

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT

NAME: Sisalkraft Factory Complex

PLACE: 26557

ADDRESS: Kaurna Country

356 Torrens Road, Kilkenny

This heritage assessment considers that the place meets criteria (d) and (e). Refer to Summary of State Heritage Place for final approved wording, including criteria statements.



Reinforced concrete parabolic arch supporting canopy fronting the Sisalkraft Factory Complex (business signage obscured).

Source: DEW Files 26 November 2024

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Statement of Heritage Significance:

Designed by architect Keith Neighbour and built for Sisalkraft Distributors SA Pty Ltd in 1956, the Sisalkraft Factory Complex in Kilkenny is an outstanding representative of a mid-twentieth century factory. The complex exhibits many of the key attributes typical of factories erected during the industrialisation of South Australia, c.1935-1965, notably its Modernist design elements and landscaping. The Sisalkraft Factory Complex is also an outstanding example of Postwar International architecture, observed through elements like its rectilinear shape, structural frame and curtain walls. Similarly, the Sisalkraft Factory Complex demonstrates a high degree of creative achievement

through the holistic application of Modernist design elements across the complex as well as its distinctive rhomboid skylights and concrete parabolic arch.

Relevant South Australian Historical Themes

5. Developing South Australia's Economies

5.1 Developing South Australia's Economy

5.8 Developing Manufacturing, Engineering and Construction and Service Industries

Comparative Analysis:

The Sisalkraft Factory Complex is associated with Post-war International Architecture; Mid-Twentieth Century Factories; and architect Keith Neighbour. Each association is considered in turn below.

Postwar International Architecture

Apperly *et al* define the architectural style in which the Sisalkraft Factory Complex is designed as 'Post-War International' [hereafter Postwar International], a style that was used primarily between 1940 and 1960. Evolving from European and American interwar modernist architecture, Postwar International architecture stressed functionality and the honest expression of materials and structure, while rejecting the decorative pretensions of historicism.¹ In Australia, the style was advanced by architects such as Harry Seidler and Robin Boyd,² and by the 1950s it was widely embraced by governments and corporations, including multinational enterprises. Accordingly, buildings erected in the style have gone on to symbolise the postwar economic boom and its attendant construction programme.³

In Australia, the Postwar International style was typically expressed through curtain-walled office buildings and 'radical, flat-roofed, glass walled' houses. Such buildings made 'extensive use of steel, reinforced concrete and glass' and favoured open planning. In time, the intensive use of glass necessitated factoring sun-control measures in to the design process.⁴

Apperly *et al* identify the following key style indicators:

- Cubiform [Rectilinear] overall shape
- Structural frame [selectively expressed]
- Curtain wall [Non-load bearing]
- Large sheets [or areas] of glass
- Overhang for shade
- Plain, smooth wall surface
- External sun-control device
- Corbusian window motif (a 'long, simple horizontal strip window')⁵
- Cantilever
- Contrasting non-rectangular shape
- Contrasting texture

Flat roofs and the sharpness and precision of detailing are also identified as characteristics of the style.

Examples of places designed in the Postwar International Style listed as State Heritage Places include:

- Adelaide High School and Observatory Site, West Terrace, Adelaide (SHP 12557); designed by Fitzgerald and Brogan in 1940 and built between 1947 and 1951; described by Apperly *et al* as the 'first mainstream International style building in Adelaide'.⁶
- Walkley House, 1956, 26 Palmer Place, North Adelaide (SHP 13515); the only building in South Australia designed by Robin Boyd, a key figure associated with Post-War International architecture; described by Marsden *et al* as a 'highly significant example of the "International Style"'.⁷
- Office – MLC Building, c.1957, 181-191 Victoria Square, Adelaide (SHP 13596); designed by Osborne McCutcheon; described by Bruce Harry and Associates as a 'highly developed example of the International Style'.⁸
- Catholic Church of the Holy Name, 1959, 80 Payneham Road, Stepney (SHP 26519); designed by Douglas Michelmore; described in its Statement of Significance as an 'outstanding, well-resolved example of International Style Modern Movement architecture in South Australia'.⁹
- Educational Building – Bragg Laboratories, North Terrace, Adelaide (SHP 13757); designed by Jack McConnell; described by Patricia Sumerling as significant because it is a 'representative of twentieth century architecture of the International movement in the style of Mies van der Rohe'.¹⁰
- Ferrari House (former Eagle Star Insurance Building), 1967, 28-30 Grenfell Street, Adelaide (SHP 14099); designed by Yunken Freeman and Dean W. Berry, Gilbert, Barker and Polomka; described in its Statement of Significance as 'an outstanding example of a Post-War International Style building'.¹¹

Examples of unlisted places include:

- PGB Claridge House, 1952, Mingara Avenue, Stonyfell; designed by Philip George Brian Claridge.
- Savings Bank of South Australia, c.1958, Bank Street, Adelaide; designed by Caradoc Ashton, Fisher, Woodhead and Beaumont Smith.
- Gillanyi House, c.1959, 2 Bonvue Avenue, Beaumont; the only building in South Australia designed by Harry Seidler, a key figure associated with Post-War International architecture.
- Napier Building, 1958-1965, North Terrace, Adelaide; designed by Bates, Smart and McCutcheon and Cheesman, Doley, Brabham and Neighbour; built in two stages.
- Finance Corporation of Australia, c.1960, 15-19 Franklin Street Adelaide; designed by John Chappel.



Former Savings Bank of South Australia

Source: Google Street View



Walkley House (SHP 13515)

Source: Google Street View



Office – MLC Building (SHP 13596)

Source: Google Street View



Ferrari House (former Eagle Star Insurance Building) (SHP 14099)

Source: Google Street View

Mid-Twentieth Century Factories

Throughout the Western world, factories erected during the first half of the twentieth century were primarily designed to maximise functionality. Factories were built to serve a particular purpose and thus varied considerably by industry, ranging from large manufacturing plants to smaller scale facilities. They could encompass single structures subdivided into departments or complexes comprised of multiple, freestanding buildings. Both types could include manufacturing facilities, administrative offices and drafting departments. Most were constructed using materials such as structural steel and reinforced concrete, and accommodated new production and management processes, such as assembly lines and 'scientific management'.¹²

Importantly, designers began to draw from urban beautification and urban design principles, particularly the City Beautiful movement in the US, also known as 'beautility', and the Garden City movement in the UK. These ideas were premised on creating urban environments that were both aesthetically pleasing and provided various amenities for the communities associated with them.¹³ Such ideas influenced corporate landscaping, which in part sought to factor in employee interests, sometimes including amenities like sporting facilities.¹⁴

While many factories were designed by structural engineers and were purely utilitarian, others were designed by architects in whole or in part. In the 1910s, European architects like Walter Gropius began to design factories in the nascent Modernist style, itself predicated on functionality. The style continued to be applied to factories built throughout the West over the following decades.¹⁵

By the middle of the twentieth century, factories built in Modernist styles were typically streamlined in appearance and built using materials such as structural steel, reinforced concrete and plate glass. The greater use of glass increased natural light within factories and symbolised transparency, 'both in terms of modernity and accessibility'.¹⁶ In addition to functionality, some factories were also designed to be tangible 'advertisements' of their businesses, intended to demonstrate their progressiveness.¹⁷ Moreover, by this time, it was common for businesses to invest in 'landscaped parks, pleasure gardens or at least an outdoor seating area with trees, shrubs, flowers, or a roof garden or atrium garden'.¹⁸ These spaces were intended to be used by staff and/or clients.

Although factories had existed in South Australia for many decades, during the late 1930s numbers increased in response to efforts to industrialise South Australia and enlarge its manufacturing sector.¹⁹ This process intensified during the postwar economic boom and continued into the 1960s.²⁰ In that time, industrial zones were established, in places such as Elizabeth and Edwardstown, and many factories were erected throughout the State, in both utilitarian and modernist styles, often with a mix of both, especially at factory complexes. Administrative and public-facing buildings tended to be more stylised than production facilities.²¹ The latter were often clad with corrugated metal and featured 'sawtooth' roofs, a mainstay of factory design since the nineteenth century.²²

The application of the Garden City ideal to industrial areas had been at least partially implemented in places like Dry Creek before the war,²³ but it was combined with the 'New Towns' model and implemented on a massive scale during the postwar period, as seen by the development of Elizabeth.²⁴ Likewise, corporate landscaping and outdoor employee facilities were heavily integrated into the design of some factories, such as the Chrysler Plant in Clovelly Park (now in Tonsley) and ETA Foods in Renown Park (since demolished).

To date, limited research has been conducted on mid-twentieth century factories in South Australia. Excluding the five listings for the former Salisbury Explosives factory (SHPs 26027, 26028, 26029, 26030 and 26031), which was purpose-built as a wartime

exigency rather than an industrial venture, only three mid-twentieth century factories or portions thereof have been listed as State Heritage Places, and all were erected prior to or during the Second World War.

Mid-twentieth century factories listed as State Heritage Places:

- Factory (former Duco Plant), c.1939, 67 Lipson Street, Port Adelaide (SHP 14699, listed under criteria a, d and e); designed by Colin Hassell.
- Former Tubemakers Administration Building No. 1, 1939, 500 Churchill Road, Kilburn (SHP 26303, listed under a and e); designer unknown.
- Former Tubemakers Administration Building No. 2, 1942, 498 Churchill Road, Kilburn (SHP 26325, listed under criteria a and e; designer unknown).

Examples of unlisted places include:

- Simpson factory, c.1938, 77-99 Pym Street, Dudley Park; designer unknown; highly modified and now owned by Electrolux.
- H. H. Tandy Confectionary factory, 1945, 223 Angas Street, Adelaide; designed by Jack Cheesman.
- Former International Harvester Building, 1948, 21 James Congdon Drive, Mile End; Designed by Jack McConnell; currently occupied by Clinpath.
- WD & HO Wills factory, 1948, 11 James Congdon Drive, Mile End; designed by Jack McConnell; currently a Kennards Self Storage facility.
- Coca-Cola factory, c.1952, Port Road, Thebarton; original architect unknown; head office and factory extension designed by Dean Walter Berry in 1968.
- Former Concrete Industries factory, c.1960, 575 Grand Junction Road, Gepps Cross; designer unknown; currently Bianco Precast.
- Millicent Pulp and Paper Mill, 1960, 75 Glens Lane, Tantanoola; designer unknown; highly modified and currently Kimberly-Clark.
- Australian Glass Manufacturers factory, c.1961, 625 Port Road, West Croydon; designed by Cheesman, Doly, Brabham and Neighbour; currently Visy Glass.
- Holden factory, c.1963, Philip Highway, Elizabeth; designed by James Irwin.
- Chrysler factory, 1964, Watts Road, Tonsley; designed by Robert Woodhead.



