

# Tasmanian Heritage Register Datasheet



Tasmanian Heritage Council

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**Name:** Waverley Woollen Mills  
**Status:** Provisionally Registered  
**Tier:** State

**THR ID Number:** 11586  
**Municipality:** Launceston City Council  
**Boundary:** CPR

## Location Addresses

45 Waverley RD, Waverley 7250 TAS

## Title References

185615/1

## Property Id

9284192



Entry: western wing shopfront, eastern wing office  
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Carding shed (1987): from Waverley Road  
© NRE 2025



Central alley: between wings from south  
© NRE 2025



Central alley: northern section with chimney  
© NRE 2025



Central alley: from north  
© NRE 2025



Maintenance shed: from alley  
© NRE 2025



Northern section: from hatchery site, toward creek  
© NRE 2025



Northern section: to west from hatchery site  
© NRE 2025



Amenities block: with eastern wing behind  
© NRE 2025



Eastern wing: rear from north  
© NRE 2025



East wing: front entry to administration section  
© NRE 2025



Eastern wing: office interior; with safe  
© NRE 2025



Western wing: front office/ storage areas  
© NRE 2025



Western wing: weaving section, timber structure  
© NRE 2025



Western wing: finishing section; hybrid structure  
© NRE 2025



Western wing: timber panelling, disused machinery  
© NRE 2025



Western wing: central office, timber lining  
© NRE 2025



Northern section: former wool store  
© NRE 2025



Northern section: disused boiler; scale  
© NRE 2025



Maintenance shed: interior  
© NRE 2025



Eastern wing: sewing and finishing area  
© NRE 2026



Weeping Ash: south from eastern wing  
© NRE 2025



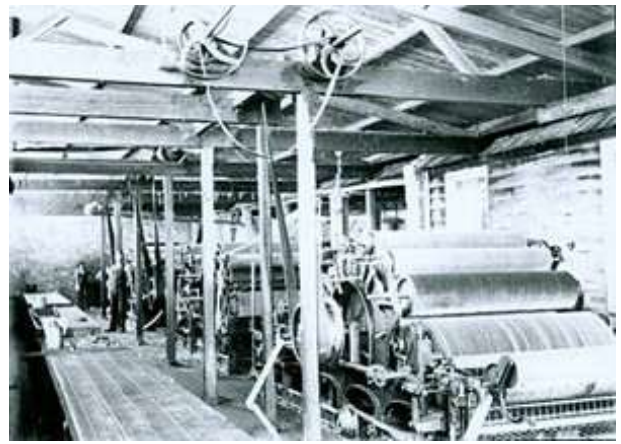
Water supply pipe: Distillery Creek weir  
© NRE 2026



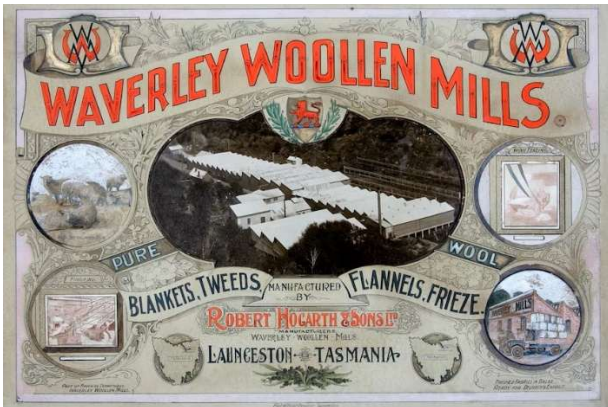
Hatchery pond (1908)  
Weekly Courier 27 August 1908



Western wing: from east (early 20th century)  
 Libraries Tasmania Collection, LPIC32-1-6



Western wing: interior (early 20th century)  
 Libraries Tasmania Collection, LPIC32-15-6



Publicity material (c. 1920s)  
 Collection of QVMAG



Blankets (1950s–80s); clothing label (1960s)  
 ABC Rural - [www.abc.net.au](http://www.abc.net.au); NRE 2025

### Statement of Significance: (non-statutory summary)

The Waverley Woollen Mills complex in Launceston is of historic cultural heritage significance as the oldest continuously operating woollen mill in Australia, established in 1874 and still operating at the same site today. The complex is of high historical significance in demonstrating the early use of hydro-electricity and lighting in Tasmania, pre-dating state and municipal hydro-electric schemes. It is also significant as a living example of the development of large-scale industry, particularly to value-add to locally available wool, and for the major economic and social benefits that the mill has brought to Launceston over 150 years. The Mill complex includes a suite of sawtooth factory and interwar administrative buildings, set in a dramatic gully location chosen for its suitable humidity, access to reliable soft water, and stone for early construction. The site has historical archaeological potential derived from documentary evidence and physical remnants of 19th and 20th century buildings, presenting an opportunity for detailed investigation of structures and deposits associated with the early use of the site. Waverley Woollen Mills are of social value to many northern Tasmanians as a place of intergenerational employment and to the wider Tasmanian community due to the quality products used in daily life. The company has been a workplace of choice, particularly for women, and a site where enduring social and recreational networks were developed. The aesthetic qualities of the buildings are demonstrated in company branding, adorning both clothing and blankets and used extensively in publicity material.

