

SITE NAME	Former Melbourne City Council Power Station
STREET ADDRESS	(Part of) 617-639 Lonsdale Street, 651-669 Lonsdale Street, 602-606 Little Bourke Street, and 620-648 Little Bourke Street Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	110703, 110704, 110706, 105718



SURVEY DATE: March 2019

SURVEY BY: Context

HERITAGE INVENTORY	H7822-1218	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	HO737 (204-240 Spencer Street) VHR H2117, HO950 (Overhead Water Tank)
PLACE TYPE	Individual heritage place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	MCC Electricity Supply Department, MCC architects	FORMER GRADE	Significant, C, ungraded
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Federation/Edwardian Period (1901-c1918) Interwar Period (c1919-c1940) Postwar Period (c1945-1975) Late Twentieth Century (c1975-1999)	BUILDER:	Not known
		DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1908-85

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not indicate any associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here.
HISTORIC THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
6 Creating a functioning city	6.3 Providing essential services

LAND USE

HISTORIC LAND USE	
Archaeological block no: 17	Inventory no: 219
Character of Occupation: Commercial, Government, Services/Infrastructure	
Refer to M. Fels, History (prepared for the CAD Archaeological Management Plan). Also: Photo in MCC Electricity Supply History; Known to have been a bore shaft excavated to 220 feet on this site and possibly a well.	
1866 Cox	Map shows building set-back from street
1880 Panorama	Panorama shows small buildings scattered across largely vacant site
1888 Mahlstedt	Timber yard
1905/6 Mahlstedt	City Council yards and sheds. Also City of Melbourne Electric Light Station (detailed layout shown)
THEMATIC MAPPING AND LAND USE	
1890s	Factory and workshop, Power
1920s	Factory and workshop, Power
1960s	Power, Warehouses

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an amendment to HO737. The former Melbourne City Council Power Station is recommended as an individual place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map.

SUMMARY

First established in 1894, the former Melbourne City Council Power Station site today comprises a complex of buildings built between 1908 and 1985, as well as external spaces and an overhead water tank. The elements that remain were built at different times and demonstrate the evolution of the power station and aspects of how it functioned. Key elements include the 1920 CitiPower substation at 651-669 Lonsdale Street (Substation J) and its 1950 and 1953 extensions, the 1908 Offices building (Spencer Street frontage), the 1908 Economiser building (Little Bourke Street frontage) at part of 617-639 Lonsdale Street, the 1888 overhead water tank in Watertank Way (relocated to the current site in 1927), the two CitiPower substations (built after 1925 and 1985, respectively) at 620-648 Little Bourke Street, and the 1949-55 Melbourne City Council Store Building at 602-606 Little Bourke Street.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Creating a functioning city

Providing essential services

The Melbourne City Council was the first Australian metropolitan council to establish its own electricity supply and distribution network in 1894, following the first production and supply of electricity commenced by private companies in the 1880s and 1890s. Melbourne was also one of the first major cities in the world, along with London and New York, to have a public electricity supply where electricity was distributed from a central generating station for use by paying private customers and for public street lighting. The nascent electricity supply enterprises adapted quickly to a new public utility technology that had its origins in the UK, USA and Europe but which, as electrical engineer Miles Pierce notes, 'enabled local ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit to flourish'. In addition, Pierce writes, 'Melbourne's early public electricity supply development encompassed most of the evolutionary technical and structural facets of the industry' (Pierce 2010:64-658).

Ray Proudley in the *Encyclopedia of Melbourne* writes that:

In the late 1870s...electric lighting had its first impact on gas companies around the world. In [Australia] in 1881 the Victorian Electric Light Co. displayed an electric lamp (with the generator powered by a gas engine) outside its Swanston Street premises and the first Melbourne Electrical Exhibition took place in the following year...

Small electricity generating plants were [subsequently] installed to illuminate individual premises. The Victorian Electric Light Co. was succeeded by the Australian Electric Co. and later by the Melbourne Electric Supply Co. among numerous others. Locally, the first example of the general supply of electricity from a central point was the establishment by the Melbourne City Council of the Spencer Street Power Station from which the streets of the central business district were first illuminated on 7 March 1894...

In 1896 the Victorian Parliament enacted the Electric Light and Power Act to bring some sense of order and regulation to what until then had been a new and totally unregulated industry dealing in a potentially hazardous field (Proudley 2008).

Under the 1896 Act, a number of local councils operated Municipal Electricity Undertakings (MEUs), enabling them to manage electricity distribution and retailing to their ratepayers. The City of Melbourne took up the first MEU in 1897. Between 1898 and 1900 the Melbourne City Council acquired the assets of three private electricity companies operating within its municipal boundaries, creating a new company known as the Melbourne City Council Electricity Supply Department (MCCESD).

The Melbourne Electricity Supply Co (MES Co) formed in 1907, to service the metropolitan Melbourne region in general, changing its name from the Electric Light & Traction Company (Pierce 2010:62).

Demand for electricity grew rapidly in the early decades of the twentieth century. The bulk of the Melbourne metropolitan area was supplied by just two companies, the aforementioned MCCESD and MES Co. They obtained their supply from the Spencer Street Power Station until the Newport A Power station was built at the mouth of the Yarra River between 1913 and 1918. It was constructed

by the Victorian Railways to supply energy for the electrification of the suburban rail system from 1919, but also supplied bulk electricity to the MCESD and MES Co (Edwards 1969:27-29).