WD & HO Wills factory, Mile End (office and showroom block)

Source: Google Street View



Former Duco Plant, Port Adelaide (SHP 14699)

Source: Google Street View



Former Tubemakers Administration Building No. 2, Kilburn (SHP 26325)

Source: DEW Files



Former Concrete Industries factory, Gepps Cross

Source: Google Street View



Australian Glass Manufacturers factory, West Croydon

Source: Google Street View

Keith Neighbour

The Sisalkraft Factory Complex was designed by Keith Neighbour (b. 13 June 1919, d. 4 February 2011), a prominent Adelaide-based architect active between c.1948 and 2011. Neighbour was attuned to modern architectural trends, such as the Postwar International style. Much of his work demonstrates a 'sophisticated use and understanding of concrete as a material'.²⁵

Throughout his professional life, Neighbour was associated with other notable and likeminded architects including Jack Cheesman and Newell Platten, both of whom had worked alongside Neighbour in the same firm. Neighbour's practice served a diverse clientele, designing 'homes for the aged, hotels, motels, cinemas, drive-ins, service stations, hospitals, schools and, and multi-storey office buildings, houses, churches and factories'.²⁶

Neighbour was highly involved in the profession through organisations such as the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA), the Architects Registration Board of South Australia and the State's architecture schools. In 1992, he received an Order of Australia medal for his professional contributions and in 1994 was awarded the RAIA (SA Branch) President's Medal.²⁷

No places designed by Neighbour are in the South Australian Heritage Register (the Register).

Some notable places associated with Keith Neighbour include:

- Neighbour House, c.1958, 61 Braemar Road, Torrens Park; Neighbour's residence (subject of a future assessment).
- Ligertwood Building, 1967, University of Adelaide, North Terrace, Adelaide; original design with Douglas Raffen; since modified.
- Former Highways Department Building, 1968, 33 Warwick Street, Walkerville; designed with Ross Stagg between 1959 and 1964, built in two stages in 1964 and 1968; since converted into a hotel (subject of a future assessment).
- IMFC Building, 1970, 33 King William Street, Adelaide; design attribution shared with Douglas Raffen (subject of a future assessment).
- St. Martin's Anglican Church, c.1970, 3 Gorge Road, Paradise (subject of future assessment).
- Millicent Civic and Arts Centre, 1972, Ridge Terrace, Millicent (subject of a future assessment).



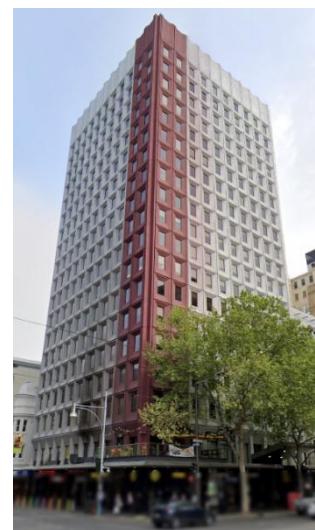
Neighbour House

Source: Google Street View



Former Highways Department Building

Source: Google Street View



IMFC Building

Source: Google Street View



Millicent Civic and Arts Centre (section designed by Cheesman, Doley, Neighbour and Raffen Pty Ltd)

Source: DEW Files

Heritage South Australia, DEW
Sisalkraft Factory Complex 26557

**Assessment against Criteria under Section 16 of the Heritage Places Act 1993.
All Criteria have been assessed using the 2020 Guidelines.**

(a) it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history.

Criterion arguments have considered the Guidelines for State Heritage Places:

The place should be closely associated with events, developments or cultural phases which have played a significant part in South Australian history. Ideally it should demonstrate those associations in its fabric.

Places will not normally be considered under this criterion if they are of a class of things that are commonplace, or frequently replicated across the State, places associated with events of interest only to a small number of people, places associated with developments of little significance, or places only reputed to have been the scene of an event which has left no trace or which lacks substantial evidence.

The Sisalkraft Factory Complex is associated with the historic theme: 'Developing South Australia's Economies' and its subthemes 'Developing South Australia's Economy' and 'Developing Manufacturing, Engineering and Construction and Service Industries'.

The Sisalkraft Factory Complex is associated with the industrialisation of South Australia, which occurred between the mid-1930s and the mid-1960s. Beforehand, the South Australian economy was largely based on primary production, with manufacturing geared towards serving agricultural and pastoral needs, as well as producing basic consumer goods. Recognising the shortcomings of this arrangement, various parties sought to reorient the economy towards manufacturing through market incentives and government intervention. The process to attract external capital and build up the manufacturing sector commenced in the 1930s and was stimulated by munitions production during the Second World War. Partly driven by Premier Thomas Playford and fuelled by the postwar economic and population booms, industrialisation intensified during the postwar period, so much so that South Australia was essentially industrialised by the mid-1960s.

It was in this context that Sisalkraft Distributors Pty Ltd (hereafter Sisalkraft) built a state-of-the-art factory complex in 1956, located in what is now Kilkenny, a north-western suburb of Adelaide. Based in Sydney and half-owned by an American parent company, Sisalkraft manufactured, sold and distributed its sisal-based products from the complex, including its reinforced waterproof building paper and aluminium-coated insulation material. It was subsequently purchased by St Regis-ACI, which began operating under its own name around the early 1980s before selling the property in 1983.

Although the Sisalkraft Factory Complex is associated with the industrialisation of South Australia, this association is incidental when compared to other places with substantially the same association. Regarding factories and manufacturing specifically, there are several places that better demonstrate various aspects of this

history. For instance, the former Tubemakers administrative buildings in Kilburn (SHPs 26303 and 26325) and the former Duco factory in Port Adelaide (SHP 14699) demonstrate the early years of industrialisation; the former General Motors Holden plant in Elizabeth South and the former Chrysler plant in Tonsley demonstrate the postwar intensification of manufacturing which was dominated by car manufacturing, as well as the influx of American capital in South Australia; and the former Simpson factory in Dudley Park and the former Coca-Cola factory in Thebarton demonstrate the expanded production of consumer goods. Therefore, the Sisalkraft Factory Complex does not represent the theme as well as other places that remain extant.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not fulfil** criterion (a).

(b) it has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance.

Criterion arguments have considered the Guidelines for State Heritage Places:

The place should demonstrate a way of life, social custom, industrial process or land use which is no longer practised, is in danger of being lost, or is of exceptional interest. This encompasses both places which were always rare, and places which have become scarce through subsequent loss or destruction.

Places will not normally be considered under this criterion if their rarity is merely local, or if they appear rare only because research has not been done elsewhere, or if their distinguishing characteristics have been degraded or compromised, or if they are at present common and simply believed to be in danger of becoming rare in the future.

The Sisalkraft Factory Complex is associated with factories erected during the mid-twentieth century, roughly comprising the late-1930s to mid-1960s. South Australia industrialised during this period and the creation of factories and manufacturing plants were integral to this process. Their growth over this period is indicative: there were around 1,710 factories in the mid-1930s, whereas there were about 5,800 factories located throughout South Australia by 1963. Many of these factories remain extant, including several notable examples, such as the former Holden and Chrysler plants, respectively in Elizabeth and Tonsley. Accordingly, mid-twentieth century factories are not considered rare, uncommon or endangered.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not fulfil** criterion (b).

(c) it may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history, including its natural history.

Criterion arguments have considered the Guidelines for State Heritage Places:

The place should provide, or demonstrate a likelihood of providing, information that will contribute significantly to our knowledge of the past. The information should be inherent in the fabric of the place. The place may be a standing structure, an archaeological deposit or a geological site.

Places will not normally be considered under this criterion simply because they are believed to contain archaeological or palaeontological deposits. There must be good reasons to suppose the site is of value for research, and that useful information will emerge. A place that will yield the same information as many other places, or information that could be obtained as readily from documentary sources, may not be eligible.

The Sisalkraft Factory Complex was built on Section 62, Hundred of Yatala, in 1957. The land was first part of Section 2069 and was a government reserve before its subdivision in 1892. Thereafter, it appears to have been used primarily for residential and small-scale commercial purposes. The land is not believed to contain any archaeological deposits beyond what would be considered commonplace in a residential or commercial context within suburban Adelaide.

The physical fabric of the Sisalkraft Factory Complex is documented in a variety of primary and secondary sources, including photographs, architectural records, and professional publications. There is no evidence (documentary, oral history or physical) to suggest that the place may yield information that will contribute meaningfully to an understanding of the State's history beyond what is readily available.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not fulfil** criterion (c).

(d) it is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.

Criterion arguments have considered the Guidelines for State Heritage Places:

The place should be capable of providing understanding of the category of places which it represents. It should be typical of a wider range of such places, and in a good state of integrity, that is, still faithfully presenting its historical message.

Places will not be considered simply because they are members of a class, they must be both notable examples and well-preserved. Places will be excluded if their characteristics do not clearly typify the class, or if they were very like many other places, or if their representative qualities had been degraded or lost. However, places will not be excluded from the Register merely because other similar places are included.

The Sisalkraft Factory Complex is associated with the class of place known as mid-twentieth century factories. Mid-twentieth century factories are culturally significant to South Australia because they demonstrate the industrialisation of the state, which occurred between the mid-1930s and mid-1960s. In that time, manufacturing replaced primary production as the state's principal economic activity. Such activity occurred within factories, the number of which increased from around 1,710 in the mid-1930s to about 5,800 in 1963.

Principal characteristics of mid-twentieth century factories include:

- Modernist or International Style architectural elements,
- bespoke designed standalone administrative office/s,

- standout architectural element/s to attract business, such as landmark signage, artwork and/or landscaping,
- standalone or integrated showroom/s,
- standalone or integrated drafting, engineering or design office/s,
- manufacturing and/or assemblage facilities,
- corporate landscaping for staff and/or customer usage, including outdoor recreation and leisure areas,
- staff amenities,
- staff and/or customer carparking.

The Sisalkraft Factory Complex demonstrates most of these characteristics, including:

- International Style architectural elements, expressed throughout the entirety of the complex,
- A bespoke standalone administrative office building,
- standout architectural element/s to attract business, achieved through the parabolic arch and contrasting cubiform shape, as well as landscape elements;
- manufacturing facilities to the rear of the complex;
- corporate landscaping for staff, in this case a paved garden area with a water feature;
- staff amenities located in the annex that connects the office and the factory;
- staff and customer parking areas.

While most components of the Sisalkraft Factory Complex remain largely unaltered, the original showroom interior has been removed, an outdoor area originally designed for factory staff is being used for storage and the lower glass windowpanes of the office wing have been replaced with sheet metal. Regardless, the Sisalkraft Factory Complex remains substantially intact, and these issues are not irreversible or irredeemable. Notably, the corporate landscaping is particularly well preserved, which is an element that has typically been lost or compromised in other mid-twentieth century factories. The Sisalkraft Factory Complex demonstrates a high level of intactness and is considered to be an outstanding representative of the class of place, mid-twentieth century factory.

It is recommended that the nominated place **fulfils** criterion (d).

(e) it demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics.

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

The place should show qualities of innovation or departure, beauty or formal design, or represent a new achievement of its times. Breakthroughs in technology or new developments in design would qualify, if the place clearly shows them. A high standard of design skill and originality is expected.

Places would not normally be considered under this criterion if their degree of achievement could not be demonstrated, or where their integrity was diminished so that the achievement, while documented, was no longer apparent in the place, or simply because they were the work of a designer who demonstrated innovation elsewhere.

The Sisalkraft Factory Complex is considered to be an outstanding representative of Postwar International architecture and demonstrates a high degree of creative accomplishment.

