

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

---

**name:** Horsham Silo and Noske Mill complex  
**Address:** 35-39 Wawunna Road HORSHAM  
**Place Type:** Silo,Rail Transport Precinct  
**Citation Date:** 2022



*Horsham Silo complex, 35-39 Wawunna Road Horsham*

---

**Recommended Heritage Protection**      **VHR -**

**HI -**

**PS**  
Yes

## Integrity

Original 1911 mill building and chimney lost in a fire 1980s. Remaining 1934 additions still provide an illustration of the scale of the former mill. Silos extant – moderate integrity. Shedding altered. In 2022 a mural was painted on the east side of the 1919 concrete silo.

## History and Historical Context

The first flour mill established in Horsham was constructed by John Gillies in 1873 on allotments 4, 5, 6 and 7 of Section 8 in the Township of Horsham. Gillies leased the mill to James Fry, proprietor of Fry and Company, who had founded successful mills in central Victoria in the post-Gold Rush period.

Fry and Company expanded into the Wimmera following the extension of the Ballarat to Horsham railway line in 1879 and due to escalating wheat production as a result of closer settlement. Fry operated a number of flour

## HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

---

mills in the Horsham district, including mills at Natimuk, Dimboola, Kaniva and Nhill, and grain stores at Pimpinio and Wail.

Gillies resumed operation of the Horsham mill in the late 1880s, renaming it 'Horsham Pioneer Flour Mill'. Following his death the mill was purchased by Dimboola farmer and the son of Prussian migrants, Traugott Johann Noske, in 1900 for £1,500. By 1901 a notice appeared in the *Horsham Times* calling for tenders for the removal and relocation of the mill, plant and grain stores from central Horsham to a site at the Horsham railway siding.[1] The *Horsham Times* records the opening of the new mill in December 1901:

*'Mr Noske was a man of much enterprise, and promised to be of much benefit to the town and district. The mill would be of advantage to both the town and country. The farmers would by reason of the mill being in operation get the best ruling price for their wheat, whilst the bakers would get their flour and the townspeople their bread at the lowest possible prices.'*[2]

At first the Noske mill processed five bags of wheat per hour. The relocation of the mill to the railway precinct was the first in a series of improvements carried out by Noske to modernize the plant and increase the volume and quality of product (and the by-products, bran and pollard).[3] These improvements included the demolition of the former galvanized iron mill and the erection of a multi-storey brick mill built by local contractor W. F. Allan in 1907. A new processing plant fitted out with Henry Simon Ltd machinery resulted in a substantial increase in output and by 1911 forty bags per hour were being processed.[4]

In addition to the Horsham mill, Noske purchased a mill in Warracknabeal in 1903 in partnership with W. A. Gunn (Noske's head miller at Horsham) and W. H. Nichterlein (Noske's head clerk). Noske also purchased the Arapiles mill at Natimuk and two flour mills at Nhill in 1905.

Trading as Noske Brothers from 1909, the firm was registered as a proprietary company in 1919. By the 1920s Noske Brothers Ltd operated mills in two states and exported flour to Southeast Asia, South Africa and Europe.

Traugott Noske was an early adopter of emerging manufacturing and construction technologies, and from 1911 was the chairman of Australian Portland Cement Co. Pty Ltd. In 1919 Noske Brothers Ltd constructed a reinforced concrete silo at the Horsham mill which stood 30 metres tall with a girth of 15 metres. For a time this was the largest wheat bin in the Southern Hemisphere (but was soon eclipsed by Noske's Nhill silo built in 1920). The wheat bin held 120,000 bushels and with its associated machinery enabled the milling of 1,000 bags of wheat per hour.

