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Name: Former Richardson's Motor & Cycle Garage
Status: Permanently Registered
Tier: State

THR ID Number: 10930
Municipality: Central Coast Council
Date Listed: 18/04/2007

Location Addresses

66 MAIN RD, PENGUIN 7316 TAS

Title References

29614/1

Property Id

6759472



Photo: D Scott, Feb
07
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Setting: 66 Main Road, Penguin is located in the commercial district of Penguin, with a northern outlook across the Esplanade reserve to the main Penguin beachfront and Bass Strait. This former garage, now a supermarket, is a moderately important commercial element in the streetscape, forming part of a group of three single-storey commercial buildings from the early 20th century (including 68 and 70 Main Road). Access driveways are located on the northern and southern side of the building, and a late-20th century brick veneer house is located at the rear of the block adjacent to the railway line which runs along the rear boundary.

Description: 66 Main Road Penguin is an early-20th century motor garage and workshop of concrete block construction that was adapted as a supermarket in c1980. The original utilitarian form, steep pitched corrugated iron roof and the stepped parapet of flat steel sheeting remain intact, these forms providing minor clues to the building's Federation-period origin. The large rectangular awning with attached flagpole dates from the 1950s. The remains of a BP advertising sign support are visible on the roof. On the main facade, the original garage doors, to allow vehicle access into the workshop, have been replaced with sliding glass doors, the original multi-paned office/workshop window has been replaced with a double-paned aluminium-framed window, and the original customer/staff doorway has been converted into a window subsequently bricked over. The original timber floor to the garage/workshop has been covered in a concrete screed. This creates a potential for evidence of machinery bases and artefacts to have been preserved in-situ within or beneath the original floor.

Petrol bowsers that were once located on the footpath at the front of the building have been removed, but the concrete pads remain. In the early years of the building, there was a gas lamp, designed and installed by Richardson, on the footpath at the front of the building, and later an electricity pole, but both have since been removed. Richardson's early 20th century residence at the rear of the business is believed to have been a separate building. It was demolished and replaced with a new residence in the c1990s.

History: The building now known as Lanes Supermarket (2007) was built in c1910 by Goshen [sic] Swain Richardson as the first Motor Garage in Penguin, known as the Penguin Motor Garage Beach Cycle and Motor Works. The blocks were made from local beach pebbles and cement with the assistance of Mr Revell, a local builder. Richardson, who went by the name Mick, was a well known business and community man in Penguin as garage owner; cycle manufacturer and cycle shop owner (formerly at 117 Main Rd, demolished); cordial drink factory owner (formerly at 106 Main Rd, demolished); photographic business operator; Superintendent of the Fire Brigade and Supervisor of the Penguin Council Water Works for 10 years (Penguin Council Records 28th January 1925). He was an avid inventor and prospector. He was also appointed as a representative of the employers on The Motor Garage Wages Board in 1921 (Industrial Dept Corres: April 1921). The building known as No 66 Main Rd Penguin is the only extant physical evidence of Richardsons presence in Penguin.

The son of Peter and Sarah Richardson (Yorkshire immigrants who arrived in Tasmania in 1855) Mick was born in Launceston 29 July 1881 and registered at Morven, under the name Goachem Swain Richardson (RGD 1881 33/1352). He married Gertrude Florence Farmer at Evandale in 1903 (Federation Index 1-07-1903) and they had four children.

According to family sources Richardson and a brother spent time in South Africa building windmills and undertaking engineering works (B Moncreif PC & Notes: April 2007). He is believed to have moved to Penguin in c1902, and first appears in the Post Office Directory records of 1906 listed as a Bicycle Maker, Importer and Agent. By 1914 was advertising under Penguin Motor Garage beach cycles and motor works. By 1923 he was advertising his inventions and also operating a car hire service (Tas PO Directories).

The bicycle manufacturing and repair workshop at 117 Main Rd Penguin, (since demolished) was the site where he designed and built the first Australian cycle pedal flying machine in 1908. It was the first successful flight in Australia. The pilot was a local doctor called Henty De Witt who shared an interest in scientific inventions with Richardson. The flight took place on a hill at the eastern end of Penguin and finished on Watcombe Beach. The pilot sat on a bicycle, which was suspended beneath wings by several struts. The pilot would provide energy to turn the propellers as well as steer and ride. The wing span was 9.14m (Skycycle Website TAFE). A photograph of his flying machine was proudly displayed for many years in the Penguin Council Chambers (Advocate undated clipping, PHG).

