

# Sanitarium Health Food Company Complex

Address 51 Main Street, Warburton 3799

Practice Billson, Edward F

Designed 1936

Completed 1939

History & Description The Sanitarium Factory Complex, comprising the Sanitarium Health Food Company Factory and 'Signs of the Times' Printing Works, was designed by architect Edward Billson, built by T R & L Cockram between 1936 and 1939, and landscaped to Billson's concept.

Its buildings are important early examples of modern architecture in Australia influenced by the contemporary European models. In particular they draw heavily on the personal style of Dutch architect WM Dudok which had in turn developed through the influence of the De Stijl movement and the work of Walter Gropius. There are obviously parallels between the three storey east end of the Sanitarium Health Food Company building and the Fagus Works designed by Gropius in 1911. In 1940 the complex won the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects Street Architecture Award, the first awarded to a building outside the metropolitan area.

Its industrial garden setting typified a trend towards outer urban or rural sites with ample grounds and a range of worker amenities, such as outdoor eating areas, separate carparking, detached factory buildings partially concealed by planting, and a concern for townscape amenity.

The buildings and their rural setting reflected the health and fitness philosophy of the Seventh Day Adventist Church.

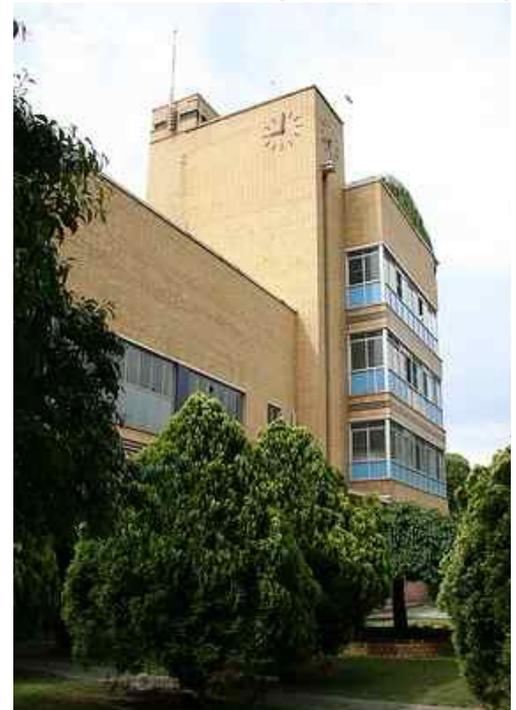
Statement of Significance The Sanitarium Factory Complex is significant for its skillful assembly of contrasting geometric, brick-clad forms and as an early example of the small group of non-residential buildings which successfully emulate European Modern architecture (particularly Dudok) and hence create a precedent for Australian post-war commercial and industrial architecture

The complex is also significant for its considerable aesthetic qualities, derived largely from the crisp architectural detailing and contrast of materials, the mature garden setting, and the focus of the buildings as dramatic punctuation in a predominantly forested setting.

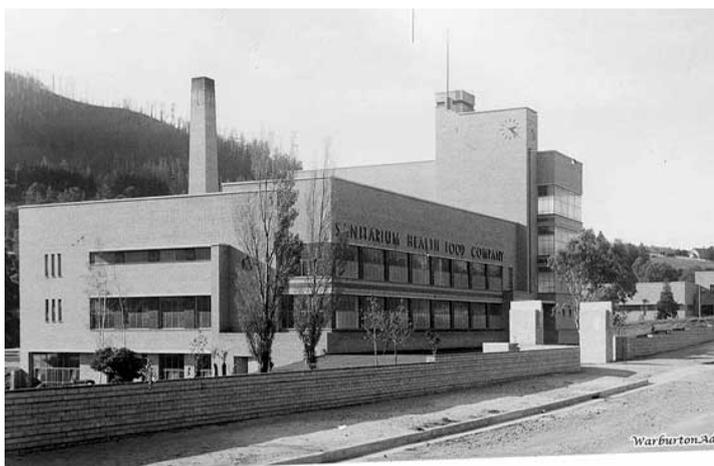
Criteria Applicable N1 - Significant Heritage value in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or period of design.  
N2 - Significant heritage value in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.



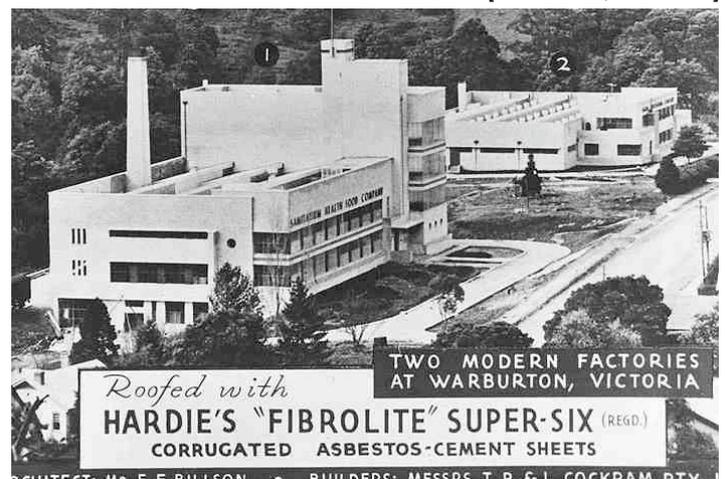
Clock Tower [Mick Stanic, Flickr.com]



Entrance [Mick Stanic, Flickr.com]



South west corner c1940 [Warburton Adventists Collection]



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