

APPENDIX 11. "Register of the National Estate" entry

ASC Sugar Mill (former), Church St, Canterbury, NSW, Australia

www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=place_detail;place_id=3328

List	Register of the National Estate (Non-statutory archive)
Class	Historic
Legal Status	Registered (18/04/1989)
Place ID	3328
Place File No	1/16/011/0001
Statement of Significance	Historically significant as the foundation of one of Australia's major manufacturing companies, Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR); as one of the earliest surviving elements of the Australian sugar industry; and as possibly the only substantial industrial building in greater Sydney dating from before the gold rushes.

Official Values Not Available



Date Taken:	May-96
Photographer:	Chapman, Daryl
Copyright Owner:	Copyright Department of the Environment
Copyright Comments:	Unlimited reproduction usage for unlimited period of time
RNE:	Place_ID 3328

Description

A three storey industrial mill in the Georgian style with two structures to the eastern side of two storeys. Roofed with a large single hipped corrugated iron roof having a bell cast and the end facades have circular vents or spaces for clocks. The letters ASC are on the facade. The site was chosen because of the availability of fresh water. Built in 1841 to house the operations of the Australian Sugar Company which became the Colonial Sugar Refineries (CSR) at a later date. Used as a sugar refinery 1841-55, vacant 1855-84, used for variety of industrial purposes 1885-to date.

Industrial five-storey mill in Georgian style architecture with a three-storey annex to the eastern side. Roofed with a large single hipped corrugated iron roof. There is a small pediment marked 'A.S.C. 1841' marking the original ownership of the building (Jack & Little 1979). Since being adaptively restored within a residential complex of 39 units in 2003, the Old Sugarmill is neighboured by another apartment block and a row of townhouses.

Modifications and Dates

1803 - Purchase of Canterbury Estate by Robert Campbell 1839 - Formation of Australian Sugar Company (ASC) in London 1840 - Arrival of ASC directors, operatives and others in Sydney 1841 - Mill building substantially complete 1842 - Production of sugar at the Mill commences 1854 - Dissolution of the Australian Sugar Company 1855 - Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR) formed and works at Canterbury closed c1908 - tall chimney demolished 1908-1919 - caretakers cottage, killing shed and engine room (smokestack) built. Original four floors reduced to two and basement used as cold storage rooms. 1985. Permanent Conservation Order made on Old Sugarmill. 1996. Ruin of Old Sugarmill is further damaged by fire. 2003. Old Sugarmill adaptively restored into apartment block within residential complex of 39 units.

History

European exploration of the Cooks River commenced with the colonisation of Sydney in 1788, when "officers of the First Fleet of 1788 negotiated the Cooks River as far as the districts of present-day Canterbury and Campsie. The officers noted the low and marshy aspect of the countryside and observed Aborigines fishing on the river" (Howard & Lumby, 2003, 1).

The earliest European settlement in the area took place when the Rev. Richard Johnson was granted 100 acres, known as 'Canterbury Vale' on 28 May 1793. Canterbury Vale was consolidated by a grant of 50 acres on 15 September 1796 and a further grant of 260 acres on 5 October 1799. This was known as Sheep Pasture Plains. Johnson applied for leave to return to England for health reasons in 1798 and before his departure in October 1800 sold the farm to Lieutenant William Cox.

Cox was a lieutenant in the new South Wales Corps but in 1803 was suspended from office due to overstraining his credit. Cox had purchased additional properties surrounding Canterbury Vale. In 1803 Robert Campbell procured 830 acres of Cox's land consolidating a grant of land which he already held.

Robert Campbell was known as the 'father of the mercantile community' in the colony of New South Wales. The main purpose of the purchase at Canterbury seems to have been for the accommodation of the overflow of imported cattle rejected by the government which he apparently purchased.