## Why is it significant?:

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.**

The Waverley Woollen Mills complex comprises a diverse range of built elements that demonstrate a number of historical themes in Tasmania and the wider evolution of industry in northern Tasmania. These include the development of early hydro-electricity and electric lighting schemes, the establishment of factories based on similar enterprises in Britain, the creation of a workforce to contribute to the state's war effort, and the dependence of Launceston on manufacturing in the 20th century. This is all within the context of Launceston's expansion from a 19th century waterfront industrial town to a major industrial powerhouse on the national stage by the early 20th century.

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

The Waverley Woollen Mills is one of Tasmania's oldest continuously operating industries. Few Van Diemen's Land/Tasmanian industries have operated on the same site for 150 years. The site is also a rare example of early hydro-electricity use in Tasmania. It followed the earlier 1883 Mount Bischoff Co at Waratah scheme (THR #11963) but pre-dated the 1896 Duck Reach development in Launceston (THR #11976); 1906 Moorina Hydro Electricity Power Development (THR #1396) in the north-east; and 1914 Mount Lyell Lake Margaret scheme (THR #1396) on the west coast.

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

The Waverley Woollen Mills complex has historical archaeological potential derived from documentary evidence and physical remains of 19th century buildings and landforms, presenting a rare opportunity for detailed investigation of structures and/or deposits associated with Australia's longest continuously operating woollen mill site. This includes the potential to yield unique, original information on location, layout and function/s of the buildings associated with these historical uses, including the early use of hydro-electricity, the former fish hatchery, and the lives of the people who worked in the vicinity.

**d) The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of place in Tasmania's history.**

The Waverley Woollen Mills complex is a highly intact example of a 19th century and 20th century woollen mill complex. Surviving elements demonstrate the features of an industrial complex that has evolved over 150 years. These include buildings, facilities and machinery constructed for washing and scouring wool, carding, spinning, knitting and weaving wool, and finishing. Many of these processes are virtually unchanged since Waverley Woollen Mills was established in 1874.

**e) The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement.**

For over 150 years the Waverley Woollen Mills complex has demonstrated a high degree of technical and creative achievement via its early use of gravity powered pipeline, hydro-electricity and lighting. With water pumped to the factory, the Waverley fish ponds and hatchery utilised innovative and experimental technology for the period to furnish Tasmanian lakes and streams with fish for recreational fishing. The factory itself is an important Tasmanian example of milling, washing, raising, cutting, sewing and labelling products, processes adapted to meet local conditions.

**f) The place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social or spiritual reasons.**

The Waverley Woollen Mills complex has meaning to the wider Tasmanian community as the site of wool processing and cloth manufactory for over 150 years and is strongly associated with the Waverley Mills company. Since its inception the company has utilised branding opportunities that emphasise the heritage and subsequent success of the business, to the extent that a shop and tours were established to cater for the interest and meaning the factory and its products have to Tasmanians. In almost every Tasmanian linen cupboard and wardrobe is a reminder of Waverley Woollen Mills. Blankets produced at the factory have special meaning to many Tasmanians, often gifted to friends and family at significant personal milestones. The quality and durability of these blankets are a reminder of the ongoing existence of Waverley Woollen Mills, and the affection with which the company is held across Tasmania.

**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.**

Waverley Woollen Mills has a special association with the Archibald and Daniel Johnstone, who, along with Peter Bulman, established the Waverley Woollen Mill at Distillery Creek. From 1883 the Johnstone family company, Johnstone Brothers, went on to run a successful textile business in Gore Street, South Hobart (THR #3142) until 1898. The Johnstone family arguably made a substantial contribution to the establishment of a textile industry in both the north and south of the state.

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

Waverley Woollen Mills' picturesque setting in a gully east of Launceston has been part of its brand since its establishment in 1874. Publicity and marketing have continuously featured the landmark sawtooth buildings and striking industrial brick chimney, even used in labelling of clothing manufactured at the factory. Historic images in Tasmanian periodicals, particularly for company anniversaries, have emphasised the industrial endeavours of the Bullman and Hogarth families in a dramatic bushland setting with its picturesque creek providing its power and water supply.