The silo dramatically transformed the horizon line of the township and was the first bulk handling wheat storage facility erected in Horsham. Thus, it became an enduring marker of the progression from manual handling to bulk handling of grain, which was to become a wide-spread mode of grain storage and distribution following the creation of the Grain Elevators Board of Victoria in 1934. Two additional concrete silos were constructed in 1928-29 and four more in 1938-39.[5]

In 1934 the brick Horsham mill building was substantially remodeled and a large brick extension erected at the rear of the 1911 mill, doubling its original footprint. The extension was designed to house a new generation of milling equipment purchased from Henry Simon Ltd, in particular a Simon 'Alphega' plantsifter system.[6]

A fire destroyed the wheat cleaning plant and dust-collecting room in February 1935, resulting in £14,000 of damage. The 1934 section of the mill was saved, due to the installation of fire proof doors and a floor-to-ceiling brick partition dividing it from the original structure. The mill was shut down for eight months during reconstruction and the 40-strong workforce were re-deployed to assist in demolition and reconstruction works.[7]

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

---

Noske Brothers invested heavily in upgrades to storage, and processing and distribution systems, and expected suppliers to embrace the latest agricultural innovations. For example, the company offered nine-pence per bushel above market price to farmers who grew the 'Minister' strain of wheat. This strain produced a superior product and was a key ingredient of Noske Brothers renowned Horsham 'Best' and Nhill 'Silver Crown' flours.[8]

Following World War Two there was an initial increase in flour production and export. By the 1950s however, this demand decreased as European mills again began to meet their own domestic needs. By the 1970s the exportation of flour had reduced to a trickle. As a result, the Horsham mill scaled back its flour milling operations in favour of stockfeed production for the domestic market, trading as Milling Industries (a subsidiary of Noskes Industries).

The Henry Simon Ltd flour milling equipment was sold for scrap in 1970 and the mill was acquired by the Mill Owners Federation of Victoria's Rehabilitation Committee in 1972. In the same year the Grain Elevators Board purchased five steel silos previously used by Milling Industries to store grain.

In 1988 a fire caused substantial damage to the mill, resulting in the subsequent loss of the 1911 section and the brick chimney stack.

[1] *Horsham Times*, Tuesday 21 June 1898, p 2.; Friday 5 July 1901, p. 3

[2] *Horsham Times*, Friday 20 December 1901, pg. 2

[3] Jones, W. L. & Jones, P, *The flour mills of Victoria 1840-1990 : an historical record*, 1990. P. 240 – 244.

[4] *Horsham Times*, Friday 16 August 1907 p 2

[5] Brooke B., & Finch A, 1982, p. 26.

[6] *Horsham Times*, Friday 31 January 1936, p. 8.

[7] *Horsham Times*, Friday 22 February 1935, p. 1; Friday 25 October 1935, p. 4

[8] Jones, W. L. & Jones, P, 1990, p. 240

## Description

### Physical Description

Today, the former mill comprises a complex of single-storey corrugated, coloured steel clad buildings addressing Wawaunna Road (c.1901-1920s), a concrete silo (1919), the reinforced concrete framed/ brick rear portion of the former brick mill (c.1934-5) and four cement bins with associated elevator towers (c.1938-9), and five steel silos (pre 1972).

### Physical Condition

Shedding is in good condition but all re-clad and new openings formed recently – used by separate tenants. Silos are in good condition (external inspection only). Remnant 1934 additions to mill in fair to poor condition –

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

---

roof needs attention and many openings remain unsealed.

## Australian Heritage Commission Criteria

Relevant HERCON Criteria

*Criterion A:* Importance to the course, or pattern, of our cultural or natural history. (physical evidence of key regional industry and the first to erect a bulk handling concrete silo in 1919, an enduring marker of the progression from manual handling to bulk handling of grain in the 1930s period.)

*Criterion B:* Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history. (early bulk grain silo – first in Horsham in 1919 and an early example of a concrete silo)

*Criterion F:* Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period. (early bulk handling silo – illustrates reinforced concrete technology of the time to support grain storage, and is the earliest identified concrete silo in Horsham Rural City.)

*Criterion H:* Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history. (Association with Noske family – significant flour manufacturers in Horsham and the surrounding districts (and Murray Bridge in SA))

## Comparative Analysis

Surviving comparable examples are in other municipalities:

*Noske flour mill and silos, Nhill, Hermes no. 11477:* Silo and bins as per Horsham (same dates and styles); 1934 building in Horsham matches that of Nhill. Shedding appears more intact. Original mill building no longer extant. Comparable.