Designed by Keith Neighbour and constructed in 1956, the Sisalkraft Factory Complex is considered to be an outstanding example of Postwar International Style architecture (see Comparative Analysis), articulating many key attributes of the style, including:

- cubiform [rectilinear] overall shape, particularly evident in the office building, with its shoebox proportions and flat roof;
- structural frame expressed through the steel beams and alternating gable trusses on the factory roof that form rhomboid skylights (factory);
- curtain walls built of Besser blocks (factory) and glass window panels (office),
- large areas of glass expressed as glass window panels (office);
- overhang for shade in the form of an eave at the southern (front) elevation of the office;
- plain, smooth wall surfaces built from Besser block masonry and glass panels,
- external sun-control devices, especially evident in the eaves and metal fins along the office's southern elevation;
- contrasting non-rectangular shape expressed through the parabolic arch that supports the canopy at the front entrance.
- cantilever, expressed by the end of the canopy.

The Sisalkraft Factory Complex also demonstrates a high degree of creative accomplishment, exhibited through its application of Modernist design ideas and elements to a factory complex.

Neighbour designed the Sisalkraft Factory Complex holistically and carefully considered each of its individual components, drawing from the design language of the Postwar International style to do so. Other mid-twentieth century factories in South Australia typically centred their architectural emphasis on the administrative buildings and relied on established factory designs, most often featuring 'sawtooth' roofs, a mainstay in industrial architecture since the late nineteenth century. Conversely, each component of the Sisalkraft Factory Complex was given equal consideration, including the factory. Neighbour eschewed the standard sawtooth model and instead designed an innovative structure comprised of alternating gable trusses forming large rhomboid skylights, intended to maximise and regulate light flow.

The Sisalkraft Factory Complex has received contemporary and retrospective critical recognition for its creativity and progressiveness. Contemporaries lauded its modern design elements. In 1956, *Cross Section*, an influential newsletter published by the

University of Melbourne's School of Architecture, declared that the complex was 'not only Adelaide's most advanced factory ... but an excellent pointer for industry elsewhere'. In May 1957, *Architecture and Arts*, based in Melbourne, included the complex among its Buildings of Outstanding Merit, judged as part of its Building of the Year awards.

Subsequent observers have similarly praised the Sisalkraft Factory Complex. The (Royal) Australian Institute of Architects (AIA) included the complex on its list of South Australian Significant 20th Century Architecture, noting the place 'exemplified an objective approach to design'. The AIA later listed the complex in its of 20th century South Australian places.

It is recommended that the nominated place **fulfils** criterion (e).

(f) it has strong cultural or spiritual association for the community or a group within it.

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

The place should be one which the community or a significant cultural group have held in high regard for an extended period. This must be much stronger than people's normal attachment to their surroundings. The association may in some instances be in folklore rather than in reality.

Places will not be considered if their associations are commonplace by nature, or of recent origin, or recognised by a small number of people, or not held very strongly, or held by a group not widely recognised, or cannot be demonstrated satisfactorily to others.

Sisalkraft Distributors Pty Ltd built the Sisalkraft Factory Complex in 1956. Although the company eventually became St Regis-ACI, sisal-based products were manufactured and distributed at the site until around the early 1980s. Since then, it has been owned and leased by several parties, some for decades. It is possible that some individuals who have owned or worked in the complex have a strong cultural and/or spiritual attachment to the place, including former employees of Sisalkraft/St Regis-ACI and past and present owners and tenants. However, there is no evidence to suggest that such individuals form a group that would be broadly recognised by the South Australian community as being historically important to the State's development.

The Sisalkraft Factory Complex has cultural associations for members of the South Australian architectural community and people who appreciate and celebrate modernist architecture. For instance, the complex has been recognised by the Adelaide Chapter of the Art Deco and Modernism Society of Australia and is included in Stuart Symon's 2019 book, *Modernist Adelaide: 100 Buildings, 1940s-1970s*. However, the Sisalkraft Factory Complex is only one of many places to which they have an attachment. Many other architecturally important buildings are also celebrated and promoted by them in a similar manner.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not fulfil** criterion (f).

(g) it has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance.

Criterion arguments have considered the Guidelines for State Heritage Places:

The place must have a close association with a person or group which played a significant part in past events, and that association should be demonstrated in the fabric of the place.

The product of a creative person, or the workplace of a person whose contribution was in industry, would be more closely associated with the person's work than would his or her home. Most people are associated with many places in their lifetime, and it must be demonstrated why one place is more significant than others.

Places will not generally be considered under this criterion if they have only brief, incidental or distant association, or if they are associated with persons or groups of little significance, or if they are associated with an event which has left no trace, or if a similar association could be claimed for many places, or if the association cannot be demonstrated. Generally the home or the grave of a notable person will not be entered in the Register unless it has some distinctive attribute, or there is no other physical evidence of the person's life or career in existence.

The Sisalkraft Factory Complex is associated with the architectural work of Keith Neighbour and Sisalkraft Distributors Pty Ltd. Each is considered below.

The Sisalkraft Factory Complex was designed by prominent South Australian architect Keith Neighbour (b. 13 June 1919, d. 4 February 2011) while working for Lawson, Cheesman and Doley, of which he later became a partner. Neighbour is known to have designed or co-designed many buildings throughout South Australia and was highly active in the profession, including through the (Royal) Australian Institute of Architects and both schools of architecture.

The Sisalkraft Factory Complex was one of Neighbour's first projects, along with his house in Torrens Park, built in 1957, and the Former Highways Department Building, which he designed with Ross Stagg between 1959 and 1964. These buildings demonstrate his formative preference for functionality and the honest expression of materials. While Sisalkraft shows a clever use of concrete, particularly in the parabolic arch that was likely built in-situ, later places designed in whole or in part by Neighbour better demonstrate his sophisticated application of the material, such as the Former Highways Department Building and the IMCF Building. Accordingly, the Sisalkraft Factory Complex is not considered to have a special association with Neighbour for his use of concrete. However, to understand Neighbour's contribution to South Australian architecture more broadly and whether Sisalkraft Factory Complex can be considered to have a special association with Neighbour, further research into Neighbour and his oeuvre is required. Sisalkraft Factory Complex is not considered, to meet criterion (g), at this time, for its association with Keith Neighbour.

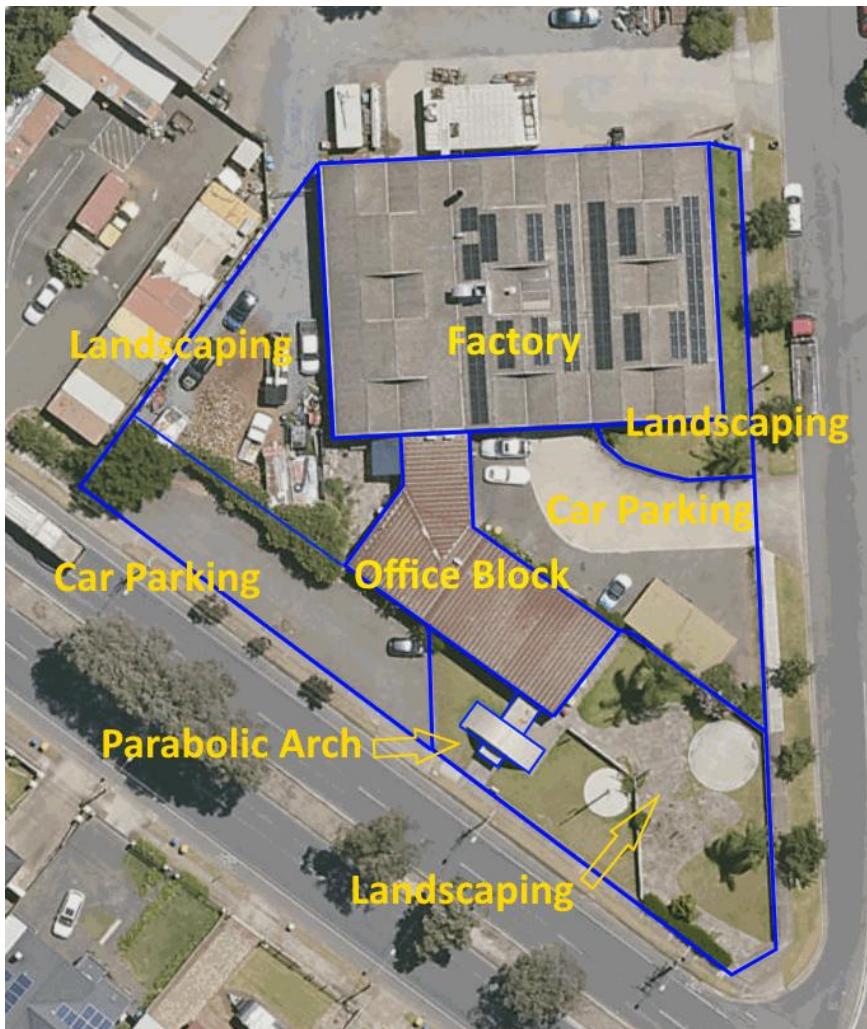
The Sisalkraft Factory Complex was built for Sisalkraft Distributors Pty Ltd, a company based in Sydney and co-owned by the American Reinforced Paper Company. The company manufactured, exhibited and sold its popular insulation products from the

complex. It was later acquired by St Regic-ACI, which eventually renamed the complex after itself, before selling the property in the early 1980s. While Sisalkraft products like Sisalation were and are used widely by the construction industry in South Australia, they are one of several insulation products available on the market. Moreover, even if it can be established that sisal-based products have been important to South Australia, this is more to do with the products than the companies that have produced and distributed them, of which there are several. Therefore, Sisalkraft Distributors Pty Ltd itself cannot be said to have made a strong, notable or influential contribution to the course of South Australian history.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not fulfil** criterion (g).

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Sisalkraft Factory Complex comprises multiple structures and elements, including an office wing, factory, parabolic arch and landscaping.



Site plan of Sisalkraft Factory Complex

Office wing

The office wing is situated to the south of the site and fronts Torrens Road. It is a steel-framed rectangular building with a flat roof clad in deck-profile steel. There is an annex at the rear connecting the office to the factory.

Features include:

- Besser block curtain walls on the north-western and south-eastern elevations,
- timber-framed glazed double door at entrance with fan light and flanking windows,
- glazed panel windows along the northern and southern elevations (bottom halves infilled with sheet steel),
- eaves,
- metal fins positioned perpendicular to southern elevation, supported on steel posts,
- timber facias.

Factory

The factory is situated to the north of the site. It is a steel-framed rectangular structure with a patterned gable truss roof clad in corrugated asbestos-cement sheeting.

Features include:

- gable truss roof pattern comprising six smaller truss sections repeated at the front, middle and rear bays and three larger truss sections repeated in two interleaving bays, forming rhomboid skylights,
- Besser block curtain walls (some sections painted),
- steel-framed glazed clerestory windows,
- interior insulation (Sisalation),
- industrial roller doors,
- timber facias.

Parabolic Arch

The front entrance features a distinctive reinforced concrete parabolic arch that supports a steel-framed canopy with timber soffits, the latter overhanging a stone pathway. The arch supports the canopy with a hanging concrete blade and steel brackets on either side. The arch is skim-coat rendered.

Landscaping

Extant landscaping features are situated primarily to the south-east of the site. They include:

- slate pathways,
- courtyard paved with slate,
- low fences constructed of Besser blocks and breeze blocks, the bottom two courses solid, the above four hollow,
- circular, water feature forming a shallow, tiled pool,
- steel and timber flagpole on circular, tiled plinth,
- lawned areas, palm trees and shrubs.

