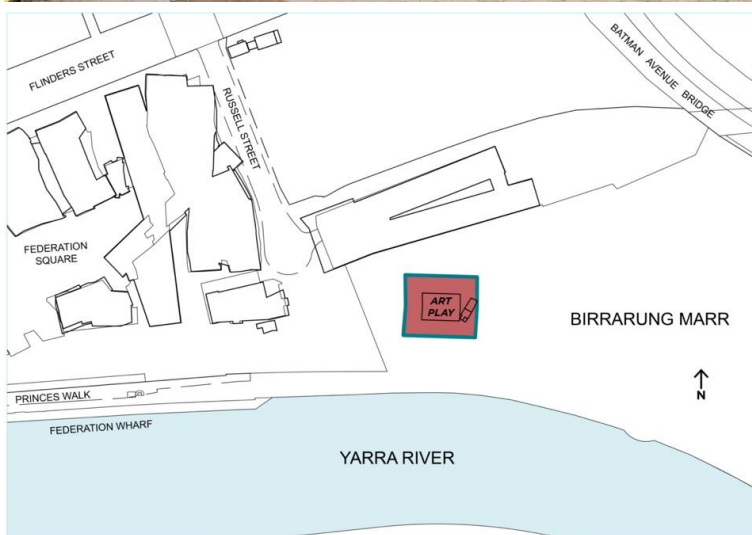


SITE NAME	Former Princes Bridge Lecture Room [also known as ArtPlay (current name)]
STREET ADDRESS	Princes Walk, Birrarung Marr Melbourne
PROPERTY ID	592820



SURVEY DATE: June 2020

SURVEY BY: GJM Heritage

HERITAGE INVENTORY	No	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY	No
PLACE TYPE	Individual Heritage Place	PROPOSED CATEGORY	Significant
		FORMER GRADE	C
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Victorian Railways Department	BUILDER:	Not known
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Federation/Edwardian Period (1902-c1918)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1916-17

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Research undertaken in preparing this citation focused on the rail history of the site and did not address associations with Aboriginal people or organisations	Aboriginal Themes (Hoddle Grid Heritage Review, Stage 2 Volume 3 Aboriginal Heritage, March 2019) have therefore not been identified here
HISTORIC THEMES	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES
6 Creating a functioning city	6.7 Transport

LAND USE

THEMATIC MAPPING AND LANDUSE	
1890s	Railway yards, baths, morgue
1920s	Railway yards
1960s	Railway yards

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: To an extent of 10m from each original building elevation

SUMMARY

The Former Princes Bridge Lecture Room was constructed in 1916-17 as a purpose-built training facility for the Victorian Railways Department. Training of railway staff was an essential part of the process to electrify the metropolitan rail network and special facilities were required to adequately provide instruction on the control of electrically operated trains.

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

Development of the Princes Bridge/Jolimont Railway Yards

[The following historical information is largely drawn from Mike Williams 'Jolimont Railway Yards', *The Encyclopedia of Melbourne*].

The Princes Bridge railway yards (later the Jolimont railway yards) developed to the east of Princes Bridge, on the southern edge of the Hoddle Grid and adjacent to the Yarra River. This site was included in a large tract of land set aside by 1838 as a 'Reserve for Public Purposes' (Lovell Chen:7).

Flinders Street station, to the west of Princes Bridge, was opened by the Melbourne and Hobson's Bay Railway Company in 1854. In 1859 the Melbourne and Suburban Railway Company opened Princes Bridge station – opposite Flinders Street station and east of Princes Bridge – as the city terminal for the new railway line to Richmond (Harrigan:179). In 1865 the companies amalgamated to form the Melbourne and Hobson's Bay United Railway Company and two culverts were excavated under Swanston Street to link the two stations. All passenger traffic was relocated to Flinders Street station (Harrigan:58) and the area east of Princes Bridge was opened up as a marshalling and repair yard for the newly formed company. A two-track viaduct connection, linking the Princes Bridge railway yards with Spencer Street station and the western railway network, was constructed in 1888 and a large locomotive depot was built concurrently in the Princes Bridge railway yards.