The State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SECV) was established in 1921 under the chairmanship of Sir John Monash. The first SECV projects were the construction of the first brown coal power plant at Newport B (adjacent to the Victorian Railways Newport A Traction Power Station), opened in 1921, and Yallourn A (the first Latrobe Valley power station), which opened in stages from 1924. Meanwhile, the SECV began to establish and develop its supply and distribution network. The first stage involved the construction of substations at key locations, which enabled the SECV to progressively assume control for the supply and distribution of power in the metropolitan area. From 1922 to 1924 four metropolitan substations were constructed: in the Melbourne City Council area, in operation from 1923; in Ascot Vale, in operation from 1924; in Brunswick, in operation from 1924; and in Collingwood, in operation from 1924. In 1930, the MES Co. was formally acquired by the SECV (Pierce 2010:64).

As Proudley writes,

However, as a consequence of the earlier private ownership, electricity distribution remained at least partly in the domain of local government with eleven Municipal Electrical Undertakings distributing and selling electricity purchased from the SECV [State Electricity Commission of Victoria], [which] [f]rom the 1950s to the early 1980s...expanded dramatically (Proudley 2008).

The Spencer Street Power Station supplied the inner city of Melbourne with electricity until the 1970s.

In 1994, the Kennett government launched an extensive reform of the Victorian electricity industry, resulting in the creation of five electricity distribution companies based on geographic regions that took over the responsibilities of the SECV and the 11 MEUs in inner Melbourne.

SITE HISTORY

The site of interest comprises the extant former Melbourne City Council Power Station buildings with frontages to Lonsdale, Spencer and Little Bourke streets, within the block bound by Lonsdale, Spencer, Little Bourke and King streets. Melbourne City Council Power Station (MCC Power Station) was also commonly known as the Spencer Street Power Station.

The subject buildings were developed in stages between 1908 and 1985, on or nearby the former MCC Power Station site, which existed on part of Crown Allotments 15 to 19, Block 17, which were set aside as a permanently reserve for general produce market ('Plan of Melbourne' 1838). 602-606 Little Bourke is located on part of Crown Allotment 12 and 13, Block 17, offered for sale in 1839 ('Plan of Melbourne' 1838).

Prior to its development as a municipal power station, the site was a timber yard surrounded by one to three storey brick buildings (see Figure 1).

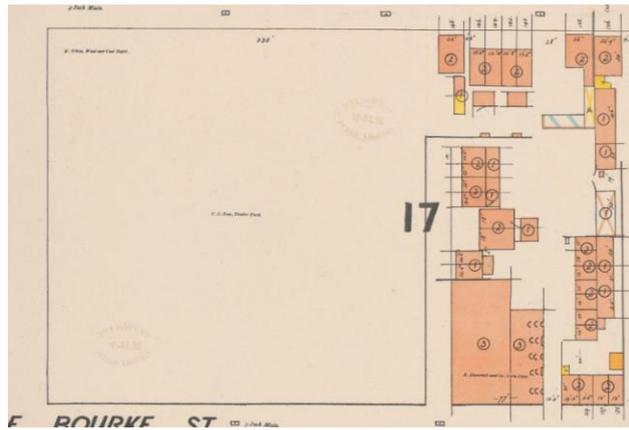


Figure 1. Detail from an 1888 fire survey plan shows the site as a timber yard and surrounding brick buildings prior to its development as a municipal power station. (source: Mahlstedt Map no 17, 1888)

An existing heritage citation prepared by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) describes the inception of the former MCC Power Station:

A power station to generate electricity was established on the corner of Spencer and Little Bourke streets in 1894 by the Melbourne City Council, initially to supply electricity for street lighting. The establishment of the Melbourne City Council Electricity Supply Department (MCCESD) was a major departure from privately owned power generators at the time, and the City of Melbourne was the first to do so. It was one of only four generators in the State at the time, and produced half the electricity then produced. The popularity of electricity for a range of purposes led to the rapid expansion of the facility, which saw the original turbine room and boiler house greatly expanded and altered many times before WWI ('Former Melbourne Power Station' VHD Place ID 65593).

The 1895 Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) plan shows the 1894 Electric Light Works building (altered and partially demolished) at the corner of Little Bourke and Spencer streets, surrounded by Melbourne City Council's corporate yard (see Figure 2). Not yet being part of the MCCESD site this time, part of 620-648 Little Bourke Street was occupied by a store, and the 602-606 Little Bourke St site was occupied by small-scale residences (MMBW Detail Plan no 737, 1895, SLV).