Elements of Significance:

Elements of heritage significance include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Sisalkraft Factory Complex,
- Office wing,
- Factory,
- Parabolic arch supporting concrete canopy,
- Landscaping, including slate pathways and courtyard, lawned areas, tiled water feature, tiled podium, flagpole and Besser and breeze block fences.

Elements not considered to contribute to significance of place include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Non-original sheds/warehouses,
- Wire fencing,
- Air-conditioning and ventilation systems,
- Internal partitioning in office and factory,
- Cantilevered car shelter,
- Shipping containers,
- Poles for shade awnings in garden,
- Any non-original fixtures and fittings.

HISTORY

Mid-Twentieth Century International Style Architecture

During the early 1930s, Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Phillip Johnson coined the term 'International Style' to describe the modernist architecture designed by architects like Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.²⁸ The style generally prioritised simple forms responding directly to the intended function of a building, and stressed the honest expression of materials and structure, in turn rejecting ornamentation and the pretensions of historicism.²⁹ It also embraced industrialisation and mechanisation, seeking to harness the benefits of mass production.³⁰



The Headquarters of the United Nations (centre) in New York is a quintessential example of International Style architecture.

Source: Flickr (user: United Nations Photo); per [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#)

Aesthetically, the style was characterised by:

space enclosed by thin planes or surfaces as opposed to the suggestion of mass and solidity; regularity as opposed to symmetry or other kinds of obvious balance; and, lastly, dependence on the intrinsic elegance of materials, technical perfection, and fine proportions, as opposed to applied ornament.³¹

It was 'international' in that practitioners believed that these principles were universal and applicable anywhere in the world regardless of tradition and context, at least initially.³² The style became a global one when it spread beyond Europe, particularly to the United States, owing to the migration of Modernist architects before and after the Second World War and modernism's embrace by homegrown architects like

Frank Lloyd Wright.³³ By the middle of the century, especially following the war, multinational corporations advanced the International Style due to its perceived progressiveness.³⁴

Although South Australia tended to be stylistically conservative during the interwar period, younger Adelaide-based architects began to turn to the developing International Style, which at this stage referred broadly to modernist designs, particularly functionalist and streamlined styles.³⁵ Jack Cheesman, Colin Hassel and Jack McConnell were notable early advocates.³⁶ Cheesman, who had both travelled throughout Europe and studied contemporary American architecture, commented in 1932 that 'the "modern" or "international style" is practical, straightforward, and really in elevational treatment a truthful expression of the plan'.³⁷ In 1938, McConnell, originally from Melbourne, established the Young Architects Association, alternatively known as the Adelaide Architects Club, which aimed to advocate modernist architecture to the broader public.³⁸

Buildings designed in modernist styles were erected in South Australia during the 1930s, but the International Style proliferated following the Second World War. The postwar economic boom and massive population growth combined to necessitate and facilitate a vast construction programme to accommodate businesses and residents, as well as provide essential amenities, like healthcare and educational facilities.³⁹

This scenario was well suited to modernist design principles and practices, which were applied broadly to a vast array of buildings throughout South Australia. Historian Susan Marsden observes that by 'adopting industrial mass-production techniques[,] modernist architecture could provide bigger housing estates, factories and power stations, schools, hospitals and whole towns'.⁴⁰ Referring to modernist design in Adelaide, author Stuart Symons states that it was at the 'heart' of the city's 'physical, cultural and social transformation'.⁴¹ In short, the International Style was interwoven with the postwar economic and population booms.

Industrialisation and the Postwar Boom

Before the 1930s, the South Australian economy was based on primary production, predominantly agriculture and pastoralism and, briefly, mining.⁴² Manufacturing was largely geared towards supplying these industries with equipment and processing the produce created, as well as providing basic consumer goods for the domestic market.⁴³

The state's heavy reliance on primary production exposed the economy to several risks, including seasonal variations and fluctuating prices. It also left South Australia less competitive than other states, particularly Victoria and New South Wales, which were further along their industrialisation pathways. Recognising these vulnerabilities, in the 1920s the state government launched a Royal Commission into the manufacturing sector. Promisingly, the motor body industry developed during the decade. Beyond this, however, leaders did not devise a serious industrialisation strategy until primary

production was greatly impacted by the Great Depression and the nascent motor body industry threatened to move interstate.⁴⁴

Spearheaded by Premiers Richard Butler and Thomas Playford, public servants like J. W. Wainwright and organisations like the South Australian Chamber of Manufacturers, major efforts to encourage manufacturing and transform the economy commenced in the mid-1930s.⁴⁵ Certain taxes were greatly reduced to encourage growth, infrastructure was constructed to support industrial development and the South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT) was established to provide low-cost housing for workers.⁴⁶ Various firms responded positively to these developments and increased or commenced operations in the late 1930s, notably BHP in Whyalla.⁴⁷ Industrialisation was further stimulated by war production during the Second World War, reflected by the munitions factories in and around Salisbury, Woodville North and Hendon.⁴⁸

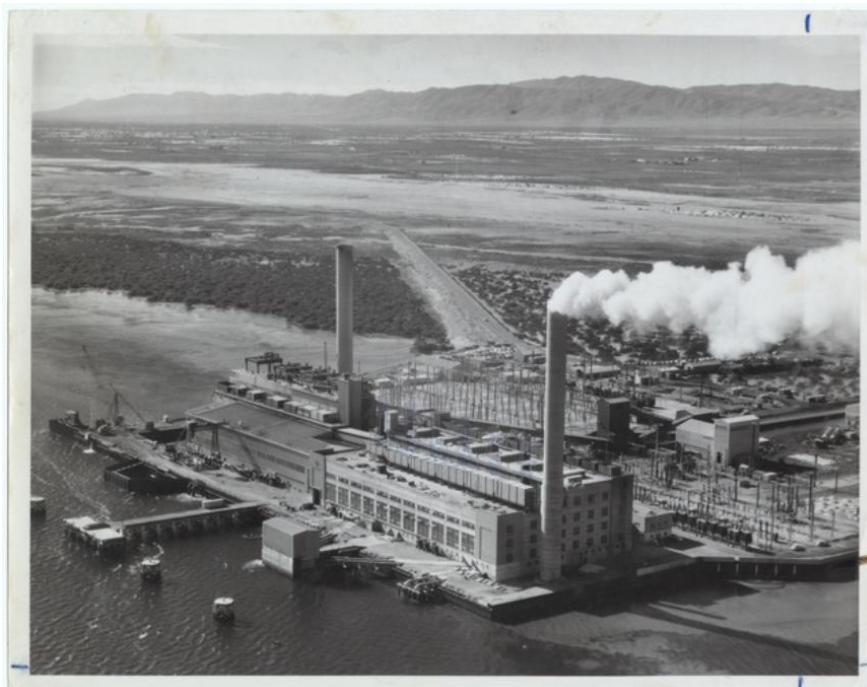


Factory workers visited by Premier Thomas Playford (left) during the Second World War, c.1944.

Source: SLSA B64210

Despite initial difficulties, the national economy boomed following the war, much as it did in other parts of the world, especially throughout the Anglosphere.⁴⁹ A ravenous demand for consumer goods was unleashed after wartime restraints were lifted and economic activity 'increased more than threefold'.⁵⁰ As a result of the postwar 'Baby Boom' and mass immigration, the number of young families also grew. The Australian population consequently almost doubled between the mid-1940s and mid-1960s, in turn further stimulating growth and development.⁵¹

In South Australia, the government introduced a raft of measures to accelerate the industrialisation process. It began mining coal at Leigh Creek, nationalised the state's electricity industry and built a power station in Port Augusta to ensure a cheap and reliable source of energy; retained price controls for several years following the war to reduce living costs and in turn minimise agitation for higher wages; secured from the Commonwealth a disproportionately larger share of Assisted Passage migrants; bolstered or established industrial cities, suburbs and corridors, including Whyalla and Elizabeth; and, through the SAHT, constructed thousands of houses for workers throughout the state.⁵²



Playford A Power Station in Port Augusta (since demolished), c.1962.

Source: Darian Smith, SLSA B 48544

The attempt to encourage and entice industrial manufacturing in South Australia worked. Authors Mark Dean and Lance Worrall observe that '23 significant manufacturing firms' were established in South Australia during the 1940s, followed by another 26 during the 1950s, in turn 'doubling the number of firms established during the 1930s'.⁵³ Most firms were related to 'motor-vehicles, electrical goods and household appliances'.⁵⁴ The number of factories and workers employed in these industries similarly grew: by the mid-1960s, there were about 5,800 factories of various kinds and sizes throughout South Australia,⁵⁵ and around 118,000 people employed in manufacturing.⁵⁶

A large share of this growth stemmed from foreign capital investment, including from the US. Throughout Australia, postwar industrial development had been 'financed in no small measure by overseas capital, with a significant contribution from the United States'.⁵⁷ Scholar Donald Brash notes that the 'value of American direct investment in Australia [...] expanded by 446 per cent' between 1950 and 1962.⁵⁸ In South Australia, American capital investment was most evident in the establishment of the General Motors Holden factory in Elizabeth South and the Chrysler factory in Clovelly Park.⁵⁹

The combined result of government policy, capital investment, global economic conditions and a soaring population, South Australia's economy was completely transformed in the space of a few decades. The manufacturing sector outweighed primary production for the first time in the 1950s and by the mid-1960s South Australia had essentially been industrialised.

Sisalkraft

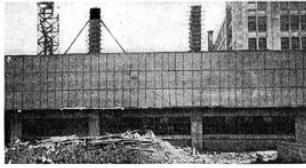
In 1925, the US-based American Reenforced [sic] Paper Company filed its patent for Sisalkraft, the brand name for its waterproof, reinforced building paper.⁶⁰ The product was initially designed as protective sheeting for 'building, agricultural and industrial uses',⁶¹ though early advertisements stressed its broader applicability.⁶² A copper coated version was later developed for use as flashing and was followed by the creation of Sisalation, an aluminium variant used for insulation and sarking.⁶³

The American Reenforced Paper Company first manufactured the product at its plant in Attleboro, Massachusetts. Distribution branches operating as the Sisalkraft Company were subsequently established in other American cities, namely Chicago, New York City and San Francisco. By the early 1930s, Sisalkraft products were being manufactured and distributed internationally.⁶⁴ Australia's first Sisalkraft factory opened in Sydney in 1932.⁶⁵

SISALKRAFT PROTECTION

Builders and Contractors everywhere are using SISALKRAFT the 6-ply WATERPROOF REENFORCED BUILDING PAPER as a protection during the course of construction. Its toughness, waterproof qualities and ease in handling make SISALKRAFT the ideal needed by the building industry.

The photographs shown below visualize the many uses of SISALKRAFT as a practical and economical WATERPROOF REENFORCED BUILDING PAPER.



SISALKRAFT used for temporary partition.



SISALKRAFT covering stock piles. Note that for this purpose two sheets of SISALKRAFT are sewed together. These were sewed on a regular machine for making automobile curtains.

The manufacture and sales of SISALKRAFT have tripled in the last six months. We thank our many customers who have made this possible.

We had generous response from our customers in reply to the December advertisement. Orders for carloads of SISALKRAFT are being received by telegraph and mail from our Dealers. We urge you to order your spring supply of SISALKRAFT at once!

