and economical use was been made of second hand plant and materials from a wide variety, combined with common bush technologies of construction.

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This place/object may also be State heritage listed. Check the Victorian Heritage Database. For further details, contact the local Council or go to Planning Schemes Online