Richardson later expanded to building motorcycles and motorcars and was renown as an inventor. Between 1913 and 1916 he built approximately five Beach Motorcycles (Saward: 1996: p.9). Many of his inventions were used in the garage at 66 Main Road, including machines producing wire goods such as staples which were very popular with several Launceston Firms.

One invention known as the Aqua Auxiliary was a tank fitted into a car and dripped small amount of water into the fuel system causing smoother running.(V Kowarzik, PHG Notes). In c1925 he also developed a pattern of a revolutionary engine eliminating cylinders and pistons (later developed by a German called Wankel). He invented the Richardson Can Emptyer and Retainer for pouring petrol into a car without spilling it; Nupeg clothes pegs using a mass production machine which was patented; and the Richardson Wire Staples machine to mass produce staples to be used in wooden fencing. These inventions revolutionised the wire working trade in Australia, eventually leading to overseas export markets being established (Advocate 18 Dec 1924 PHG).

In 1913 Richardson was elected superintendent of the Penguin Fire Brigade and served until he resigned in 1925 (McNeice, pp.170-172.). He was also involved in the design of the first Penguin sewerage Plan based on gravity. He was awarded a Gold Medal by the local Masonic Lodge. He was also instrumental in the development of the Lobster Creek Hatchery. He was a miner of osmiridium near Savage River and according to family was a contemporary of Philosopher Smith. He collected and developed many iron oxides used to paint his house. He was the discoverer of red granite and talc in the Riana area. (V Kowarzik, PHG Notes). The site at 66 Main Rd Penguin was also where Richardson initiated bag sewing and camouflage net making evenings where sand bags and nets were then sent abroad for the war effort . According to his grand-daughter these were well attended by the community. He also organised many fund raising events for the war effort.

In the mid 20s he moved the family to Sydney where he set up and rebuilt his machinery at the Maspro factory, Burwood noted for its production of PMG Street Fittings etc. In 1925 he became Director of the Nupeg (Australia). Correspondence suggests he went onto design wall ties and eventually he worked for the PMG making telephones and associated equipment. (Advocate Clipping undated PHG). GS Richardson died in Sydney on the 24th April, 1948.

The Garage continued to be operated by various persons until the 1980s including Becker, PC Whittle, Bill Whittle and Max Dazeley. Later Ken Cordell converted the building into a supermarket.

Statement of Significance:
(non-statutory summary)

No Statement is provided for places listed prior to 2007

Significance:

The Heritage Council may enter a place in the Heritage Register if it meets one or more of the following criteria from the Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995:

a) The place is important to the course or pattern of Tasmania's history.

No Data Recorded

b) The place possesses uncommon or rare aspects of Tasmania's history.

c) The place has the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Tasmania's history.

No Data Recorded

- d) **The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of place in Tasmania's history.**
- e) **The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement.**
- f) **The place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social or spiritual reasons.**
- g) **The place has a special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Tasmania's history.**

66 Main Road, Penguin is of historic cultural heritage significance for its association with Goachem Swain Richardson (b 29.7.1881 - d 24.4.1948). Richardson is of national prominence in the history of flight in Australia. His invention of the pedal cycle plane in 1908 is the first recorded successful flight in Australia. On a State level, Richardson was also an early pioneer in industrial design and manufacturing. He was responsible for a broad range of inventions from bicycles to machines that manufacture wire clothes pegs and fencing staples, from an early water-injection system for car engines to the design of the Penguin gravity sewerage mains. Locally, Richardson was an important member of the Penguin community, who initiated home front war efforts as well as operating a number of businesses including a cordial factory and photographic studio, and held the positions of Supervisor of the Council Water Works and Superintendent of the Fire Service. He was also a West Coast prospector.

- h) **The place is important in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.**

PLEASE NOTE This data sheet is intended to provide sufficient information and justification for listing the place on the Heritage Register. Under the legislation, only one of the criteria needs to be met. The data sheet is not intended to be a comprehensive inventory of the heritage values of the place, there may be other heritage values of interest to the Heritage Council not currently acknowledged.