If you are a Lumber or Building Material Dealer we wish especially to welcome you into our SISALKRAFT Circle. Write for our Dealer prices. They are attractive.

American Reenforced Paper Co.,
Attleboro, Mass.

Gentlemen: Please send me free sample of
SISALKRAFT

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Sold in New England under the name
of FIBREEN. Whitney Bros., Inc., of
Boston, Agents.

American Reenforced Paper Co.
Attleboro, Mass.

Advertisement for Sisalkraft building paper, the American Reenforced Paper Company's new product, 1926.

Source: American Builder, February 1926 (via Hathi Trust).

The company's expansion continued after the Second World War. In the US, additional factories were opened during the 1950s in Cary, Illinois, and Tracy, California.⁶⁶ Sometime thereafter, the Reenforced Paper Company likely changed its name to American Sisalkraft Corp.⁶⁷ By the 1960s, Sisalkraft was operating in most Australian capital cities,⁶⁸ variously as Australian Sisalkraft, Sisalkraft Distributors, Australian Reenforced Paper Company and Bates (Australasia).⁶⁹

These subsidiaries resembled multinational franchises, in that they were co-owned by a parent company and local investors, in this instance split evenly between the two.⁷⁰ Moreover, they appear to have operated under a licensing agreement, allowing them to use the Sisalkraft name and manufacture the product locally.⁷¹ While they were both American and Australian owned, Donald Brash noted Sisalkraft in his study of American capital investment in Australia.⁷²

The US-based St Regis Paper Company acquired American Sisalkraft Corp in 1960, including its Australian holdings.⁷³ In 1961, St Regis-ACI Pty. Ltd. was registered in Australia,⁷⁴ suggesting a merger or joint-venture with Australian Consolidated Industries (ACI), a glass manufacturing conglomerate that later introduced Pink Batts® to the Australian market, another widely used insulation product.⁷⁵

St Regis-ACI initially operated under the Sisalkraft name, but eventually used its own name while continuing to sell Sisalkraft and Sisalation branded products.⁷⁶ St Regis was deregistered as an Australian company in 1999.⁷⁷ Fletcher Building acquired ACI in the early 2000s, bringing with it the Sisalation and Sisalkraft brands.⁷⁸

The Sisalkraft Factory Complex

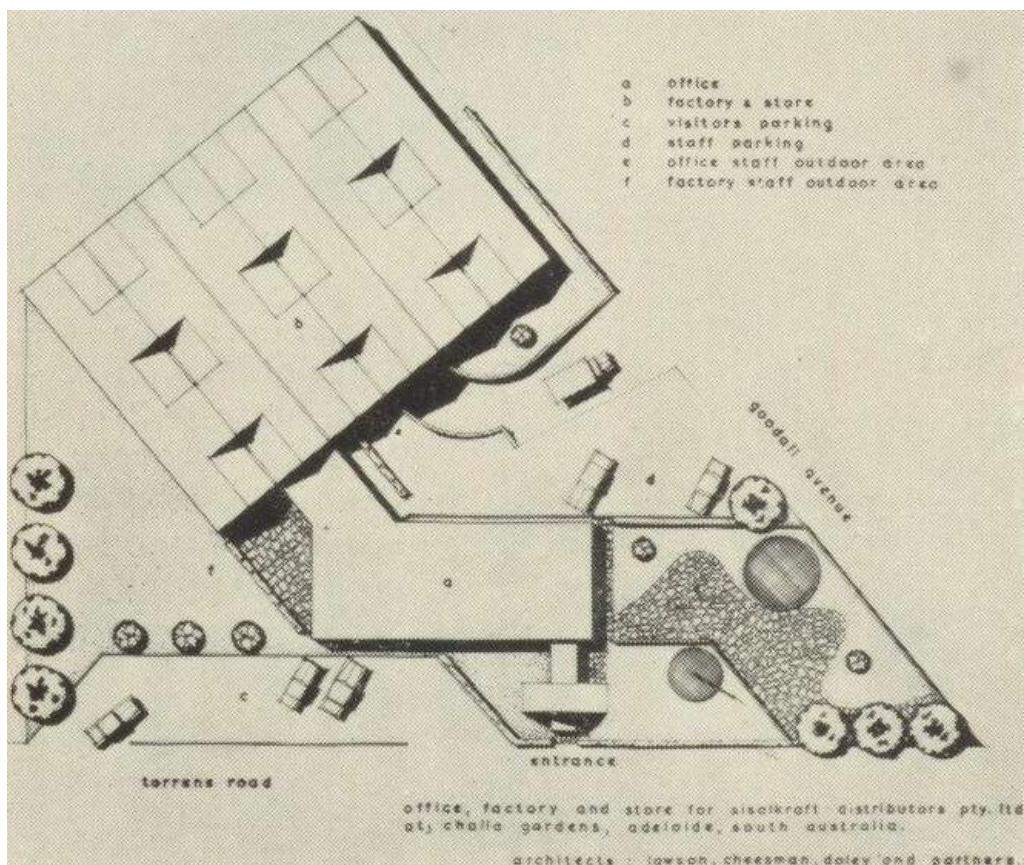
On 18 November 1955, Sydney-based Sisalkraft Distributors purchased a portion of Section 62, Hundred of Yatala, located on the south-eastern corner of Torrens Road and Goodall Avenue in what was then Challa Gardens.⁷⁹ Challa Gardens was created as a new suburb five years earlier on land that was previously a part of Kilkenny.⁸⁰

Kilkenny had been a mixed residential and industrial suburb since the nineteenth century. Almost all industrial activity occurred at its south-western corner around the railway line and Port Road.⁸¹ The north-western end largely comprised undeveloped and agricultural land, with limited residential development.⁸² Around the time Challa Gardens was established, commercial and industrial development proliferated in the area, as it had throughout the north-western suburbs generally, owing largely to the government's industrialisation efforts.⁸³

In 1956, the company commissioned the architectural firm Lawson, Cheesman and Doley to design a factory complex for the site.⁸⁴ Employee Keith Neighbour was selected to lead the project. Neighbour, a veteran of the Second World War and former prisoner of Imperial Japan, was still early in his career as an architect when he led on this commission,⁸⁵ making the Sisalkraft factory complex one of his earliest projects.

Drawing on modernist architectural principles, Neighbour designed the Sisalkraft Factory Complex in a progressive style. Comprising distinct but connected sections, Neighbour's design integrated steel frames, plate glass and Besser block curtain walls. A standout feature was the concrete parabolic arch at the entrance. The arch was built without a top form, suggesting it was poured in-situ rather than manufactured off-site.⁸⁶ Another notable feature was the factory's alternating gable trusses that formed rhomboid skylights, intended to regulate light flow. Sisalation, the company's aluminium insulation product, was used as sarking in the office and factory roofs.⁸⁷

Demonstrating the architect's holistic approach, the office furniture and landscaping were also included in the design.⁸⁸ The landscaping included outdoor areas for both office and factory staff, though the area for the former was more elaborate, likely due to its visibility to the public. A 1957 article in *Architecture and Arts*, a Melbourne-based magazine, noted the outdoor 'conference area', with its 'lawns, pool, stone paving, shrubs, seats and screens'. It observed that '[i]ntegrated landscaping was considered to be most important, both by clients and architects'.⁸⁹ Ultimately, every facet of the complex was designed from scratch.

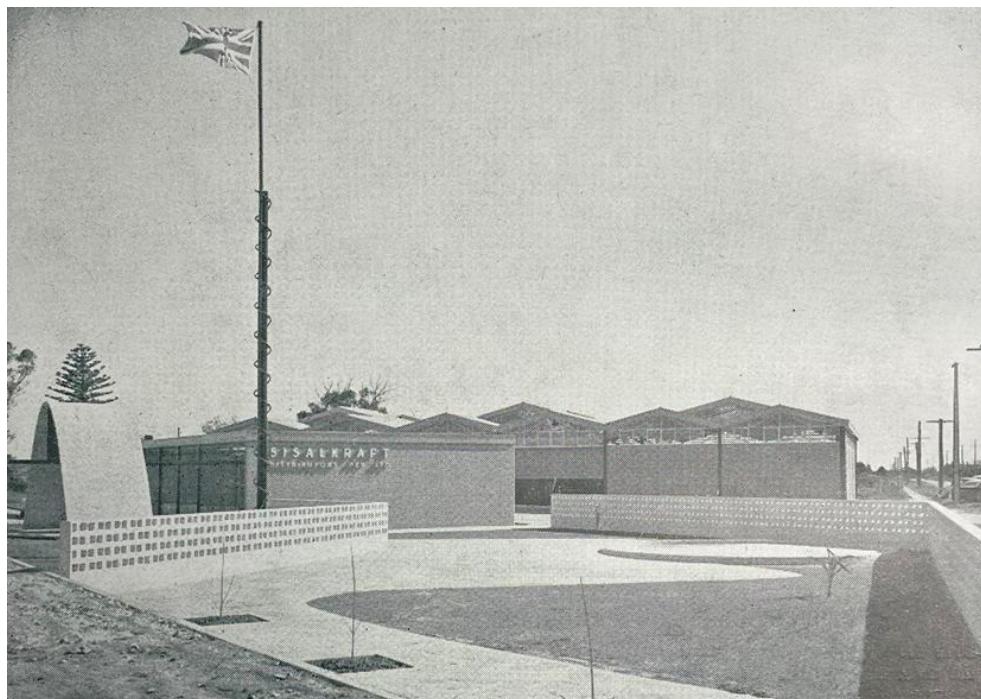


Site plan of the Sisalkraft Factory Complex, 1957.

Source: *Architecture and Arts* no.46 (June 1957), p.32; trove.nla.gov.au.

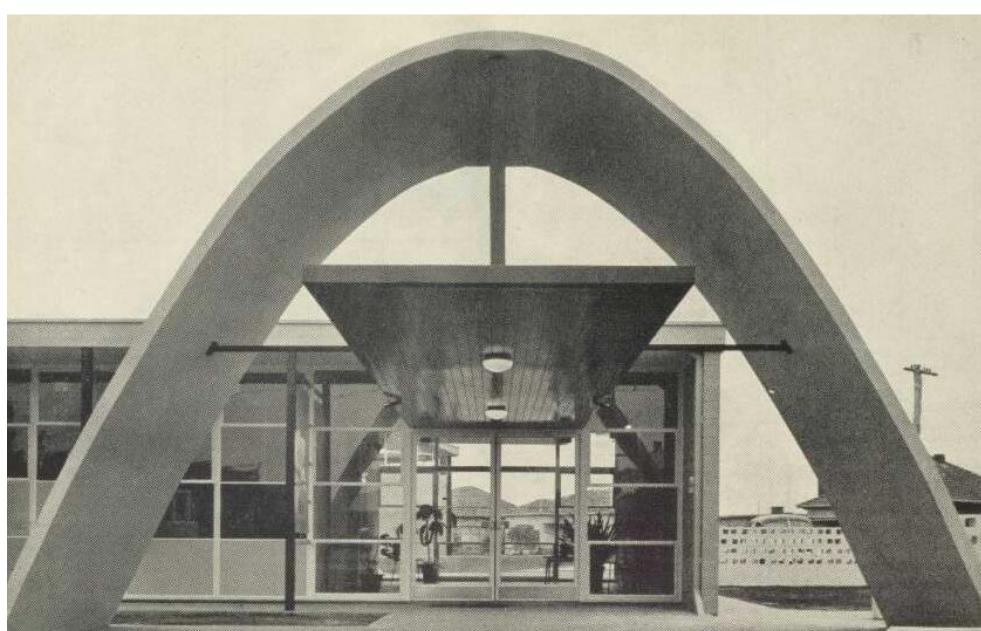
Builders Wilckens and Burnside Ltd. were contracted to construct the factory complex in 1956.⁹⁰ It was completed sometime later that year and was occupied no later than February 1957, by which time Sisalkraft Distributors was listing the place within its national advertisements.⁹¹ The company's name was placed conspicuously and proudly on the showroom wall facing the south-eastern corner.⁹²

The complex was immediately well received within Australian architectural circles. In 1956, *Cross Section*, an influential newsletter published by the University of Melbourne's School of Architecture, declared that the complex was 'not only Adelaide's most advanced factory bldg [sic] but an excellent pointer for industry elsewhere'.⁹³ In May 1957, *Architecture and Arts* included the complex among its Buildings of Outstanding Merit, part of its Building of the Year award.⁹⁴ The following month, the magazine published an article on the complex and a year later included the complex as an example of a 'post-war city building' that exhibited fine workmanship and creativity.⁹⁵



Sisalkraft Factory Complex c.1956.

