

HEINZ

CLOSED DOWN 2000.

TOLL HOLDINGS EARN PERMIT TO TRANSFORM HEINZ

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Heinz icon given new lease on life

By Andrea Kellett

ONE of Greater Dandenong's manufacturing icons is about to be transformed into a multi-million dollar warehouse complex.

Councillors voted last week to issue a planning permit for redevelopment of the former HJ Heinz food processing plant on the Princes Highway.

International company Toll Holdings Pty Ltd will spend up to \$40 million transforming the landmark site into a warehousing centre.

Toll Holdings will retain the existing Heinz buildings, add six new buildings with ancillary offices and subdivide the site into seven separate lots.

The company said the business park would be modelled on Toll's Altona Business Park, which contains warehouses for Nike, Arnott's and Footlocker.

The sale marks the final chapter of the HJ Heinz manufacturing era in Greater Dandenong.

The company closed its doors in Dandenong four years ago after 45 years as one of the region's major manufacturers and biggest employers.

At its height it employed 200 workers.

Heinz Watties, as it was known, produced baby foods, canned soup, baked beans, spaghetti,



Gordon Rich-Phillips.

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salads and various Weight Watchers' products from the factory.

In a report to councillors, the council's commercial development team leader Joseph Nasr said the site was one of "Australia-wide importance" and was officially opened by former Prime Minister Robert Menzies on November 7, 1955.

"It was claimed to be the largest food processing plant in the southern hemisphere and an architectural showpiece," Mr Nasr said.

"With the other two industrial giants at Doveton - General Motors

Holden and International Harvester, Heinz was responsible for great social and economic changes in the district.

"It has been closely associated with the development of industrial and commercial Dandenong and the Doveton housing estate."

The planning permit was approved on the condition that Toll Holdings develop a conservation management plan that addressed heritage issues identified in the council's 2002 Heritage Study and preserves any "historically significant structures".