**Heritage approval is required for work that will result in changes to the nature or appearance of the fabric of a Heritage place, both internal and external.**

**Please refer to the Heritage Council's Works Guidelines ([www.heritage.tas.gov.au](http://www.heritage.tas.gov.au)) for information about the level of approval required and appropriate outcomes.**

**Heritage Advisors are also available to answer questions and provide guidance on [enquiries@heritage.tas.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@heritage.tas.gov.au) or Tel 1300850332**

**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.**

**Setting:**

Waverley Woollen Mills is located in the northern Tasmanian city of Launceston, accessed from the end of Waverley Road in the eastern suburb of Waverley. The factory site is in a gully to the south of Distillery Creek, which provides Launceston's water supply. There is vacant sloping bushland to the north; suburban residential development to the east; and larger commercial and residential properties to the south and west. The main mill buildings, including the administrative buildings are accessed from the south and are concentrated along the western boundary.

**Description:**

**Overview**

The Waverley Woollen Mills site was first occupied for wool milling in 1874 and features a range of structures dating from that period onwards. The current (2026) factory complex comprises two main wings of industrial and administration buildings in a parallel arrangement either side of a central alleyway (the alley), along with a number of separate sheds and utility buildings to the north-east and south-east of the site. The place demonstrates various periods of construction, including a variety of sawtooth roofs, fine brick detailing in walls, and a substantial brick chimney located at the end of the alley. The earliest surviving brick sawtooth roofed section appears to date from the 1890s. Early operations were powered by a water mill, and later, a hydro-electric turbine which was located within the factory until the 1990s. Remnants of the water intake pipework and infrastructure for these survive along Distillery Creek to the north-eastern end of the site, as do ruins of a fish hatchery operation.

**ELEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

**Factory buildings**

**1. Western wing:** This is the larger of the two rows of buildings flanking the concrete apron of the alley, extending over 165 metres along the western boundary of the site. To the southern end is a gable roofed section (c.1960s) with a reconstructed brick façade, shopfront and office area developed in the 1980s, which forms the Mill's main public interface. Behind this section are a series of conjoined industrial structures with parts dating from around the 1890s, which are considered to be of high significance as the earliest remaining elements. These have brick walls and a system of timber posts and brackets supporting timber roof framing in sawtooth forms. In places the timber structure has been reinforced or replaced by steel elements. The roofs are clad with steel (the original iron being replaced in 2022), and clear sections facing south-east. Many of the original glass panes were replaced by corrugated polycarbonate sheeting in the 21st century. The floors are generally of timber with sections of concrete where required to support the heavy industrial machinery. This sawtooth structure replaced an extensive timber building, believed to be one of the earliest on site (TAHO, PH30/1/6293). Some more domestic scale spaces, which include timber joinery such as fireplaces, have also been retained as offices and storage and amenity areas for staff.

This western wing remains as the main production area for the Waverley Mills in 2026, including most of the dyeing, weaving, and finishing processes. The machinery and plant continues to be updated as required and so the working elements come from a range of eras and assist in telling the story of the Mill. Elements of disused machinery has also been retained for display purposes due to its scale and its role in the history of the place, and this is considered to be of high significance.

The hydro-electric turbine and associated infrastructure was located toward the southern end of the western wing, but this was removed to make space for new machinery and relocated to the Inveresk site of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in the 1990s.

A new boiler room was added to the western side of the main building as part of a substantial programme of works completed in the 2020s. As a recently built utilitarian extension, this tall concrete block structure is not considered to be highly significant.

**2. Northern section:** A suite of connected vernacular buildings is located to the rear of the eastern wing, adjacent to Distillery Creek. This section was largely disused at the time of writing, but retains much of its original fabric and machinery and is considered to be of high significance.

There are a variety of structures and roof forms, but most are clad in corrugated iron and have large timber sliding warehouse doors and multi-pane timber windows. These replaced an earlier substantial timber structure to the north of the site (TAHO, LPIC147/7/198). The larger space was used for wool bale storage and retains presses and scales.

At the end of the alley is a prominent brick chimney, which appears to have replaced an earlier version (TAHO, LPIC147/7/198). Like other parts of the complex, the chimney stack has evolved to meet contemporary needs of the company.