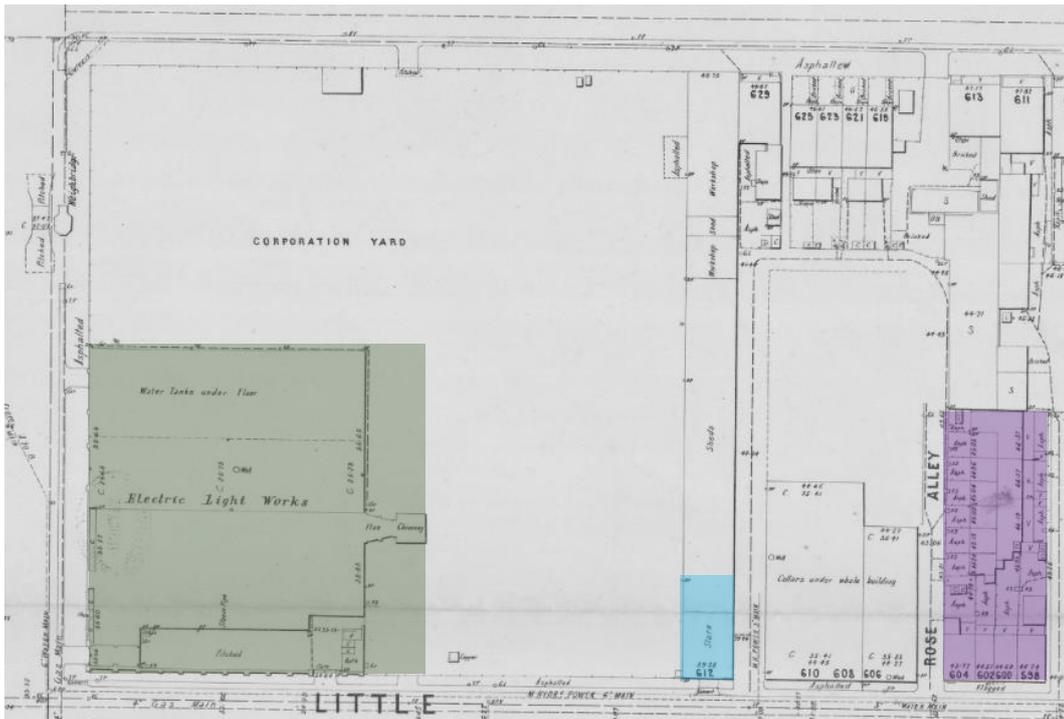


Figure 2. Detail from a Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works plan, showing the Electric Light Works at the corner of Little Bourke and Spencer streets (shaded green), a store occupying part of 620-648 Little Bourke Street (shaded blue), and the 602-606 Little Bourke St site (shaded purple), occupied by residences. (source: MMBW Detail Plan no 737, 1895, SLV)

In the first years of the twentieth century as the demand for electricity grew, the MCC Power Station in Spencer Street was substantially expanded. The changes between 1903 and 1907 involved extension of the Boiler House (1903), construction of a 24-inch diameter cast iron pipe to substitute the original cooling water tower (1904), and construction of a large chimney and coal facility (1907) (Elphinstone 1986:9). None of these early structures built from 1903 to 1907 remain today.

In 1908, the Offices building extant in Spencer Street replaced the front part of the 1894 turbine hall, and the Pumping House (later known as Economiser building) extant in Little Bourke Street were constructed, attached to the engine room which ran along Little Bourke Street. They were designed by the MCCESD ('Former Melbourne Power Station' VHD Place ID 65593).

The 1910 Mahlstedt plan shows the new Offices building fronting Spencer Street and the Pumping House (later Economiser building), both connected to the Boiler House (1903) and the 1894 turbine hall. The turbine hall, labelled 'Dynamo House' in Figure 3, had been extended towards east by this time. The site today known as 620-648 Little Bourke Street was occupied by the 1903 Boiler House and an attached iron store housing a chimney. The 602-606 Little Bourke Street site was cleared of the former small-scale residences by this time (Figure 3).

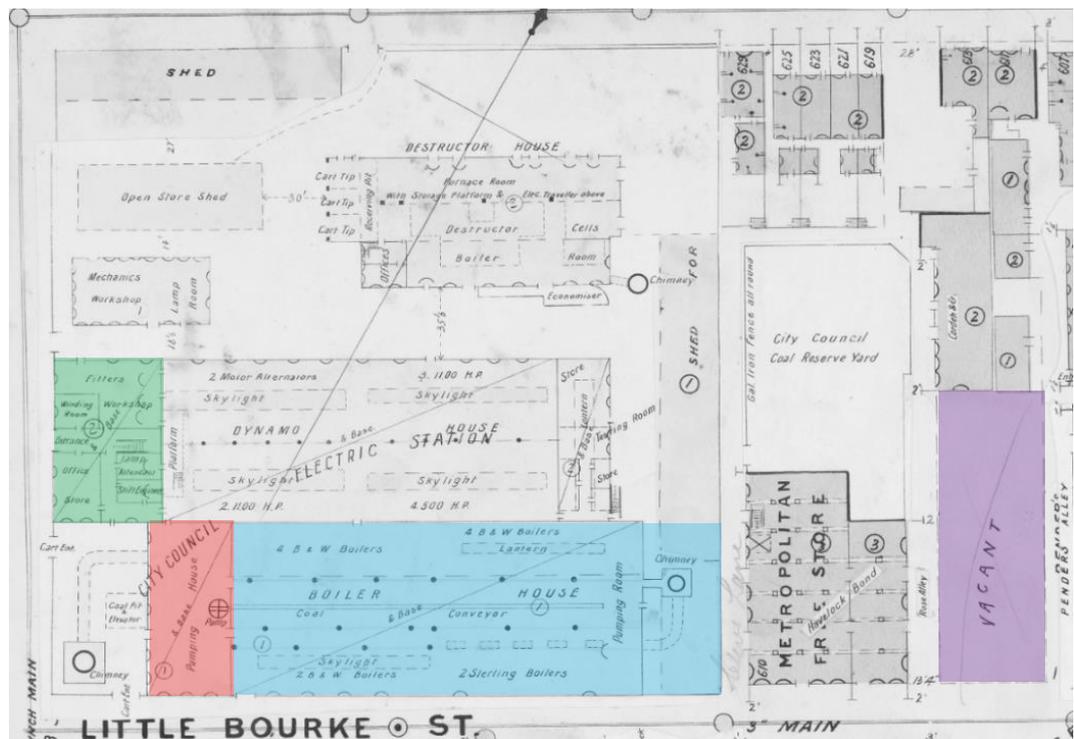


Figure 3. Detail from a 1910 fire survey plan shows the Pumping House (Economiser building, shaded red) and the Offices fronting Spencer Street (shaded green). The 620-648 Little Bourke Street site (shaded blue) was occupied by the 1903 Boiler House and an attached iron shed to east, and the 602-606 Little Bourke Street site was vacant (shaded purple). (Source: Mahlsted Map Section 1, no 22, 1910)