Source: South Australian Institute of Architects, *Architecture in South Australia*, p.54.



Feature Concrete Parabolic Arch, c.1957.

Source: *Architecture and Arts*, June 1957, p.32.

Subsequent History

Sisalkraft Distributors continued to own the factory complex until the early 1980s.⁹⁶ Advertisements from that time indicate that the business was by then operating as St Regis-ACI, which had been Sisalkraft's parent company in Australia since the early 1960s.⁹⁷ On 25 June 1982, the land title was transferred to St Regis-ACI.⁹⁸ It is likely the Sisalkraft signage was removed from the factory complex around this time. In August the following year, St Regis-ACI sold the factory complex, effectively ending its association with the Sisalkraft name.⁹⁹

Classic Holdings Pty Ltd purchased the factory complex and subsequently leased it to Liebherr-Australia, a subsidiary of the Liebherr Group based in Europe,¹⁰⁰ a 'major manufacturer of mining, earthmoving and construction equipment'.¹⁰¹ A year earlier, the Foreign Investment Board approved the Liebherr Group's proposal to construct a \$10 million manufacturing plant in what is now Para Hills West.¹⁰² Liebherr-Australia likely used the former Sisalkraft factory complex as a showroom and warehouse until its own factory was built, which appears to have been completed in the early to mid-1990s.¹⁰³

According to the owner of Marque Restorations, a business that restores classic cars, their tenancy in the factory section of the complex commenced in the 1990s, which correlates roughly with when the first portions of Liebherr-Australia's factory were built.¹⁰⁴ The building was later purchased in 1998 by its current owners.¹⁰⁵ The office has had multiple tenancies since; Marque Restorations continues to lease the factory section.¹⁰⁶

While there have been several alterations to the factory complex over the years, attributable to its varied uses and general wear, it has remained substantially intact since its construction in 1956. In c.1986 the South Australian Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects recognised it as an example of significant 20th century architecture in South Australia. Additionally, it is included in Stuart Symons' book, *Modernist Adelaide: 100 Buildings, 1940s to 1970s*, and was featured in a 2023 edition of *Spirit of Progress*, the journal of the Art Deco and Modernism Society of Australia Inc.¹⁰⁷

Chronology

Year	Event
1846	29 October: Hundred of Yatala is established.
1892	Section 2069, Hundred of Yatala, is subdivided, which includes the creation of Section 62.
1919	13 June: Architect Keith Neighbour is born in Goolwa, South Australia.
c.1926	The American Reenforced Paper Company establishes Sisalkraft, the brand name for its waterproof reinforced building paper.
1932	Sisalkraft begins operating in Australia. The first Sisalkraft factory in Australia opens in Sydney.

- 1930s- South Australia undergoes intensive industrialisation, completely transforming its economy and society.
- 1960s
- 1940- Keith Neighbour joins the RAAF and serves as a gunner in a bomber crew in the Pacific. He is captured by the Japanese in 1942 and spends the next several years as a prisoner of war.
- 1945
- 1954 Keith Neighbour is hired by the architectural firm Lawson, Cheesman and Doley.
- 1955 18 November: Sisalkraft Distributors Pty Ltd purchases a portion of Section 62, Hundred of Yatala.**
- 1956 Sisalkraft Distributors commission architectural firm Lawson, Cheesman and Doley to design a factory complex for the site. Keith Neighbour is assigned the project.**
- Builders Wilckens and Burnside Ltd. are contracted to construct the factory complex.**
- Construction of the Sisalkraft Factory Complex is completed later in the year.**
- 1957 Sisalkraft commence operations at the factory complex early in the year.**
- May: Architecture and Arts includes the complex among its Buildings of Outstanding Merit, part of its Building of the Year award.**
- 1959 Lawson, Cheesman, Doley and Partners is renamed Cheesman, Doley, Brabham and Neighbour. Neighbour was made a partner sometime between his employment in 1954 and the firm's rebranding.
- 1960 American firm St Regis Paper Company acquires the American Reinforced Paper Company, which includes the Sisalkraft brand and all the business's Australian holdings.
- 1961 St Regis-ACI is registered as an Australian Company. It continues to operate its Sisalkraft holdings under their original name.
- c.1980s St Regis-ACI begin operating their Sisalkraft holdings under their own name. The Sisalkraft signage at the factory complex is likely removed around this time.
- 1982 25 June: The land title is transferred from Sisalkraft Distributors to St Regis-ACI.**
- 1983 August: St Regis-ACI sell the property to Classic Holdings Pty Ltd. The latter immediately leases the factory complex to Liebherr-Australia, a subsidiary of the Europe-based Liebherr Group.**
- c.1992 Liebherr Australia relocate to their new factory complex in what is now Para Hills.
- Marque Restorations commences its tenancy of the factory section of the complex.

1998 The property is purchased by its current owners. Various tenants have since leased the office section of the complex. Marque Restorations continue to lease the factory section.

1999 St Regis is deregistered as an Australian company.

2000s Fletcher Building acquires ACI, including the Sisalkraft and Sisalation brands.

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SITE RECORD

NAME:	Sisalkraft Factory Complex	PLACE NO.:	26557
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DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:	Factory complex comprising office wing and factory, with landscaping and feature reinforced concrete parabolic arch supporting a canopy over the entrance.		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION:	1956		
REGISTER STATUS:	Nominated: 5 December 2022 Provisional Entry: 8 May 2025 Confirmed: 11 December 2025		
CURRENT USE:	Commercial use, c.1980s – Manufacturing, 1957 – c.1980s		
ARCHITECT:	Keith Neighbour of Lawson, Cheesman, Doley and Partners, 1956		
BUILDER:	Wilckens and Burnside Ltd., 1956		
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:	City of Charles Sturt		
LOCATION:	Street No.:	356	
	Street Name:	Torrens Road	
	Town/Suburb:	Kilkenny	
	Post Code:	5009	
LAND DESCRIPTION:	Title	CT 5491/302 F6312 A8; CT 5491/304	
	Reference:	F6312 A7; CT 5491/305 F6312 A11; CT 5491/306 F6312 A10; and CT 5232/375 F6312 A6	
	Hundred:	Yatala	

PHOTOS

NAME: Sisalkraft Factory Complex

PLACE NO.: 26557



Aerial view of the Sisalkraft Factory Complex, c.1969.

Source: ENV Maps

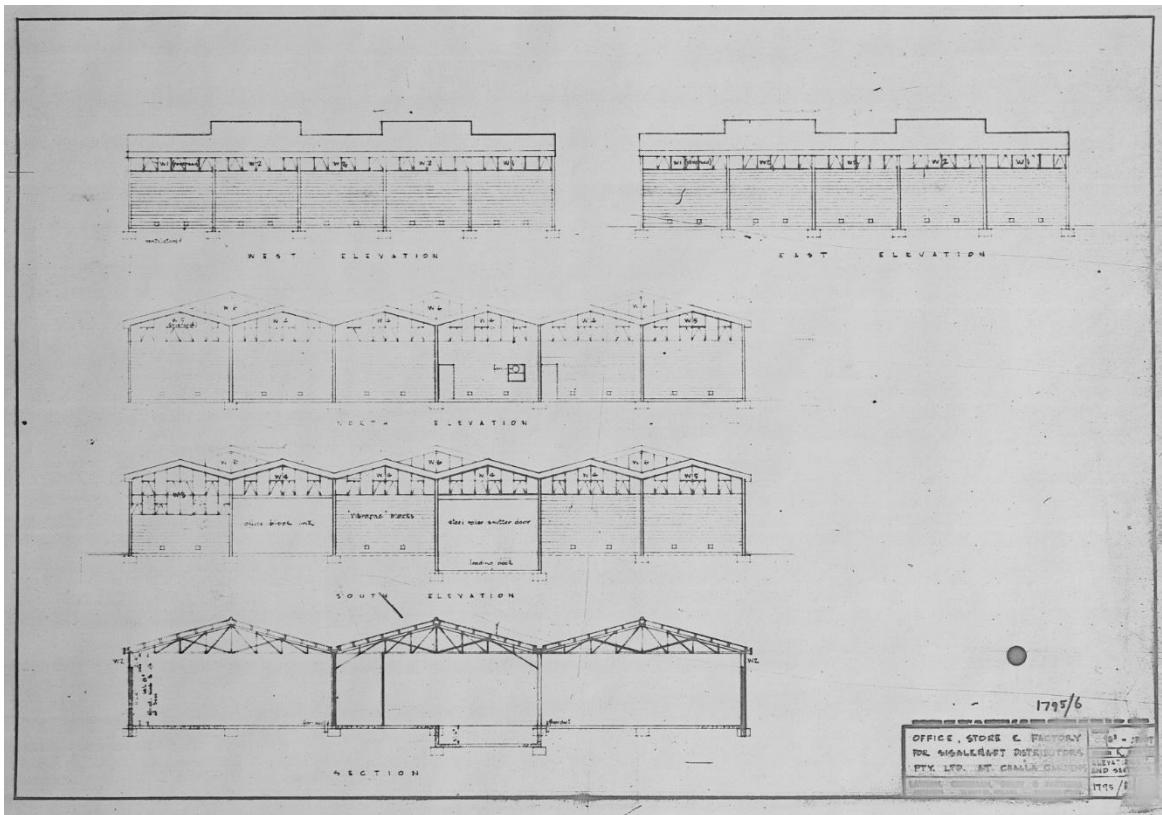


Aerial view of the Sisalkraft Factory Complex, c.1979.