**3. Eastern wing:** The eastern wing is made up of a smaller group of conjoined buildings. The main form is a substantial red brick structure approximately 47 metres in length, with a gable roof spanning over 15 metres and is considered to be of high significance. As this space housed the sewing and finishing processes it has raised timber floors, ceilings fitted with skylights, and task lighting for fine detail work. Sewing and packing operations still occupy the southern end of this section. A modest administration section adjacent to this section (c.1930), continues to serve as the reception area and offices for the company. Topped by a low-pitched hipped roof, the exterior of this structure features Inter-war Art Deco style detailing including a curved brick corner to the alley, decorated timber columns and doors to the entry and complex window joinery. The interior of this section contains the company boardroom, an early walk-in safe, and original timber detailing to wall paneling, doors, and windows.

Two steel shed structures adjoin the eastern side of the main brick building, the southern-most (c.1980) being used for wool storage and freight operations. These more recent and utilitarian buildings contribute little to the visual character of the place but are part of the ongoing evolution of the Mill's operations and are therefore considered as contributory to its historic significance.

**4. Carding shed:** A separate shed to the south-east of the main complex has provided a larger space for the wool carding operations which formerly occupied the brick factory buildings. Built in 1987, this is a steel framed and clad structure with a gable roof covering an area of 850m<sup>2</sup>. Due to the relatively recent construction and generic form of this building, its fabric is considered to be of less historic importance than the bulk of the remaining structures, however it does represent a key phase in the history of operations on the site and therefore contributes to the significance of the place.

#### **Utilities structures**

Along the east side of the alley, between the northern section and the eastern wing, are smaller structures with flat and mono-pitch roofs.

**5. Maintenance shed:** The northern-most of the structures is the steel-clad maintenance shed with a large timber sliding door providing direct access to the alley, and a shipping container providing additional storage to its southern end. The main form is highly intact and is considered be of moderate significance.

**6. Amenities block:** Further to the south and set back 5 metres from the alley is a simple red brick building with a mono-pitch roof which continues to provide the main amenities for the site. While this block has played a role in the history of the site and remains in fairly original condition, it is considered be of lower historic significance than the main factory buildings.

## Archaeology

The Waverley Woollen Mills has varying degrees of historical archaeological potential demonstrated in documentary evidence and the physical remnants of historic buildings and infrastructure. This presents a rare opportunity for investigation of structures and/or deposits associated with early mercantile trade, wool processing and domestic life within Launceston. While many areas have been modified, the site retains potential to yield information regarding the location, layout and function of these buildings and the day-to-day lives of the people who lived and worked at the mill and fish hatchery.

### Fish hatchery

The whole former hatchery area represents an area of archaeological potential.

**7. Hatchery ponds:** Remnants of an oval shaped concrete fishpond dating from pre-1908 (*Weekly Courier*, 27 August 1908 p.21) survive to the east of the factory buildings at 515090E, 5413230N (LISTmap aerial imagery).

**8. Hatchery infrastructure:** There are also remnants of the cast iron pipeline down from the water intake (at 515505E, 5413490N). However, there are less visible remains of the fish hatchery buildings and rearing races. Historic images record what appears to have been a caretaker's cottage, races/ponds with protective cloth, dog kennels to ward off predators and ancillary buildings in this area (TAHO, LPIC147/7/198).

### Other archaeological remains

**9. Water supply pipe:** A substantial length of pipework and supporting infrastructure remains largely intact above ground. There may also be remains below ground, and/ or concealed by vegetation. This system provided water directly from Distillery Creek, serving the site in a number of innovative ways since establishment of the Mill.

**10. Former houses:** Land to the east of the current factory footprint for example contained housing for staff that began to be removed after a fire in the 1970s (TAHO, AB713/1/12059). As early as 1875 the company was providing housing: 'a six roomed cottage has been erected to those of the employees who wish to live on the ground' (*Tasmanian* 16 October 1875, p.10). However, no remains of the houses here are visible above the ground surface today.

### Historic plantings

**11. Weeping Ash:** The garden area to the front of the property includes a Weeping Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior 'Pendula'*) that was classified on the National Trust tree register in 1995; a species popular in the Victorian era.

### ELEMENTS NOT ASSESSED AS BEING OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Roadways and carparking infrastructure to the front of the western wing.

The interior of the c.1980s brick structure added to the southern end of the western wing (facing the public entry).

## History:

The wider Tamar Valley has been inhabited and managed by Aboriginal people for at least 35,000 years. These included the North Midlands nation, comprising the Leterremairrener (or Port Dalrymple people), the Panninher (or Norfolk Plains people), the Tyerrernotepanner (or Stoney Creek people) and possibly others (Ryan 2012, p.29).