Further additions followed in the 1920s. The three-storey brick substation, today known as Substation J, was constructed in 1920, at the south-east corner of Lonsdale and Spencer streets (see Figure 4 and Figure 5) replacing iron sheds. The current two-storey brick building (known as Substation JA) on the eastern portion of 620-648 Little Bourke Street was constructed shortly after 1925, as a carpenters' workshop, which was part of a larger complex of brick workshops for tradesmen including blacksmiths and fitters built along Cleve Lane. Internally connected to the 1903 Boiler House fronting Little Bourke Street, these workshops were likely established to service the power station complex (see Figure 5).



Figure 4. Photograph from c1920 of the former MCC Power Station from the corner of Lonsdale and Spencer streets, showing Substation J and Offices building fronting Spencer Street. (Source: Citipower Collection, c1920)

called for tenders for building a 'Stores Building', at '600 Little Bourke Street', for the Melbourne City Council Electricity Supply Department (Age 5 November 1939:13). The Melbourne City Council called another tender in December 1949 for the erection and completion of a three-storey steel-framed and reinforced concrete Store Building, to a design from the City Architect's office (Age 14 December 1949:19). The Store Building, also known as the Electric Supply Store, became six-storey, being added with three storeys in 1955. In the 1950s, the site was interchangeably addressed as number 600, 602 or 602-604 Little Bourke Street, and by 1960, it became known as 602-606 Little Bourke Street (S&Mc 1950, 1955 & 1960).

The former Melbourne City Council Power Station in its fully developed state is shown in Figure 7, with extant buildings shown in different shades.



Figure 6. View of the power station buildings along Lonsdale Street, showing the Substation J brick building (with windows bricked in) (far right) and the new 1950s reinforced concrete buildings and tower to the east. (Source: Richards 1957, Museums Victoria [in copyright](#))



Figure 7. Showing the Melbourne City Spencer Street Power Station in the c1960s. The 602-606 Little Bourke Street building named 'MCC Store Bldg' (purple), the 1925 substation building (blue), the 1985 substation JA and service vehicle yard (dark blue hatching), the Economiser building (red), Offices (green), Substation J (yellow) and reinforced concrete additions to the south and east (pink), and overhead water tank (grey) can all be seen in relation to the other, now lost, buildings that comprised the electricity supply complex. (Source: Mahlstedt Map Section 1, no 22, 1948, with later amendments)

The MCC Power Station in Spencer Street was closed in 1982, and remained largely vacant and derelict for 25 years (Millar 2006). After the closure of the power station, the operation of Substation J continued under the management of the Melbourne City Council Electricity Supply Department.

In 1985 tenders were invited for the 'building demolition and removal of existing load bearing three-storey brick building, removal of heavy engineering equipment and concrete sub-structure' (Age 29 June 1985:159). This referred to the demolition of the 1903 boiler house, which was replaced in 1985 with the extant Substation JA at 620-648 Little Bourke Street (Age 7 August 1985:53). The Substation J (651-669 Lonsdale Street) and the Substation JA (620-648 Little Bourke Street) operated under the ownership of Melbourne City Council in conjunction with the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SECV) until the privatisation and transfer to CitiPower Ltd in 1998. Both substations today continue operation under the ownership of CitiPower Ltd (CT:V0372 F667).

The Offices building and Economiser building, both built in 1908, remain extant, being incorporated into the recently developed residential tower complex. In May 2006 the large substation site was sold to overseas developers, with asbestos removal and demolition commencing soon after to facilitate redevelopment. The historic tower fronting Lonsdale Street was dismantled in September 2007 and much of the site was cleared by April 2008 (ABC News Online 2007). In 2008-09 the 1950s section of the power station was demolished, as well as many other earlier buildings, including the earliest surviving structure of the MCC Power Station, the 1894 turbine hall behind the Offices building (VHD Place ID B6614).

By May 2012, the 602-606 Little Bourke Street building was in use as the City of Melbourne Archives building, retrofitted with climate and security control measures (Future Melbourne Committee 2012).

In 2012, the building contained 'approximately 10km of records' in the archives occupying the levels from the basement and third floor, and 'a variety of 7000+ [sic] works of art, textiles, photographs, objects, documents, sculptures and fountains' held in the Art and Heritage Collection on the fourth and fifth floor (Future Melbourne Committee 2012:4-5).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The former Melbourne City Council Power Station has become fragmented through development over time. The remaining buildings constitute a collection of industrial buildings built between 1908-1985, all of which were associated with the site's former use as the Melbourne City Council Power Station.

Offices building at part of 617-639 Lonsdale Street (Spencer Street frontage)



Figure 8. The Offices building, built to replace the front part of the 1894 turbine hall in 1908. (Source: Context, January 2020)

The two-storey Offices building, now part of 617-639 Lonsdale Street (Spencer Street frontage), was built in 1908. It is constructed in loadbearing red brickwork (Flemish bond) with free classical detailing favoured by the Victorian Italianate style. The building has had a large apartment tower built to its east. The principal façade and side walls remain extant.

