Victorian Heritage Database Report

Yarraville SEC Terminal Station



Location:
Vockler St and 308 Hyde Street YARRAVILLE, Maribyrnong City

Heritage Status / Level of Significance:
Incl. in the MCC HO

Heritage Overlay Number: HO130
Listing Authority: Maribyrnong City

Statement of Significance:
The Terminal Station at Yarraville is of historical, technological and architectural significance.

The site is of historical and technological significance for being the first Terminal Station established in Melbourne in the early 1920's by the newly formed State Electricity Commission (SEC) and for its provision of electrical power from the Latrobe Valley brown coal deposits. The creation of the Latrobe Valley brown coal electricity generation scheme and the SEC was a major step in the development of Victoria, having ramifications for industry, employment and quality of life throughout Melbourne.

The Terminal Station is also of historical significance for its association with Sir John Monash who was the first chairman of the SEC and one of the main proponents behind the development of Victoria's brown coal electricity generation.

Architecturally the Machine Hall is significant as one of the earliest remaining SEC buildings in the State. Its functional, yet monumental and classically inspired form, is typical of many large scale government works and

initiatives in Victoria. The building is also a prominent element of the site, with visibility from the surrounding area. The Machine Hall is of additional interest for being associated with the work of the Reinforced Concrete and Monier Pipe Construction Co. Internally, the main building is relatively intact with original crane gantry, crane and some electrical installations contributing to the significance.

The laboratory buildings are of interest architecturally, although this aspect of significance (and their technological significance) has been greatly diminished through internal changes. The toilet/amenities block is of interest as a surviving early element on the site. The remains of the original entrance road off Globe Street and associated turning circle and oval area to the north of the Machine Hall, and the Vockler Street entrance gates are significant landscape elements.

Description

The Yarraville Terminal Station comprises a complex of rendered brick and concrete buildings and timber and iron sheds which were constructed from 1921 onwards. Electricity was supplied to Melbourne from the site from June 1923. The earliest elements of the site are the Machine Hall, switchyard, a workshop and smaller buildings such as the amenities block. The entrance to the Terminal Station appears to have originally been off Globe Street to the north of the Machine Hall. A later addition to the complex, a large laboratory, was constructed in around 1938.

The Machine Hall, which was constructed in 1921/22, is a relatively intact large two/three storey, steel reinforced concrete structure of classically-inspired form with regular fenestration, a prominent hipped roof and overhanging eaves. Two story annexes flank parts of the southern, western and northern sides of the hall. The principal elevation is the northern, more detailed, facade which features a small formal portico entrance facing the raised grassed area in the centre of the turning circle. The ground floor comprises the machine room, which retains some original tiled floor areas, high voltage testing equipment and a crane gantry, and the adjacent annexe areas dedicated to workshops and equipment storage spaces, a battery room and switchboard room. The first floor at the west end of the building comprises the original control room and stores and offices.

The current and former laboratory buildings, which were constructed in the late 1930's and after, and which were subsequently extended and altered, are located to the north and south of the current entrance road off Hyde Street.

The toilet/amenities block is a single storey interwar building with rendered masonry and a hipped iron roof, sited to the east of the Machine Hall. The building is thought to be contemporary to early development on the site.

The significant landscape elements are:

. The form of the original entrance road off Globe Street and associated turning circle and raised oval grassed area to the north of the Machine Hall.

. The entrance and associated gates off Vockler Street in use since 1950, including the double iron gates which may have been relocated from the original Globe Street entrance.

Physical Conditions:In good condition

Integrity:Generally Intact

Context: Located near Stony creek adjacent to residential and industrial areas. The high tension cable provides an associated context.

Australian Principal Theme Providing services

PAHT Subtheme: Providing electricity
Local Theme Industry Consolidation and

Creation date(s): 1920 c.
Heritage Significance state
Map (Melway) 42 B10
Boundary description the extent of the main buildings including machine hall, offices and laboratories, amenities building, entrance gates, original driveway and a curtilage of 5 metres to the buildings.
Local Government Area: City of Maribyrnong
Ownership Type Privatised electricity company SPI Powernet and AGL

Additional Report from: Maribyrnong Industrial Heritage Places, Panel Report, Amendment C31, May 2004, Gary Vines

1.1 SEC Terminal Station Hyde Street

HO 130 Submission 15 & 15a

The owners' submission (SPI PowerNet Pty Ltd and AGL) requested clarification of the application of the Heritage Overlay. They also commissioned a heritage appraisal by Allom Lovell and Associates which generally found that the site did have heritage significance and concurs with the historical, technological and architectural significance.

Some corrections were made as a result of the new information including the reference to the site by its address at 308 Hyde Street, rather than 3 Globe Street.

AGL raised several concerns: that repairs to switch gear are not likely to utilise the same materials as the original. Repairs or maintenance can be urgently required and wished to have defined, what is exactly to be included in the "Internal Controls" in the overlay.

The inspection and Allom Lovell report confirms the significance of this site. The main Machine Hall still the core of the proposed overlay but having looked more closely at the other buildings and their history, I believe a more appropriate overlay would include the Machine Hall and at least the main facades of the office/laboratory buildings, as well as the gates, driveway and amenity block. I have considered the switching yards before, but the difficulty in discerning early fabric in such a structure make inclusion in the overlay problematic.

The heritage appraisal commissioned by SPI PowerNet and carried out by Allom Lovell & Associates has found that the significant site components are:

. The Machine Hall, to the extent of its original external and internal fabric. The original remnant electrical equipment is also of significance.

. The former laboratory buildings on the north and south of the current entrance road, including the former garage (but not including the FAF workshop building), to the extent of their original fabric.

. The toilet/amenities block (original external fabric)

. The form of the original entrance road off Globe Street (not including that portion of the road and entrance which as been built over), and associated turning circle and raised oval grassed area to the north of the Machine Hall.

. The entrance and associated gates off Vockler Street.

Recommendation: That the overlay should be altered to accurately reflect the contributory components at the site and that the internal controls apply to "the switch gear control panels and original crane".

That an incorporated plan be prepared to provide a permit exemption for works on the components covered by internal controls other than for a major upgrade, demolition or removal of the control panels or crane.

Heritage Study / Consultant	Maribyrnong - Maribyrnong Heritage Review, Jill Barnard, Graeme Butler, Francine Gilfedder & Gary Vines, 2000
Construction Date Range	1920 -
Architect / Designer	
Municipality	MARIBYRNONG CITY
Other names	
Hermes number	28371
Property number	

This place/object may also be State heritage listed. Check the Victorian Heritage Database. For further details, contact the local Council or go to Planning Schemes Online