Following the arrival of Europeans and the establishment of Launceston in 1806, the growing port became a prosperous township, albeit underpinned by substantial infrastructure for the management of the convict population. Cloth was first manufactured in the colony at George Town Female Factory (THR #11931), north of Launceston, using prison labour. When transportation of prisoners ended in 1853, the colony was keen to shed its convict roots. Successive governments sought to attract development to the former penal colony.

### Establishment

Waverley Woollen Mills, the oldest surviving and continuously operating weaving and blanket mill in Australia, was established by Scottish emigrant farmer, Peter Bulman (1831–1896) on the outskirts of Launceston in 1874 (QVMAG CHS 71).

Encouraged by a government incentive to produce woollen goods, Bulman leased a site from James Scott at Distillery Creek, three miles from Launceston (QVMAG CHS 71). Bulman returned to Scotland to explore weaving operations, where he established a partnership that was to become Bulman, Johnstone & Co. Daniel and Archibald Johnstone joined the Waverley venture and by May 1874 the company had begun production at the Distillery Creek site (*Launceston Examiner* 30 March 1876, p.2).

Importantly, the site had the right humidity for spinning wool, a good supply of 'soft water' and accessible building stone (Turnbull 1994). The Bulman and Johnstone enterprise attracted considerable attention, likely given the government bonus incentive. A journalist touring the factory described:

The hum and turmoil of the machinery, the splashing of the huge water-wheel, and the general bustle of the locality, contrast strangely with its whilom hushed seclusion, when this same spot was the resort of the disciples of Izaak Walton, and where many a shining trout has rewarded the patience of the angler (*Mercury* 5 August 1874, p.3).

Within two years the company had erected new buildings on the site, having secured the government bonus after producing £1143 at auction. Newspaper coverage noted:

The unpretending building in which all the operations were at first carried on has been found insufficient, and each department is, as far practicable, conducted under a separate roof. The new erections are principally of wood, with party brick walls, but the storeroom and finishing room are of brick (*Launceston Examiner* 15 April 1876, p.3).

### **Powering the site**

By 1882 the partnership between Bulman and the Johnstone family had lapsed (Burgess 2009, p.40), Archibald and Daniel establishing their own woollen mill in South Hobart (Gore Street Brewery and Mill Buildings, THR#3142). Bulman was joined by his Tasmanian born brother-in-law, Robert Hogarth (1858–1945). In 1889 the pair commissioned a hydro-electric scheme to light the factory and Hogarth's residence ('Old Waverley' THR #4515), certainly the first in Launceston, and indeed early in a state context (Burgess 2009, p.52). Guests for the opening night at the factory found: 'various rooms brilliantly lighted, and the hands at work, and so had a capital opportunity of testing the real value of the light as applied to practical work' (*Launceston Examiner* 29 July 1889, p.3). The light was still a novelty a decade later, a journalist noting:

'Another interesting feature of the establishment is the fact that the electric light is used in all departments, this system being the most perfect in every detail' (*Launceston Examiner* 3 June 1895, p.3).

### **Growing the Waverley brand**

During this period, Bulman and Hogarth grew the business from a small building into a small village like complex. They perfected the internationally renowned 'Bluey' cloth, which was both warm and water-repellent, making it popular with outdoor workers at the time (Turnbull 1994). In 1891 the company exhibited at the International Exhibition held at the Albert Hall, purpose-built for the occasion. The show attracted over a quarter of a million visitors over four months. By the end of the decade the company were providing uniforms for post offices, the prison service and the railways (Burgess, 2009, p.45).

In 1896, when Peter Bulman died, ownership of the company transferred to Robert Hogarth. Two years later he purchased the nearby Albion and Harden flour mills, and had opened a tailoring business in York Street, Launceston (Burgess 2009, p.57). The Waverley factory itself also expanded around this time:

The building just finished is 53 ft x 47 ft. Two other buildings are in the course of construction, one 40 ft by 30 ft, the other 25 ft x 15 ft, all reflecting great credit on the contractors, Messrs HT Russell and Sons (*Launceston Examiner* 22 October 1897, p.5).

The company's entry in the *Cyclopedia* suggests by 1900 they had 100 employees and had doubled manufacturing over the previous four years (*Cyclopedia of Tasmania* 1900, pp.117–118).