During the latter part of the 1830s the colony was enjoying an economic boom with much English capital flowing into the country. A London based company promoter, Francis Kemble, who had some previous experience in the sugar industry, persuaded William Knox Child, Deputy Lieutenant of the County of Kent and also inspector and director of the London and County Joint stock Bank to provide the capital for the establishment of a sugar works in Australia. In 1839 the Australian Sugar Company was formed in London, purchase made of machinery and equipment after the sale of Child's assets, and on 11 March 1840 the directors of A.S.C. and their families and forty operatives departed for Sydney, arriving on 12 July 1840.

Because of the need for plentiful water and fuel supplies to expedite the manufacturer of sugar, a site on the Cooks River was chosen on part of Robert Campbell's Canterbury estate. As well, a dam had been erected near the site to prevent salt water reaching the upper portion of the stream - town supply was limited and this was the nearest available location close to Sydney. Some 60 acres were chosen with a value of 1200 pounds and the transaction was carried out by the exchange of 50 pound shares in the company.

Work commenced on erecting the main building beside the Cooks River. Scottish stonemasons quarried sandstone on the site, to erect the building. Ironbark was obtained from across the river. By September 1841 the Mill was sufficiently complete to warrant a detailed description in *The Australian*. As a result of disputes between Kemble and Childs, a slump in trade caused the dissolution of the company and the subsequent formation of the Australasian Sugar Company.

Before the Mill began production, sugar was imported into Sydney from Java, Mauritius and the

Philippines. The raw material to the Mill was imported from the Philippines. Apart from the cane which arrived in Sydney with the First Fleet, pioneering efforts production of cane was undertaken by T.A. Scott who settled in Australia in 1819 and spent several years growing sugar cane at Port Macquarie. In 1829 he went to Point Clare where he had received a grant of land, and continued to grow cane on a very small scale. It was not until the late 1860s that commercially viable crops were grown in the northern part of new South Wales. It was in the 1860s that cultivation of cane became viable in Queensland. Because of these circumstances the Mill at Canterbury processed imported material.

The Sugar Company and Robert Campbell subdivided their land in 1841 and auctioned it. The nucleus of the Village of Canterbury thus formed on this land subdivided in 1841. The reason for the subdivision was to accommodate Mill workers and secondly to raise finances for the operation of the Mill.

From 1843 to 1846 the Australasian Sugar Company was managed by Edward Knox, a close friend of Campbell. After 1846 he remained a director of the Company until 1854 when disagreements amongst the shareholders caused the dissolution of the concern. On 1 January 1855 the Colonial Sugar Refining Company was formed with Knox as manager and one of the directors. A decision was made to close the works and transfer them to a property in George Street West later that year.

The Mill remained vacant and unused for many years. In 1880 the Sugar Mill was purchased by Frederick Clissold, who in turn sold it to Blacket and Co., Engineer in 1884. Blacket and Co. hoped to benefit from being located next to the promised suburban railway line. However the line was slow to arrive and the company was bankrupted before the line was built. (Kass and Walker 1988)

It was used as a butter factory by Foley Bros and from 1900 until 1908 by Denham Bros as the Canterbury Bacon Factory. Towards the end of this time the tall chimney, once such a prominent and unique feature of the Sugar Mill was demolished.

In 1980 the former Sugar Mill was purchased by the firm J.C. Hutton and Co. The firm used the sugar works for the manufacture of smallgoods. In 1950 the killing licence expired.

In 1983 Hutton sold the property to its present owner, Nick Scali and Co. Pty Ltd.
(Howard 4-14:1995)

Condition and Integrity

The building was restored and adapted for use as a staff amenities building by the owners, who also demolished the various unsympathetic additions that had surrounded the building previously. As such, it should have a long and useful life, as long as it is protected from any unsympathetic alterations that may be considered in the future.

Interior damaged by fire February 1996 (Financial Review 14 February 1996).

Location

Within Hutton's Plant, on north bank of the Cooks River, near corner of Church and Hutton Streets, Canterbury.

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Form for the Canterbury Heritage Study

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