The principal façade facing Spencer Street is symmetrically arranged and is divided into six bays separated by engaged pilasters that terminate at a moulded cornice above which sits a simple straight parapet. At the upper level five evenly spaced, vertically proportioned double hung timber sash windows sit between the pilasters and are distinguished by moulded cement architraves and scroll brackets that support substantial triangular and semi-circular (centre window) pediments. At the ground level four large circular arched windows sit either side of a central entrance door. The windows are fitted with multipaned fixed glazing that appears early and have unpainted basalt sills. The central round arched entry sits beneath a large triangular pediment supported by elaborate scroll brackets.

The remnant brick wall along the building's southern elevation is of brown brick laid in English bond. Utilitarian in detail several original openings remain with extant basalt sills and round (ground floor) and segmental (first floor) arched heads. Along the northern elevation the remnant wall is also of brown brick laid in English bond and is divided into three recessed bays with corbeled tops. Each bay comprises a round arched opening at the ground level with segmented arched windows above. Both side elevations show evidence of repair work to their brick walls.

Economiser building, at part of 617-639 Lonsdale Street (Little Bourke Street frontage)



Figure 9. The Economiser Building (earlier known as the Pumping House). (Source: Context, January 2020)

The single-storey Economiser building now part of 617-639 Lonsdale Street (Little Bourke Street frontage) was built in 1908 and is constructed in loadbearing red brickwork laid in English bond. Originally a simple building, rectangular in plan with gabled roof, a residential tower has been built to its north and within its air space above. In spite of the new development, all four original elevations and the original gabled roof form including the elevated roof lantern and internal roof trusses remain intact.

Designed with a temple form the building is distinguished by a prominent rendered cornice and pediment like gable end. Tall round arched windows with multipaned glazing are located along its principal elevation (Little Bourke Street) and remnant western wall and are set within rectangular brick reveals. Along the eastern elevation a single round arched window is set within a round arched reveal.

CitiPower substation (former Melbourne City Council Substation J and Control Building), 651-669 Lonsdale Street



Figure 10. Elevations of the CitiPower 'Substation J' at Lonsdale Street (left) and Spencer Street (right). (Source: Context, January 2020)

The CitiPower substation at 651-669 Lonsdale Street, comprises Substation J (1920), the 1950 addition to the south and the 1953 addition to the east (former Control Building).

Substation J is a three-storey brick building constructed in loadbearing red brickwork in English bond. Positioned on the south-east corner of Spencer Street and Lonsdale Street, it demonstrates characteristics of the Federation Free style with its incorporation of stripped back classical elements and use of natural materials. Its principal facades to Spencer Street and Lonsdale Street are divided into equally spaced bays separated by engaged pilasters that terminate at a smooth rendered cornice band with oversized brackets and round arched details that demarcate the buildings edges. A stepped parapet conceals the roof form behind. The original pattern of openings is still legible across both elevations with exposed concrete lintels extant, however, most openings have been bricked in. Some original windows remain along both elevations and are steel framed.

A warehouse building was added to the south of Substation J in 1950. Designed by City of Melbourne engineers, this utilitarian building of unadorned reinforced concrete, features simple steel-framed horizontal strip windows and simple geometric massing that is more typical of the interwar functionalist style which maintained popularity into the years immediately post war. A large mural has recently been painted over the building's Spencer Street façade.

The former Control building was added to the east of Substation J in 1953. Constructed of reinforced concrete and utilitarian in character, this cuboid building has no visible openings along its Lonsdale Street façade and is painted with a mural.



Figure 11. Warehouse building built to the south of Substation J in 1950 (Source: Context 2019)

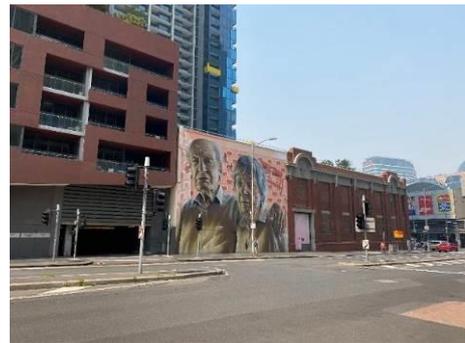


Figure 12. Former Control building built to the east of Substation J in 1953 (Source: Context 2019)

CitiPower Substation JA, 620-648 Little Bourke Street



Figure 13. CitiPower Substation JA, comprising buildings built shortly after 1925 (left) and in 1985 (right). (Source: Context, January 2020)

The CitiPower Substation JA incorporates two buildings, one built shortly after 1925 and the other in 1985, and an open service area for vehicle access between these buildings. Located on the northern side of Little Bourke Street with a side frontage to Cleve Lane, the 1925 substation is a simple two-storey factory building. Constructed of red face brick laid in English bond, the building has continuous unpainted concrete lintels over the window and door openings at the ground and first floor levels, typical of factory buildings in central Melbourne built in the 1920s. The principal façade fronting Little Bourke Street has a symmetrical two-bay form, with a double gabled parapet surmounted with a simple rendered capping. Within each gable is a circular ventilation opening. The ground floor has a pair of early timber doors on the right-hand side, and on the left, there is a large opening with louvres and external security bars. The brickwork below the window is not original, suggesting that the opening was originally a wide doorway that has been infilled. At the first-floor level there are four identical large window openings. On the eastern (Cleve Lane) elevation, the ground floor is punctuated by an irregular pattern of openings, including two windows of an identical pattern to those at the Little Bourke Street first floor level, as well as a wide roller shutter and other doorways for loading and unloading, one of which appears to have retained its original steel door. The first floor has five windows, also of the same pattern, as well as a narrow full height opening. Most of the windows are the original multi-pane steel frame windows.