Around this time Hogarth added fishponds and a fish hatchery adjacent to the factory. The Northern Tasmanian Anglers' Association had been searching for a suitable site for the introduction of quinnat or pacific salmon. Hogarth offered land and access to the mill's water supply, on the proviso the Association paid for construction. The pond structures were 40 ft by 24 ft and 5 ft deep, fed by 2 in valves. Each pond was said to have held 4000 gallons; the setup being designed by Launceston City Council engineer St John David, who acted in an honorary capacity (*Examiner* 14 March 1901, p.7). According to Tasmanian fishing historian Don Gilmour, the Waverley ponds and hatchery provided millions of fish for recreational fishing across Tasmania (Burgess 2009, p.64) including Lake Leake, Great Lake, Upper Arthur's Lake and Lake Sorell. Waverley's location near port and railway infrastructure meant eggs could be imported from New Zealand, Canada and the United States and importantly, with a high survival rate. The hatchery operated for over four decades and was replaced with a new facility at Corra Linn after World War II (*Examiner* 28 May 1947, p.2).

### **The war years**

With the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the Waverley factory was taken over by the Defence Department for the

production of blankets (Burgess, 2009 p.69). By the 1920s the site had undergone a transformation under the leadership of Russell Hogarth, son of Robert. New brick buildings with saw tooth roofs were constructed over the existing structure and machinery was acquired from Britain (Burgess 2009, p.71). Press coverage noted the removal of old buildings, and levelling of the site so that steps were no longer necessary between departments; 12 000 square feet of floor space was added (*Examiner* 13 May 1924, p.5). It is likely that the opening of the imposing multi-storey Patons and Baldwins Mill (THR #11824) in South Launceston and similarly substantial Kelsall and Kemp textile mill at Invermay (now demolished) motivated the Hogarth family to upgrade the facility at Waverley.

Despite increased local competition, Waverley celebrated its golden jubilee in 1924. Press coverage of the anniversary shows the site with its brick chimney billowing smoke, suggesting it was erected prior to this time (*Weekly Courier* 15 May 1924). With an increasing workforce and the expansion of suburbs, the company had acquired two buses for staff transport by the end of the decade (Burgess 2009, p.78).

During World War II over one million blankets were made for the British and allied forces at the mill. While other businesses relied heavily upon women to take over positions ordinarily occupied by men, the shortage of women workers was so great there were men completing work usually undertaken by women (O'Brien 1995, p.88).

### **The mill community**

Like other mills in Launceston, particularly Patons and Baldwins, later Coats Patons, Waverley mill was known for its paternalistic style of management, often employing extended families at the mill. Kath Mackrill, who spent over 40 years at the factory, recalled that management treated her well. She made grey blankets during the war, then afterwards 'ordinary' blankets. The mill even made a special run for fashion designers Maggie Taberer and a tartan for Prue Acton. The almost rural location of the factory had its ups and downs, including visits from snakes, lizards and possums (Mackrill pers. comm in Cassidy & Wishart 1990, pp.81–82).

After the war a residential suburb named Waverley was created near the factory, comprising mostly government housing. The immediate period after the war was a prosperous period for the Waverley mill, however falling wool prices and lack of woollen goods purchases led to the retrenchment of 40 hands in 1951. With 20 men on night shift and 20 women from day shift put off, staff numbers were reduced to 100 (*Examiner* 14 September 1951, p.1). By 1957 the firm employed 150 (*Examiner* 16 September 1957) and concentrated primarily on blankets until 1962 when electric blankets and tufted carpet were also produced (QVMAG CHS 71). In 1964 120 000 woollen blankets were made each year as well as 1000 electric blankets each week (*Examiner Supplement* 11 August 1964, p.37).

### **Changing times**

In 1974 the introduction of tariffs, combined with the increase in the use of synthetic fabrics and a consumer preference for quilts over blankets (Green 2010, p.63) undermined the company's viability. Staff reductions featured regularly in the news after this decision (*Examiner* 31 July 1974 & *Examiner* 3 December 1976). Successive generations of the Hogarth family managed the mill until it was purchased by the Temple family from Victoria in 1981. Around this time the factory was opened for visitors and a shopfront was added (*The Northern Scene* 28 April 1982, p.14).

In 1987 the large (65 m long x 15 m wide) 'carding shed' was constructed (Land Tasmania aerial imagery). This would bring the initial wool blending and spinning processes closer to the front of the site, and allow expansion of the weaving area into the former 'Carding Room' in the centre of the western wing. By 1990 John Fahey of Melbourne had purchased the mill (Valentine 2005, p.385) although the company had gone into receivership by 2004 (Green 2010, p.63). The Waverley Woollen Mills company archive was donated to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston and a photographic record of the site undertaken (QVMAG CHS 71).