*Concrete silo, Dimboola:* Silos only – mix of reinforced concrete and steel

*Former Wimmera Flour Mill and Silo complex, Rupanyup, Hermes No. 3115, VHR H1011:* The Rupanyup flour mill, a four-storey timber and iron structure on a brick base, was built 1906 for the flour miller George Frayne. In 1907 John Monash was commissioned to design three reinforced concrete silos for the mill; completed in 1908. They were the first application of concrete construction to the bulk storage of grain in Victoria.

*Former W.C. Thomas & Sons Flour Mill, Warracknabeal, Hermes No. 162523:* Developed by W.C. Thomas from c.1890 to c.1920s, this site includes a single reinforced concrete silo. The Hermes record does not provide a precise built-date for the silo, but it is assumed to be by c1920s.

Demolished comparable examples:

*Noske Flour mill and silo, Natimuk:* Burnt down 1920 – now site of sale yards

*Flour mill and silo, Kaniva (Western Wimmera Shire):* Erected 1881 – no longer there.

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

---

In addition, are the silos that make up the Horsham Rural City Silo Serial Listing (recommended for the Heritage Overlay by this Heritage study). They were all built in 1938-39 by the Grain Elevators Board. This makes the concrete silo at the Noske Flour Mill the oldest known example of its type in Horsham Rural City.

## Statement of Significance

### What is significant?

The elements of heritage value of the remaining significant parts of the former Noske Mill and silos, 35-39 Wawunna Road, Horsham, established in 1901, include:

. 1919 concrete silo, 4 x 1938-9 concrete bins and associated elevator towers, 1934 multi-storey reinforced concrete framed brick tower.

Excluded: All ground level shedding, five steel silos (1972) and later brickwork to tower facades (post fire).–

### How is it significant?

The remaining significant parts of the former Noske Mill and silos, Horsham are of local historic, associative and technical significance to Horsham Rural City.

### Why is it significant?

The remaining significant parts of the former Noske Mill and silos, Horsham are:

. of local historic and associative significance, as evidence of the purpose and scale of Noske's flour milling operations in Horsham in the 20th Century. Noske was a key business for Horsham and western Victoria, purchasing grain from surrounding farmers, employing locals in the manufacture of flour and erecting substantial buildings and silos for grain storage and large-scale flour production, which in turn supported an increase in local grain production and subsequent prosperity in the district. In addition, the 1919 concrete silo and 1937-8 concrete bins and associated elevator towers illustrate the early progression from manual handling to bulk handling of grain, which was to become a wide-spread mode of grain storage and distribution following the creation of the Grain Elevators Board of Victoria in 1934. (Criteria A & H)

. Of local technical significance, The 1919 silo was the first bulk-handling grain silo to be erected in Horsham. It is also a relatively early example of a reinforced concrete silo, and the earliest known example in the municipality with others built 20 or more years later. (Criteria B & F)

In May 2022 artist Sam Bates (aka Smug) painted an image on the east side of the 1919 concrete silo of Yanggendinyanyuk. This Wotjobaluk warrior is remembered for tracking down the Duff children who were lost in the bush near Mt Arapiles in 1864. For this reason, the silo may become a place of social significance for the local Indigenous community, and they should be consulted should there be plans to alter the silo painting in the future.

## Recommendations 2022

External Paint Controls	Yes
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

---

<b>Fences &amp; Outbuildings</b>	No
<b>Prohibited uses may be permitted</b>	No
<b>Incorporated Plan</b>	-
<b>Aboriginal Heritage Place</b>	No

## References

**Literature title:** A story of Horsham : a municipal century

**Literature type:** General Reference

**Literature author:** Brooke, Brian. & Finch, Alan

**Literature publisher:** City of Horsham

**Literature year:** 1982

**Literature title:** Horsham Times Newspaper

**Literature type:** General Reference

**Literature author:**

**Literature publisher:**

**Literature year:**

**Literature title:** The Flour Mills of Victoria 1840-1990: an Historical Record

**Literature type:** General Reference

**Literature author:** Jones, W. Lewis & Jones, Peggy & Flour Millers Council of Victoria

**Literature publisher:** Flour Millers Council of Victoria

**Literature year:** 1990

This information is provided for guidance only and does not supersede official documents, particularly the planning scheme. Planning controls should be verified by checking the relevant municipal planning scheme.