The rear section of the building adjacent to Cleve Lane has been demolished and replaced with a single-storey steel shed, along with the original chimney, probably in 2006 as early works in association with proposed redevelopment of the site.

The service vehicle yard is enclosed by a high wall with a rolling shutter extending eastward from the principal (southern) elevation of the 1985 substation building and terminating at the western wall of the 1925 building.

The two-storey 1985 part of Substation JA is of concrete construction and features references to classical architecture and, like the neighbouring 1908 Economiser building, features a plain face brick-clad upper level plane with concrete-render cornices. Treated like an exaggerated entablature, the upper plane is supported by a series of stylised granite Ionic columns floating from the lower level wall, creating a colonnade-like effect. The precast concrete wall is ruled to create a brickwork effect and currently overpainted with a mural. There is a roller shutter in the ground level entry.

Overhead Water Tank



Figure 14. The Overhead Water Tank, built 1888 and relocated to this site in c1927. (Source: Context, February 2020)

The Overhead Water Tank is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register (H2117). The Statement of Significance describes the water tank as below.

The Overhead Water Tank is constructed of prefabricated cast iron panels connected via a series of tie rods and is supported over a laneway on a steel framed structure. The tank is fourteen panels long by 5 panels wide. The side of the tank are two panels high and it is divided internally into three roughly equal compartments. A number of pipes and valves associated with the function of the tank are extant as are a number of valve covers at ground level which are associated with the supply of water and the distribution of high pressure water ('Overhead Water Tank', VHD Place ID 11537).

Melbourne City Council Archives (former Store Building), 602-606 Little Bourke Street



Figure 15. 602-606 Little Bourke Street, built in 1949 and 1955. (Source: Context 2019)

602-606 Little Bourke Street is a six-storey warehouse building with a basement. It was originally built in 1949 with three-storeys. Three additional levels were added in 1955. The building has secondary frontages to Rose Lane to the west and Pender Alley to the east. The building exhibits some characteristics of the interwar Functionalist style, including the horizontal groupings of multi-paned windows divided by rusticated mullions and a continuous vertical pier. The building is of reinforced concrete construction with an exposed concrete finish. The façade has undergone extensive repairs where the surface appears to have spalled. The building terminates in a simple undecorated horizontal parapet.

The principal façade to Little Bourke Street is symmetrical except for a continuous vertical bay of windows at its western end. Original multipane steel framed windows appear to be extant, each frame comprising six horizontally proportioned sashes, one of which is openable. At street level, the façade comprises a large opening at the eastern end with a roller shutter, and a similar width opening to the

left infilled with two modules of vertically proportioned steel frame windows with three sashes to each (one sash has been infilled). The three openings feature unusual recessed corbelled lintels.

The Pender Alley and Rose Lane elevations are of simple exposed concrete, and do not have rusticated mullions. The window openings are of a similar size and proportion to those of the Little Bourke Street façade, with original multipaned steel frame windows.

INTEGRITY

Although substantial redevelopment of the former power station site has occurred in recent years, as a group the former Melbourne City Council Power Station buildings retain the ability to demonstrate their original purpose as a power station established to generate electricity by the Melbourne City Council. The majority of the buildings' original scale, materiality, form and interrelationships remain legible and demonstrate the site's evolution from the early twentieth century into the postwar era. Individually:

- the two-storey Offices building (1908) fronting Spencer Street has had few changes to the original street elevation. The building's original scale, materiality and form remains clearly legible as a Federation Free Classical building built as offices for the wider former MCC Electrical Power Station complex of buildings. There is a recent tower development built above the Offices building, set back from the original building's facade;
- the single storey Economiser building (1908) fronting Little Bourke Street is largely intact with very few changes visible to original fabric. The building's original scale, materiality and form remain legible as a stripped classical building with a temple form, despite the recent construction of a large apartment tower at the rear. It retains its original fenestration, roof form including roof lantern and internal trusses. There is a recent tower development built above the Economiser building, set back from the street boundary;
- Substation J (1920) at 651-669 Lonsdale Street is largely intact with some changes visible to original or early fabric. The building retains its original scale, materiality and form and whilst some openings have been bricked in, the original pattern and size of fenestrations remain clearly legible. Extensions to the building's south (1950) and east (1953) are both largely intact and provide tangible evidence of the building's ongoing use as part of the former MCC Power Station into the postwar era;
- Substation JA at 620-648 Little Bourke Street, comprising the 1925 building (formerly a workshop) and the 1985 substation building is largely intact. Changes to the 1925 building have occurred to original or early fabric for its subsequent conversion and ongoing use as a substation. The building retains its original scale, materials and form. The 1985 substation building is highly intact to its 1985 scale, materials and form as a late twentieth century substation commissioned by the MCC Electricity Supply Department. The ground level precast concrete wall of the 1985 substation is overpainted with mural;
- the former Store Building at 602-606 Little Bourke Street is largely intact with few changes visible to the building in its six-storey 1955 form. The building retains its 1955 scale, materiality and form as a warehouse building, and also retains most of its original fenestration and steel frame windows.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The earliest substations were small scaled buildings with their importance not necessarily reflected in their design. With the significant expansion of electricity supply in the interwar period efforts were made to produce building designs that reflected their location and the importance of their function. Electrical substations across Melbourne show a variety of architectural styles, generally reflecting the civic and urban design concerns of the municipal electricity supply departments, the earlier electric companies and the role of the SECV. Pavilion styles proliferate in parkland areas of the Domain and the Fitzroy Gardens. Substations in urban streetscapes tend to exhibit more austere modernist features, or a simpler functional industrial aesthetic or present as a simple gable roofed 'shed'. Even in the more austere examples there is generally brickwork detail and care taken in their massing and composition (Biosis, 2007:19-25).