### **Moving with the times**

In 2026 the Waverley Woollen Mills still operates, adapting manufacturing and products to meet modern consumer demands. The luxury blanket and throw range for example, includes recycled wool, which blends wool offcuts recycled from the weaving process, and a collaboration with jean manufacturers sees waste denim blended into 80% wool throw rugs. Waverley Woollen Mills remains Australia's earliest surviving woollen mill (Waverley Mills website).

### **Comparative analysis:**

#### **Wool and cloth manufactories**

Tasmania's first cloth manufactory was a small-scale enterprise at c.1824 **George Town Female Factory** (THR #11931) where skilled prisoners processed wool, manufactured cloth and assembled government issue clothing. This was later followed by similarly small experimental operations at penal establishments at c.1826 **Maria Island** (THR #1531), c.1828 **Cascades Female Factory** (THR #10851) and c.1830 **Port Arthur** (THR #6).

After the breakup of the Bullman/Johnstone ownership of Waverley Mills, the Johnstone family relocated to Hobart, establishing a textile mill in South Hobart, which operated from 1883 to 1898 (THR #3142). After World War I the industry experienced a boom and companies were enticed to the Tamar Valley with the prospect of cheap electricity, plentiful water supply and rarity of industrial action by workers. They were the imposing c.1923 **Patons and Baldwins Mill** (THR #11824) in South Launceston, c.1923 **Kelsall and Kemp Mill** located in Invermay (now mostly demolished), c.1927 Reliance Worsted Mill in George Street (THR #4247) and the later c.1949 **James Nelson** textile mill (now demolished), which was once the second largest textile manufacturer in the state (*Mercury* 2 April 2024, p.12).

### Early hydro-electricity sites

The Waverley Woollen Mills hydro-electricity scheme (1889) is an early hydro-electric operation in Tasmania. It came after the earlier 1883 **Mount Bischoff Company** at Waratah (THR #11963) but pre-dates the 1896 Duck Reach in Launceston (THR #11976), 1906 **Moorina Hydro Electricity Power Development** (THR #1396) and 1914 **Mount Lyell Lake Margaret** schemes (THR #10863). Prior to publicly owned hydro-electric operations, businesses such as Waverley and Mount Bischoff were pioneers in the sector, taking financial and reputational risks with the experimental technology.

### Industry continuously operating on the same site

Waverley Woollen Mills have operated from their premises since 1874. The longest presence on a site in Van Diemen's Land/Tasmania can be attributed to **Cascade Brewery**, established in 1832, and still operating at the site of Peter Degraives' 1824 sawmill. **CT Smith/AG Webster/Webster Limited**, established as a grain store in Hobart in 1831, still operates its business in Tasmania and New South Wales, but has occupied a variety of sites in the interim. **The Tasmanian Flour Mills** complex (THR #12050) in Launceston includes buildings from c.1840 onwards, but the flour mill was only established there in 1907–08. The present-day **Boag & Son Brewery Complex** (THR #11878) in Launceston has a similar evolution to Cascade. Brewing began on the site by 1830 with the Cornwall Brewery, James Boag becoming involved as head brewer by 1853. It is clear in a statewide context that Waverley is an uncommon example of an industry operating continuously on the same site.

### Fishponds and hatcheries

The 1861 **Salmon Ponds** (THR #1270) located at Plenty is the oldest trout hatchery in Tasmania and is believed to be the oldest in the southern hemisphere (Salmon Ponds website). The site includes the historic ponds and superintendent's residence. The Waverley ponds and hatchery closed after World War II and a new hatchery opened at **Corra Linn**, south of Launceston. It is unclear how much fabric survives. A corrugated iron clad building said to have been a hatchery was operated by Vin Emery at **Campbell Town** adjacent to Mill House (THR #4935) ('Campbell Town, Tasmania' Facebook post 7 June 2025).

