

## ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

Chimney, early Tweed Mill walls, former two attached Cottages,  
red brick Loom Shed, two-storey former Blanket Finishing Rooms,  
and former Mill Shop at the former Lobethal Mill site  
1 Lenswood Road  
Lobethal

File 14621

16192

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### DESCRIPTION OF PLACE

The Mill is a sprawling complex of various buildings and structures erected since 1869 on the site beside the Lobethal Creek. The functional industrial buildings are alongside two attached cottages built in the 1880s to house Mill staff and which had a variety of use over the years. A Manager's residence built in the late 1890s was used as offices in the years before the Mill's closure. Rapid expansion of the site was carried out in response to increased production during the 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 World Wars. The Tweed factory or Woollen Mill at Lobethal, carrying the famous 'Onkaparinga' label in recent times, was used continuously from 1870 until 1993.

The former Mill buildings are currently being upgraded to attract small manufacturing businesses to the site and the main Loom Shed is again being used to produce cloth by the Smith Family with workers drawn from the Lobethal area.

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### STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

The Mill, located at Lobethal in the Adelaide Hills, is historically significant but what best symbolises the heritage value of the site is almost intangible. It has had an interesting sequence of development over the years with the consequent labyrinth of the site as structures were built as needs arose. As a historic site there are buildings and elements of those buildings which are important and a number of these have been identified as having a particular heritage value. A more ethereal significance is the length of time the Mill has been in use and its traditional links with the local community. The national image of the famous 'Onkaparinga' brand can also be regarded as significant.

## RELEVANT CRITERIA

Section 16, *Heritage Act 1993*

(a) *it demonstrates important aspects of the pattern of the State's history*

The former Woollen Mill is historically unique in South Australia, developing from a small local tweed factory in 1869 to a nationally recognised major company with an international export reputation in woollen fabrics and goods until its closure in 1993.

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

The former Lobethal Mill is a complicated and fragile site located on the western arm of the Onkaparinga River known locally as Lobethal Creek. The Mill's proximity to the waterway has made it vulnerable to flooding over the years. With lower sections of the Mill frequently inundated, the footings and bottom courses of some masonry walls have been damaged by damp. They were however repeatedly repaired by good maintenance management throughout the life of the Mill and it is hoped that these good practices of monitoring will continue.

- The stone and brick chimney has recently been the subject of an engineer's report which found the structure to be stable and in good condition. Built in five distinct stages, it is the symbol of Lobethal and a major landmark in the town.
- The early Tweed Mill section has not been used since the mid-1970s when the spinning process was transferred to Thebarton. A fire in January 1986 destabilised this area of the Mill and the three external walls will be preserved. Most of the length of the original stone façade along the line of the creek, with its elegant fenestrations, is now internal and protected under cover.
- The two attached stone and brick cottages (now rendered) have deteriorated over the years, being used as offices then storerooms and until recently covered in the ornamental Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) which caused minor damage to the external fabric of buildings. Although picturesque, the creeper will need to be totally eradicated so the webbing of roots on the stonework can shrivel. The interior rooms retain some interesting original features. The cottages can be seen in a late-1880s photograph (Young, *Lobethal...*, 31) and will be a worthwhile historic restoration project.
- The stone and brick Mill Shop, previously a boarding house for mill workers, and originally the site of F. W. Kleinschmidt's Hop Kilns, has some severe cracking on the south-western corner and will need underpinning to stabilise the fabric. The building is currently being used by the Lobethal Main Street Committee.



- The Loom Shed with its corner and Main Street signage, 'ONKAPARINGA WOOLLEN CO LTD.', is in excellent condition with its red-brick walls and brick pilasters following part of the eastern property line. The building is currently being used as a loom shed by the Smith Family.
- The two-storey Blanket Finishing building, now used as a Museum, is in excellent condition.

(f) *it has strong cultural associations for the community*

The Mill at Lobethal has been the work centre of the town for over a century and the local community have long regarded the Woollen Mill as 'theirs'. It is unique in South Australia and was one of Australia's oldest and best known companies. The site is now in public ownership through the District Council which will manage the future use of the prominent site on behalf of the people.

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## REFERENCES

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|---------------------|--|
| Brockhoff, Carol    | <i>Onkaparinga - The Story of the Mill</i> , 1992                  |
| Burgess, H. T. (ed) | <i>The Cyclopedia of South Australia</i> , Volume 2, 1909, 816-820 |
| Young, Gordon et al | <i>Lobethal 'Valley of Praise'</i> , 1983                          |
| Young, Gordon et al | <i>Onkaparinga District Council Heritage Survey</i> , 1984         |

## SITE RECORD

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Description	The Mill is a sprawling complex of various buildings and structures erected since 1869 on the site beside the Lobethal Creek. The functional industrial buildings are alongside two attached cottages built in the 1880s to house Mill staff and which had a variety of use over the years.
AMG Reference	N 6134750 E 305500 Map Sheet ONKAPARINGA 6628-11 (1:50,000)
Boundary	The sites of the noted buildings and structures only
Land Description	Sections 5124, 5135, 5171, 5175 Hundred of Onkaparinga Certificate of Title Volume 4062 Folio 71
Local Government	District Council of Onkaparinga
Owner	District Council of Onkaparinga PO Box 44 Woodside SA 5244
Other Assessments	<i>Onkaparinga District Council Heritage Survey, 1984</i>
Photographs	Film 1833 and colour transparencies, 6 May 1993 Video film of Mill in action, 7-8 July 1993
Report By	Y L Reynolds