While many small-scale substations were erected across the City of Melbourne, larger scale substations of two or more storeys are mostly found outside the central Melbourne. These include the 1920s Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramway Board substations at 214-222 Queensberry Street, Carlton (VHR H2325, HO1135) and 67-69 Clarke Street, Southbank (Interim HO1223), as well as the North Melbourne substation at the National Electricity Substation in Arden Street, Kensington. These were erected to supplement electricity for the railway and tramway services from and to the City of Melbourne, rather than for the supply of electricity to the municipality.

There are no other examples of large power stations comprising multiple buildings and built for a similar purpose within the City of Melbourne.

The following examples are all former Melbourne City Council substations in central Melbourne, currently operating as CitiPower substations. These examples are comparable with some of the subject buildings, being of a similar style, construction date and/or original use. The images and descriptions are provided by CoM Maps unless stated otherwise, with images dated c2000 or later.

Substation, 1-3 Evans Lane, 1913 (Contributory within interim HO1297 Little Lonsdale Street Precinct – Recommended in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review)

Built in 1913 by builders Reynolds Bros to designs by architect W Rain, this warehouse was converted to an electrical substation in 1928, as part of a program by the City of Melbourne to supply new substations in the 1920s. It continues to operate as a substation today.



Figure 16. 1-3 Evans Lane, constructed in 1913.

CitiPower (formerly Melbourne City Council Substation), 23-25 George Parade, c1938 (Interim HO1248 – Recommended as significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review)

23-25 George Parade was substantially altered in the interwar period as part of its substation conversion, in response to the expansion of electricity supply and distribution in Melbourne. It still operates as a substation.



Figure 17. 23-25 George Parade, constructed in 1938. (Source: Context 2017)

CitiPower (formerly Melbourne City Council Substation), 10-14 Park Street, 1928 (Interim HO1257– Recommended as significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review)

10-14 Park Street is one of several small scale electrical substations built in the interwar period as part of the expansion of electricity supply and distribution and operated for over 60 years as part of the Melbourne City Council's electricity supply department. It still operates as a substation.



Figure 18. 10-14 Park Street, constructed in 1928. (Source: Context 2017)

CitiPower (formerly Melbourne City Council Substation), 11-27 Tavistock Place, 1927 (Interim HO1249 – recommended as significant in the Hoddle Grid Heritage Review)

11-27 Tavistock Place is a large electrical substation built by the Melbourne City Council Electricity Supply Department in 1927 as part of an upgrade of electrical supply and distribution. It is one of several substations built at the edges of the Hoddle Grid which facilitated the residential, commercial and industrial expansion of the city.



Figure 19. 11-27 Tavistock Place, constructed in 1927. (Source: Context 2017)

Built as part of the City of Melbourne's programme for provision of electricity services, the above HO-listed interwar substations are comparable with the Substation J (1920) and JA (c1925), both of which supplemented the Council's electricity scheme to meet the rapidly increasing demands for electric supply in the interwar period. The overall materiality and characteristic elements seen in Substation J, such as equally spaced bays separated by engaged pilasters, a smooth rendered cornice band with oversized brackets, and round arched details, are consistent with the architectural character of later interwar substations built by Melbourne City Council. The 1927 substation at 11-27 Tavistock Place is highly comparable with the Substation J, in this respect. Similar oversized brackets and rendered cornice are also used in the 1928 substation at 23-25 George Parade.

The c1925 Substation JA is more closely comparable to the 1928 substation at 10-14 Park Street and the 1913 warehouse building converted to a substation at 1-3 Evans Lane. The later c1938 substation at 23-25 George Parade has some elements similar to the now-demolished turbine house building, which existed in Lonsdale Street in the former MCC Power Station site. In terms of its materials and use of elements, the 1920s brick building exhibits design features typical of early twentieth century warehouse buildings. Consistent with other industrial buildings from this period, the windows feature a ventilation system where the bottom row of sashes is angled back and the gap above covered in mesh to provide a measure of permanent ventilation.

The group of surviving structures of the former Melbourne City Council Power Station is distinguished from the above examples of single substations in central Melbourne. First established in 1894, the Melbourne City Council Power Station was the primary location for the City of Melbourne's Municipal Electricity Undertakings (MEUs) commenced in 1897. The extant group of buildings on the site dating from 1908 to 1985 remain as physical evidence of the City's undertaking to expand the electricity supply for the municipality.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	<p>CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).</p>
	<p>CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).</p>
	<p>CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).</p>
✓	<p>CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)</p>
	<p>CRITERION G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).</p>
	<p>CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an amendment to HO737. The former Melbourne City Council Power Station is recommended as an individual heritage place.

Amend HO737 (204-240 Spencer Street, Melbourne) to reflect the following changes:

- Apply HO737 to the former Melbourne City Council Power Station at (Part of) 617-639 Lonsdale Street, 651-669 Lonsdale Street, 602-606 Little Bourke Street, and 620-648 Little Bourke Street Melbourne
- Change the entry in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay to 'Former Melbourne City Council Power Station, (Part of) 617-639 Lonsdale Street, 651-669 Lonsdale Street, 602-606 Little Bourke Street, and 620-648 Little Bourke Street Melbourne'.
- Amend the map for HO737 to match the changes noted above.
- Retain HO950 'Overhead Water Tank, Spencer Street, Melbourne' (VHR H2117).