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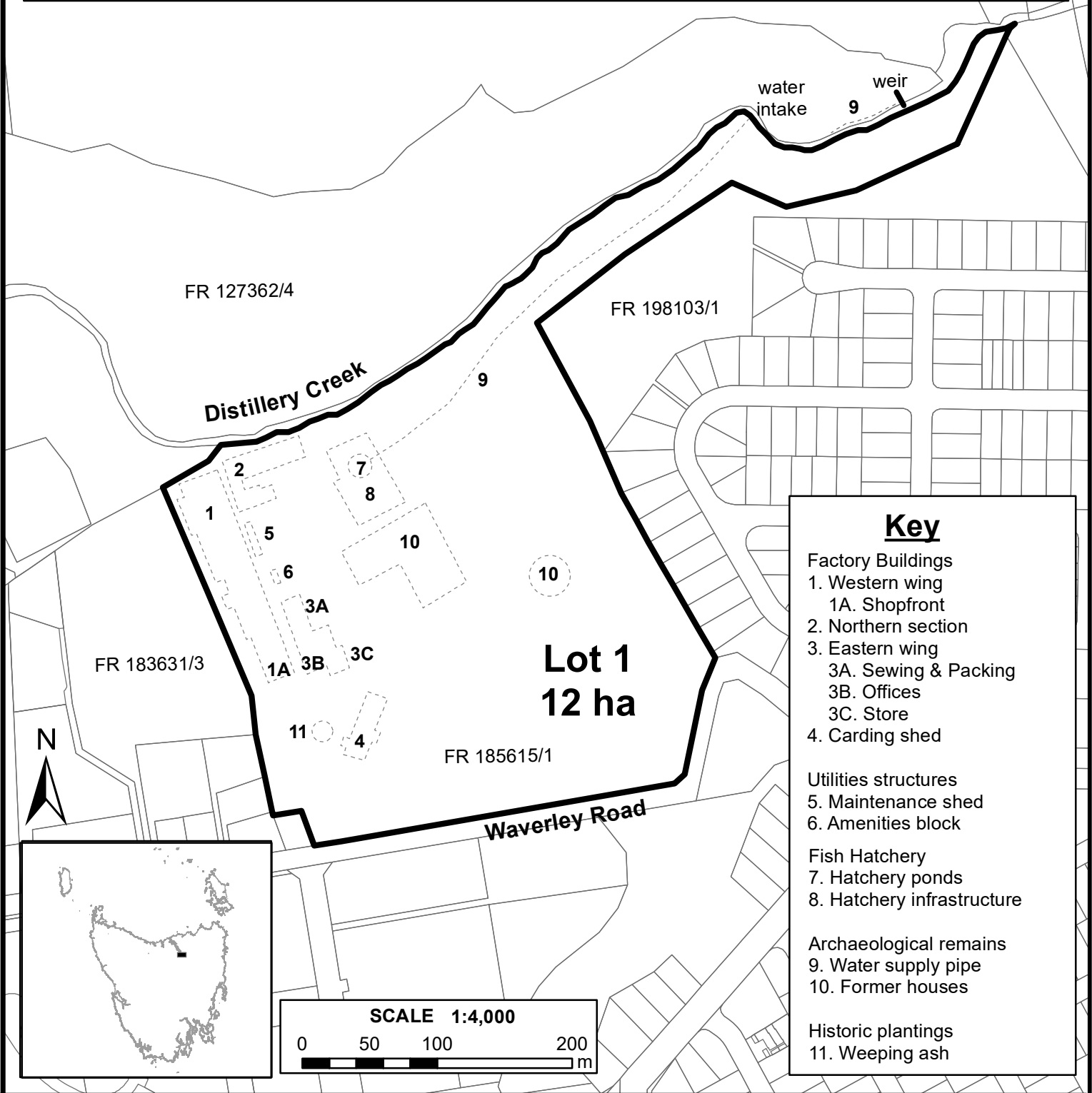
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## Note

1. Lot 1 represents the registered boundary for 'Waverley Woollen Mills', #11586 on the Tasmanian Heritage Register.
2. Lot 1 is the whole of FR185615/1 the boundary of which is marked by a heavy black line and described below.
3. All boundaries are parcel boundaries unless otherwise stated, details of individual land parcel boundaries may be accessed through the Land Information System Tasmania (LIST).



### Key

- Factory Buildings
  - 1. Western wing
  - 1A. Shopfront
  - 2. Northern section
  - 3. Eastern wing
    - 3A. Sewing & Packing
    - 3B. Offices
    - 3C. Store
  - 4. Carding shed
- Utilities structures
  - 5. Maintenance shed
  - 6. Amenities block
- Fish Hatchery
  - 7. Hatchery ponds
  - 8. Hatchery infrastructure
- Archaeological remains
  - 9. Water supply pipe
  - 10. Former houses
- Historic plantings
  - 11. Weeping ash

**TASMAB:** LAUNCESTON - 5041      **GRID:** MGA94 / ZONE 55      **DATUM:** AHD      **CONTOUR INTERVAL:** N/A

No.	PRODUCTION / AMENDMENT	AUTHORITY	REFERENCE	DRAWN	APPROVED	DATE
1	Production	THC	11586	AW	S.PARRY	18.2.26



## Waverley Woollen Mills

45 Waverley Rd, Waverley

PREPARED BY  
HERITAGE TASMANIA



### CENTRAL PLAN REGISTER

p.p. Surveyor General:

Date Registered: 24.2.26

# CPR 11652