Source: ENV Maps

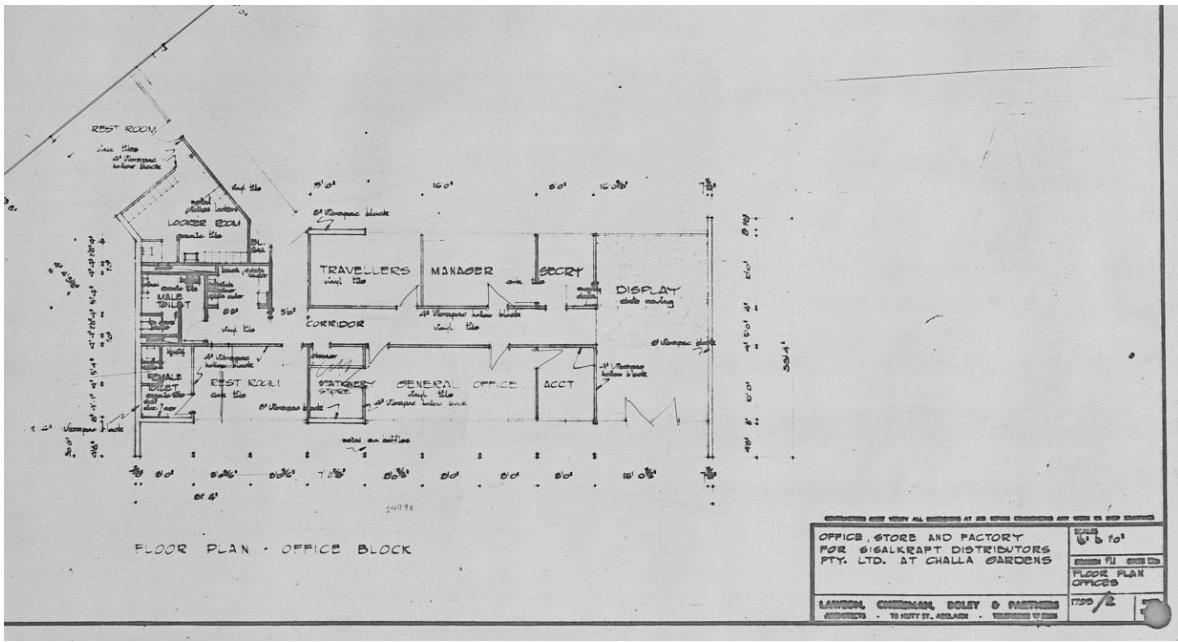
NAME: Sisalkraft Factory Complex

PLACE NO.: 26557



Sections and elevations for factory section, c.1957.

Source: Rob Tinga; Art Deco and Modernist Society (SA Chapter)

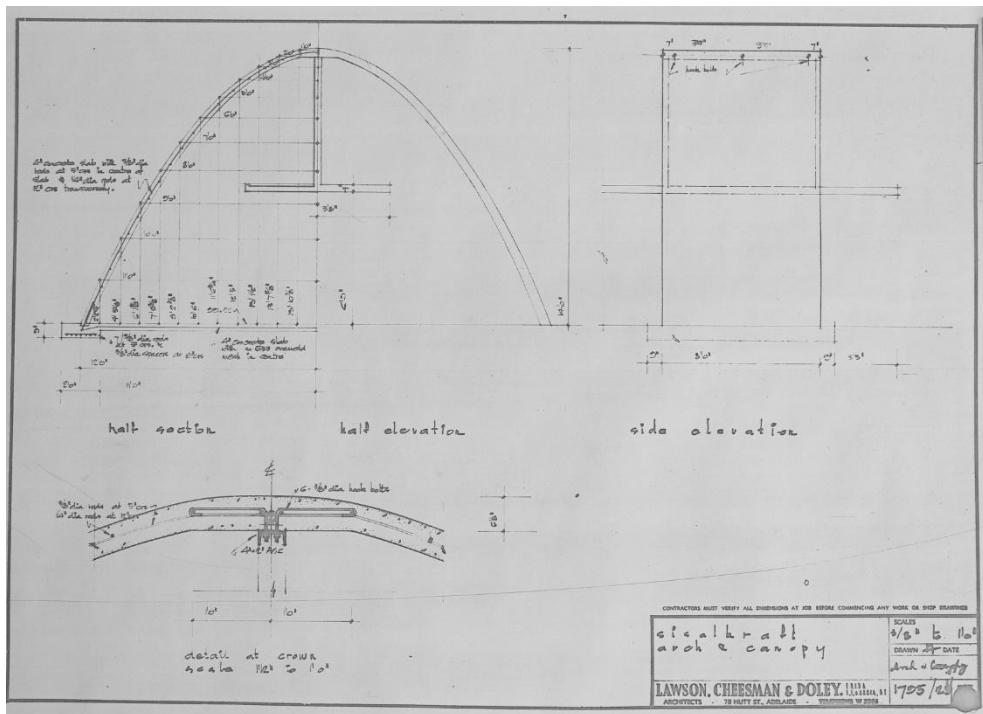


Plan of office and showroom layout, c.1957.

Source: Rob Tinga; Art Deco and Modernist Society (SA Chapter)

NAME: Sisalkraft Factory Complex

PLACE NO.: 26557



Elevations and sectional details for the parabolic arch, c.1957.

Source: Rob Tinga; Art Deco and Modernism Society of Australia (Adelaide Chapter)

***All subsequent photographs taken by DEW staff on 26 November 2024.**

Parabolic arch, canopy and slate path at front entrance.

NAME: Sisalkraft Factory Complex

PLACE NO.: 26557



Front canopy fronting Torrens Road.



Eave at southern elevation with steel posts and fins.



Portion of southern (front) elevation of office showing customer carpark to the left.

NAME: Sisalkraft Factory Complex

PLACE NO.: 26557



Southern side showing parabolic arch, eastern elevation of office and landscaping elements.



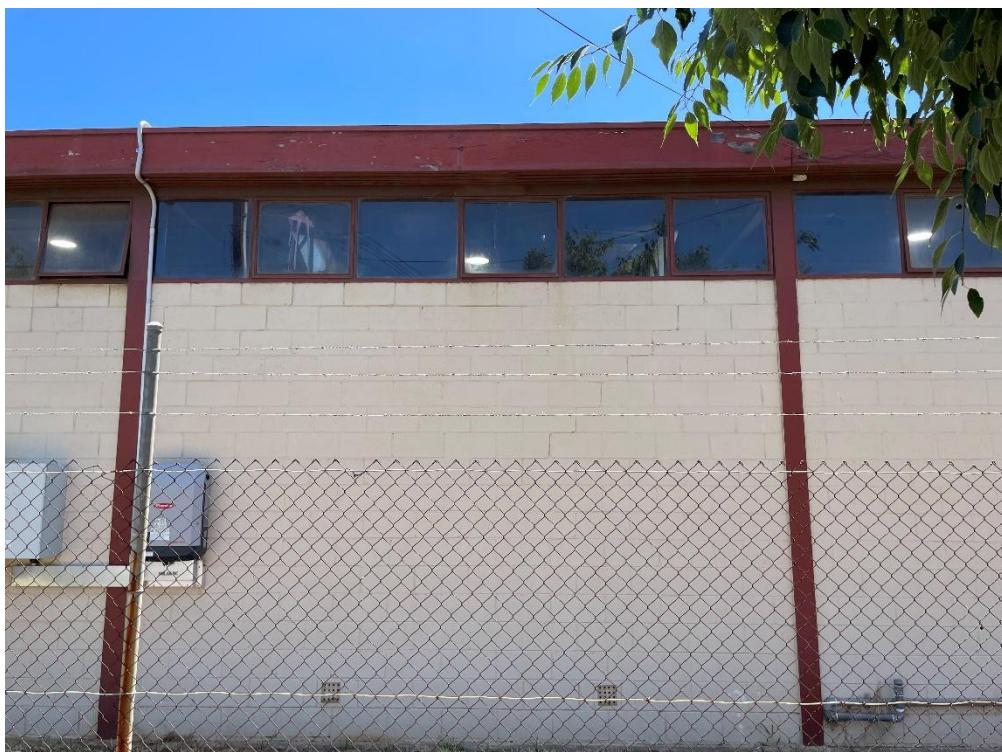
Centre of site showing rear of office and staff carpark (left), driveway and office annex (middle) and southern elevation of factory (right).

NAME: Sisalkraft Factory Complex

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Section of factory's southern elevation showing driveway to street.



Representative view of the factory's eastern elevation showing Besser block curtain wall and clerestory windows. Portions of the wall have been painted.

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Section of the factory's northern (rear) elevation showing gable truss roof pattern. Note that the Besser blocks have not been painted.



Roofline of the factory's northern (rear) elevation.

NAME: Sisalkraft Factory Complex

PLACE NO.: 26557



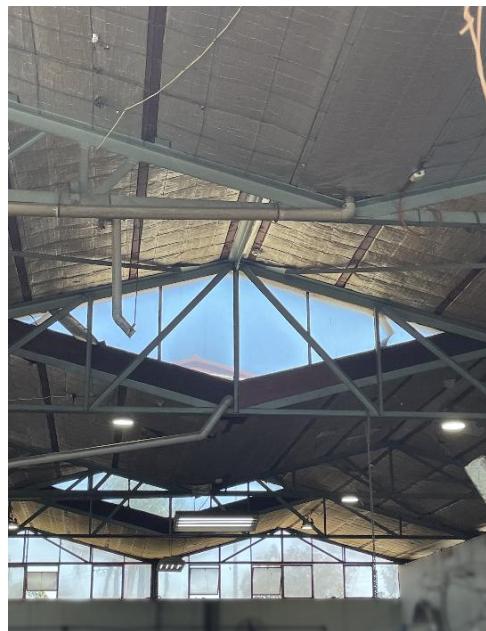
North-west corner of factory.



Indicative damage to facias (rot) and glass.



Indicative damage to facias on northern elevation.



Roof trusses in factory forming rhomboid skylights.

NAME: Sisalkraft Factory Complex

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Interior view of factory showing steel trusses, rhomboid skylights, clerestory windows and insulation (Sisalation).



Landscaping to east of site showing water feature in foreground.

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Landscaping to east of site showing slate paving, water feature, flagpole (right) and Besser brick fences.



Landscaping to east of site showing slate paving and Besser block fence.



Flagpole on circular tiled plinth.

SITE PLAN

NAME: Sisalkraft Factory Complex

PLACE NO.: 26557



Sisalkraft Factory Complex, 356 Torrens Road, Kilkenny, CT 5491/302 F6312 A8; CT 5491/304 F6312 A7; CT 5491/305 F6312 A11; CT 5491/306 F6312 A10; and CT 5232/375 F6312 A6, Hundred of Yatala.

N ↑

LEGEND

- Parcel boundaries (Indicates extent of Listing)
- Outline of Elements of Significance for State Heritage Place

¹ Richard Apperly, Robert Irving and Peter Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, reprint (North Ryde: Angus and Robertson, 2011), pp.214-217; Stuart Symons, *Modernist Adelaide: 100 Buildings, 1940s – 1970s* (Adelaide: House of Ralph, 2019), p.5.

² Apperly, Irving and Reynolds, *Identifying Australian Architecture*, p.214; Neil Clerehan, 'Robin Gerard Boyd (1919-1971)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University'. <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/boyd-robin-gerard-9560> Accessed 13 December 2024.

³ Apperly, Irving and Reynolds, *Identifying Australian Architecture*, pp.214-217.

⁴ Apperly, Irving and Reynolds, *Identifying Australian Architecture*, pp.214-217.

⁵ Apperly, Irving and Reynolds, *Identifying Australian Architecture*, p.277.