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Melbourne Planning Scheme:

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

OTHER

N/A

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- Victorian Heritage Database (VHD), 'Former Melbourne Power Station', National Trust Place ID B6614, accessed online 5 April 2019.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** C (619-629 Lonsdale Street)
C (629-669 Lonsdale Street)

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** C (619-629 Lonsdale Street)
C (629-669 Lonsdale Street)

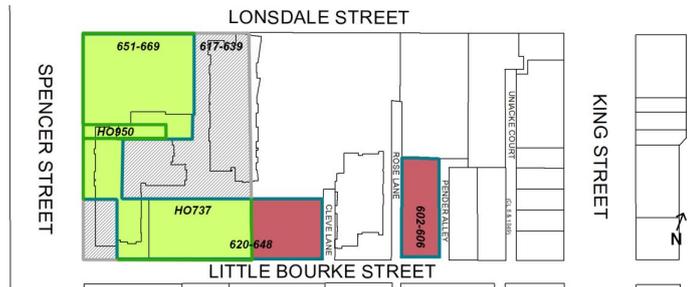
**Review of Heritage
overlay listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Melbourne City Council Power Station

PS ref no: HO737



What is significant?

The former Melbourne City Council Power Station buildings, (part of) 617-639 Lonsdale Street, 651-669 Lonsdale Street, 602-606 Little Bourke Street, and 620-648 Little Bourke Street Melbourne, located across the block bounded by Little Bourke, Lonsdale and Spencer streets, built between 1908 and 1985.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include:

- CitiPower substation (Substation J) at 651-669 Lonsdale Street, which comprises the brick substation from 1920, and the reinforced concrete additions to the south from 1950s and to the east in 1953 (former Control Building);
- External walls to the façade and north and south elevations of the Office Building, now part of 617-639 Lonsdale Street (with frontages to Spencer Street);
- Economiser Building, now part of 617-639 Lonsdale Street (with frontages to Little Bourke Street), built in 1908;
- Overhead Water Tank, fashioned out of prefabricated cast-iron panels in 1888 and relocated to this site in 1927;

- Substation JA at 620-648 Little Bourke Street, which comprises the post-1925 substation (built as a workshop and later converted to a substation) adjacent to Cleve Lane and a large substation constructed in 1985 on the site of the former 1903 Boiler House; and
- Melbourne City Council Archives building (former Store Building) at 602-606 Little Bourke Street.

Recent changes, including the interventions to the original fabric during redevelopment works after 2006 and associated apartment towers, are not significant.

How it is significant?

The former Melbourne City Council Power Station buildings, (part of) 617-639 Lonsdale Street, 651-669 Lonsdale Street, 602-606 Little Bourke Street, and 620-648 Little Bourke Street Melbourne, are of historic, rarity and representative significance to the City of Melbourne. The overhead water tank (VHR H2117) is of historic, rarity and technical significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why it is significant?

The former Melbourne City Council Power Station buildings, built between 1908 and 1985, are historically significant for their association with the development of Melbourne's electricity supply network established in 1894 and for their ability to demonstrate the provision of electricity to metropolitan Melbourne by Melbourne City Council from 1894 into the early 1980s. In 1894, Melbourne City Council was the first metropolitan council in Victoria to establish its own electricity supply and distribution network, which in turn facilitated the residential, commercial and industrial expansion of the city. The form, scale and fabric of the individual buildings provides physical evidence of the system's expansion during the early decades of the twentieth century into the postwar era and a range of the power station's component parts.

The surviving physical fabric of the former power station site is significant as rare surviving evidence of the infrastructure built by the Melbourne City Council Electricity Supply Department as part of Melbourne's expanding electricity network, and as a substantial remnant of the former Melbourne City Council Power Station, which was closed in 1982. Following the closure of the power station, the extant Substation J (651-669 Lonsdale Street) and Substation JA (620-648 Little Bourke Street) operated under the ownership of Melbourne City Council in conjunction with the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SECV) until the privatisation of the electricity industry saw it transferred to CitiPower Ltd in 1998. Substation JA represents the continued use of the site for the supply of electricity into the 1980s, before the privatisation of the electricity industry. (Criteria A and B)

The overhead water tank at the former MCC Power Station is of historic significance as the only surviving element of the original nineteenth-century system that generated and supplied hydraulic power across the City of Melbourne until the 1960s. (Criteria A and B)

The former Melbourne City Council Power Station site comprises individual buildings that are significant as representative examples of their type. Substation J (part of 651-699 Lonsdale Street), a three-storey brick substation built in 1920, is a representative example of a Melbourne City Council substation designed by its own architects' branch. Utilitarian in its design, it incorporates stripped back classical elements and natural materials. Details used in Substation J are consistent with the architectural

character of other later interwar substations built by Melbourne City Council. The post-1925 CitiPower substation at the eastern part of 620-648 Little Bourke Street is a largely intact example of an interwar factory building, consistent in form, scale and materiality with the many low-scale warehouse/factory buildings of similar utilitarian character. The lack of superfluous decoration reinforces the building's disciplined industrial aesthetic. (Criterion D)

The overhead water tank at the former MCC Power Station is of scientific (technical) significance for its early and rare use of prefabricated cast iron panels. This type of construction allowed for its reuse at the former MCC Power Station site, albeit at a reduced scale to suit the different pumping arrangements. (Criterion F)

Primary source

Hoddle Grid Heritage Review (Context & GJM Heritage, 2020)