⁶ Apperly, Irving and Reynolds, *Identifying Australian Architecture*, p.215.

⁷ 'House' in *Heritage of the City of Adelaide: An Illustrated Guide*, Susan Marsden, Paul Stark and Patricia Sumerling (eds.) (Adelaide: Corporation of the City of Adelaide, 1996): p367.

⁸ Bruce Harry and Associates quoted in 'Office – MLC Building', SA Heritage Places Database Search, Heritage South Australia, Department for Environment and Water.

https://maps.sa.gov.au/heritagesearch/HeritageItem?p_heritageno=1303 Accessed 13 December 2024.

⁹ 'Catholic Church of the Holy Name', SA Heritage Places Database Search, Heritage South Australia, Department for Environment and Water.

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¹³ Robert Freestone, *Urban Nation: Australia's Planning Heritage* (Collingwood: CSIRO Press, 2010): pp.60-64 and pp.178-184; Robert Freestone, 'From City Improvement to the City Beautiful' in *The Australian Metropolis: A Planning History*, Stephen Hamnett and Robert Freestone (eds.) (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2000), pp.31-32.

¹⁴ Helena Chance, *The Factory in a Garden: A History of Corporate Landscapes from the Industrial to the Digital Age* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2017), p.2.

¹⁵ Darley, *Factory*, pp.74-103; Darley, *Factory*, pp.74-79.

¹⁶ Darley, *Factory*, p.121.

¹⁷ Darley, *Factory*, p.8.

¹⁸ Chance, *Factory in a Garden*, p.2.

¹⁹ See Susan Marsden, *Twentieth Century Heritage Survey, State 1: Post Second World War (1946-1959), Overview History* (Adelaide: Department for Environment and Heritage, 2004), pp.27-28 and D. L. J. Aitchison, *Statistical Register of South Australia, 1963-64: Part V(b), Secondary Production* (Adelaide: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistic, 1966), p.5.

²⁰ Paul Sendziuk and Robert Foster, *A History of South Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp.130-145.

²¹ For more on interwar and postwar modernist factory design in South Australia, see Caroline Cosgrove, *The Architectural Practice as a Professional Service Firm: Hassell* (PhD Thesis, Division of Education, University of South Australia, 2014), pp.115-156, esp. 122-133 and pp.144-147.

²² Caroline Cosgrove, 'Industrial Modernist: Sisalkraft Factory, Adelaide', *Spirit of Progress*, vol. 24 no. 1 (2023): p.26; James Wormald, 'The Legacy of the Sawtooth Roof, an Icon of Industrial Architecture', ArchDaily, 17 January 2024.

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²⁹ Alfred H. Barr Jr, 'Preface' in Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1995), p.29; Khan, *International Style*, esp. pp.7-9; Symons, *Modernist Adelaide*, p.5; Paul Greenhalgh, 'Introduction' in *Modernism in Design*, Paul Greenhalgh (ed.) (London: Reaktion Books, 1990), pp.8-10; and Philip Goad, 'Modernism' in *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Philip Goad and Julie Willis (eds.) (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2012): pp.464-467

³⁰ Khan, *International Style*, p.7; Greenhalgh, 'Introduction', pp.8-10; and Goad, 'Modernism', p.464.

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³² Khan, *International Style*, pp.8-9.

³³ Khan, *International Style*, p.7 and pp.91-113.

³⁴ Khan, *International Style*, pp.117-147; Apperly, Irving and Reynolds, *Identifying Australian Architecture*, p.214.

³⁵ Michael Page, *Sculptors in Space: South Australian Architects 1836-1986* (Adelaide: Royal Institute of Architects, 1986), pp.177-194, esp.188; Burns, *Liturgy, Community, Modernity*, p.22; Apperly, Irving and Reynolds, *Identifying Australian Architecture*, pp.184-187; Carol Cosgrove, *Moving to the Modern: Art Deco in South Australian Architecture* (Adelaide: Architecture Museum, University of South Australia, 2009), p.12.

³⁶ Page, *Sculptors in Space*, p.188; Louise Bird, *Russell S. Ellis: Pioneer Modernist Architect* (Adelaide: Architecture Museum, University of South Australia, 2007), p.14.

³⁷ Jack Cheesman quoted in Symons, *Modernist Adelaide*, p.5. Also see Page, *Sculptors in Space*, pp.61-63.

³⁸ Bird, *Russell S. Ellis*, pp.16-17.

³⁹ Susan Marsden, Carol Cosgrove and Robyn Taylor, *Twentieth Century Heritage Survey Stage 1: Post Second World War, 1946-1959* (Adelaide: Department for Environment and Heritage, 2004): p.37. For Australia more broadly, see Hannah Lewi and Philip Goad, *Australia Modern: Architecture, Landscape and Design* (Port Melbourne: Thames and Hudson, 2019), pp.22-28.

⁴⁰ Marsden, Cosgrove and Taylor, *Twentieth Century Heritage Survey*, p.37

⁴¹ Symons, *Modernist Adelaide*, p.7.

⁴² Copper mining during the nineteenth century constituted the height of resource extraction in South Australia prior to the 1930s.

⁴³ David C. Rich, 'Tom's Vision? Playford and Industrialisation' in *Playford's South Australia: Essays on the History of South Australia 1933-1968*, eds. O'Neil, Bernard, Raftery, Judith, and Round, Kerrie (Adelaide: Association of Professional Historians, 1996): pp. 93-94; Mark Dean and Lance Worrell, 'Embedding Industrialisation and Deindustrialisation in South Australia', *Journal of Australian Political Economy*, no.93 (2024): pp.69-70; and 'Industrialisation', SA History Hub, History Trust of South Australia.

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- ⁴⁶ Peter Donovan, *An Industrial History of South Australia* (Adelaide: University of Adelaide, 1979), pp.80-81.
- ⁴⁷ Rich, 'Tom's Vision?', pp.93-94 and p.105; 'Industrialisation', SA History Hub.
- ⁴⁸ Rich, 'Tom's Vision?', p.102.
- ⁴⁹ Stuart Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, 4th edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp.204-247
- ⁵⁰ Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, p.204.
- ⁵¹ Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, p.204.
- ⁵² See Rich, 'Tom's Vision?', pp.91-116; Sendziuk and Foster, *A History of South Australia*, pp.130-145; and 'Industrialisation', SA History Hub.
- ⁵³ Dean and Worrall, 'Embedding Industrialisation', p.72.
- ⁵⁴ Donovan, *Industrial History of South Australia*, p.81.
- ⁵⁵ Tom McKnight, 'Industrial Location in South Australia', *Australian Geographical Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1 (1967): p.50; Aitchison, *Statistical Register of South Australia*, p.5 and p.22; and Dean and Worrall, 'Embedding Industrialisation', p.72; and Rich, 'Tom's Vision?', esp. p.91, pp.94-95.
- ⁵⁶ Rich, 'Tom's Vision?', p.91.
- ⁵⁷ Department of Trade, *United States Investment in Australian Manufacturing Industry* (Melbourne: Commonwealth of Australia, 1957), Introduction [page no. N.A.].
- ⁵⁸ Donald Brash, *American Investment in Australian Industry* (Canberra: ANU Press, 1966), p.9.
- ⁵⁹ The Holden plant began operating in 1960 and the Chrysler plant in 1964. Both companies had already been operating in South Australia for several decades.
- ⁶⁰ The patent was filed by the American Reenforced Paper Company on 3 July 1925 and accepted on 3 November 1925. United States Patent Office, *Official Gazette of the United States Patent Office* (D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1925), p.25.
- ⁶¹ 'Sisalkraft Celebrates 25th Anniversary', *California Lumber Merchant* (1952), p.32.
- ⁶² See 'Try One Roll of Sisalkraft: "More than a Building Paper" (advertisement)', *American Builder* (May 1928), p.178; 'Sisalkraft: A Reinforced Waterproof Building Paper that is Indestructible (advertisement)', *Southern Architect and Building News* (March 1927), p.31; and 'Sisalkraft, the 20th Century Building Paper: Has a Great Many Uses (advertisement)', *American Builder* (May 1926), p.87.
- ⁶³ 'Sisalkraft Celebrates', p.32.
- ⁶⁴ Sisalkraft Celebrates', p.32.
- ⁶⁵ 'Companies Registered', *Sun* (Sydney), 19 July 1932, p.6 and 'Sisalkraft Products: Influential Board of Directors Establish Factory in Sydney', *Farmer and Settler* (Sydney), 15 December 1932, p.2.
- ⁶⁶ 'Sisalkraft Celebrates', p.32.
- ⁶⁷ 'American Sisalkraft Corporation, Factory, Tracy, CA', Pacific Coast Architecture Database, University of Washington.
- <https://pcad.lib.washington.edu/building/25042/>
- ⁶⁸ Cosgrove, 'Industrial Modernist', p.26.
- ⁶⁹ See Brash, *American Investment*, p.322 and 'How to Make Your House a Home (advertisement)', *Australian Home Beautiful* (1957), p.2.
- ⁷⁰ Brash, *American Investment*, p.322.
- ⁷¹ This was the case with the Sydney-based Sisalkraft established in 1932 and was presumably how the interstate subsidiaries also operated. 'Companies Registered', 19 July 1932, p.6.
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- ⁷⁷ 'St. Regis Pacific Pty Ltd', Date Deregistered 25 June 1999.
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⁸⁰ Geoffrey H. Manning, *A Compendium of the Place Names of South Australia: From Aaron Creek to Zion Hill* (Adelaide: self-published, 2012), Cable Bay – Cygnet, p.16 of pdf.

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⁸¹ For instance, John Shearers, ACI and Forwood Down all operated in this area. See Norm Darwin, *Industry at Kilkenny: Research Using the S.A. Land Title Data Base as a Resource* (Adelaide: self-published), date N.A.

Online:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55891778e4b034e58f5e51e7/t/5f0cf493bf5bbd4148ae53af/1594684570036/Industry+at+kilkenny.pdf> Accessed 13 December 2024.

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⁸⁴ Cosgrove, 'Industrial Modernist', p.26.

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⁸⁶ 'Concrete in Modern Architecture (advertisement)', in *South Australian Institute of Architects, Architecture in South Australia* (Adelaide: self-published, 1960), p.54.

⁸⁷ Cosgrove, 'Industrial Modernist', p.26.

⁸⁸ For the furniture, see Lawson, Cheesman, Doley and Partners, 'New Office Furniture', 1956, blueprints, BRG 279/3/7/1908/3A and BRG 279/3/7/1908/6, State Library of South Australia.

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⁹⁰ Cosgrove, 'Industrial Modernist', p.26.

⁹¹ See 'How to Make Your House a Home (advertisement)', p.2.

⁹² 'Office, Factory and Store for Sisalkraft.', (June 1957): p.32; 'Sisalkraft Distributors, Cheltenham', c.1960, photograph, BRG/28/CHEESMANANDCO/31/1. State Library of South Australia.

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⁹⁴ 'Building of the Year, 1956'. *Architecture and Arts*, no. 45 (1957): pp.33-35.

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¹⁰⁰ Certificate of Title Vol. 4160, Folio 742, transfer no. 5083848 and lease no. 5129973.

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¹⁰⁵ Cosgrove, 'Industrial Modernist', p.27.

¹⁰⁶ Cosgrove, 'Industrial Modernist', p.27.

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