The Victorian Railways Department commenced preparation for the electrification of the Melbourne metropolitan railway system in the 1910s and two substantial buildings were constructed at the eastern end of the renamed Jolimont railway yards in c1917. The 1888 locomotive depot was replaced by the Jolimont car shed and workshops - built for the initial conversion of suburban trains for electric operation and for the ongoing maintenance and repair of the electric fleet, while the Jolimont substation – the largest of the seven substations built to distribute power to the railway network – was built further to the east. A third building, the Princes Bridge lecture room, was constructed concurrently in Batman Avenue at the southern boundary of the railway yards, adjacent to the Corporation Free Baths which had been established in this location in the 1870s (*The Australasian*, 2 November 1872:21) and the City Morgue (see Figure 1).

Throughout the twentieth century the Jolimont railway yards were considered an unsightly and divisive expanse which separated the city from the Yarra River and the public reserves to the south (Figure 2). From as early as the 1920s development proposals suggested roofing the yards to enable utilisation of the air space above (eg *Weekly Times*, 18 February 1928:5) (Figure 3) however, it was not until the 1960s that the Princes Bridge station buildings were demolished and the Princes Gate development constructed, spanning across the railway tracks above the north-western portion of the railway yards. This development provided a public plaza, two 15-storey office towers and a new station entrance and platforms (Brown-May & Day:20).

Major changes were made to the Jolimont railway yards in the 1970s and 1990s. Construction of the underground city loop railway in the 1970s resulted in the demolition of the Jolimont substation and the replacement of a number of signal boxes with a single Metro train control facility in Batman Avenue (Dornan & Henderson:94) (Figure 4). In the 1990s much of the western and southern portions of the Jolimont railway yards were altered due to the expansion of the Melbourne Park tennis centre, the diversion of Batman Avenue over the Jolimont railway yards to connect to Exhibition Street, the closure of the western end of Batman Avenue and the creation of an extensive public recreation

reserve along the Yarra River. As a result, many buildings were demolished including the Jolimont car shed and workshops, the majority of buildings in Batman Avenue - including the recently constructed Metro train control facility - and the 1960s Princes Gate development. A large public space, Federation Square, was constructed above the western portion of the former railway yards and the land between the Yarra River and the Batman Avenue diversion was developed into the public recreation reserve, Birrarung Marr. The Princes Bridge lecture room is the only building from the Jolimont railway yards to remain after extensive redevelopment in the 1990s.

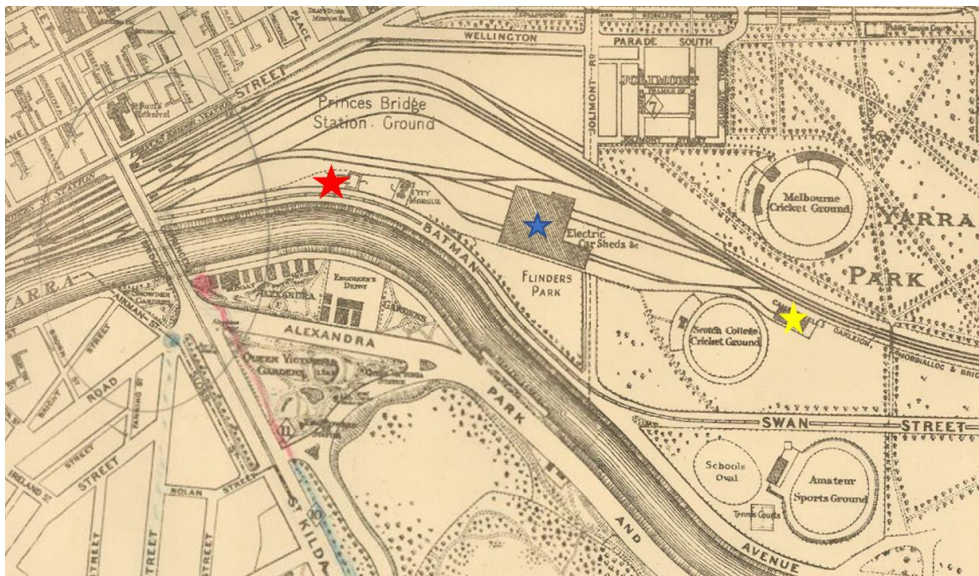


Figure 1. Map of the Princes Bridge railway yards prior to construction of the lecture room, Melbourne & Suburbs, Dept of Crown Lands & Survey, 1910 and later (note: the 'Electric car shed's and 'substation' were built after 1910). Red star indicates location of the Princes Bridge lecture hall, blue star: Jolimont car shed & workshops and yellow star: Jolimont substation. (Source: SLV)



Figure 2. Aerial view from the north-west, showing the extent of the Jolimont railway yards, Victorian Railways, c 1945-c1954 (Source: SLV).

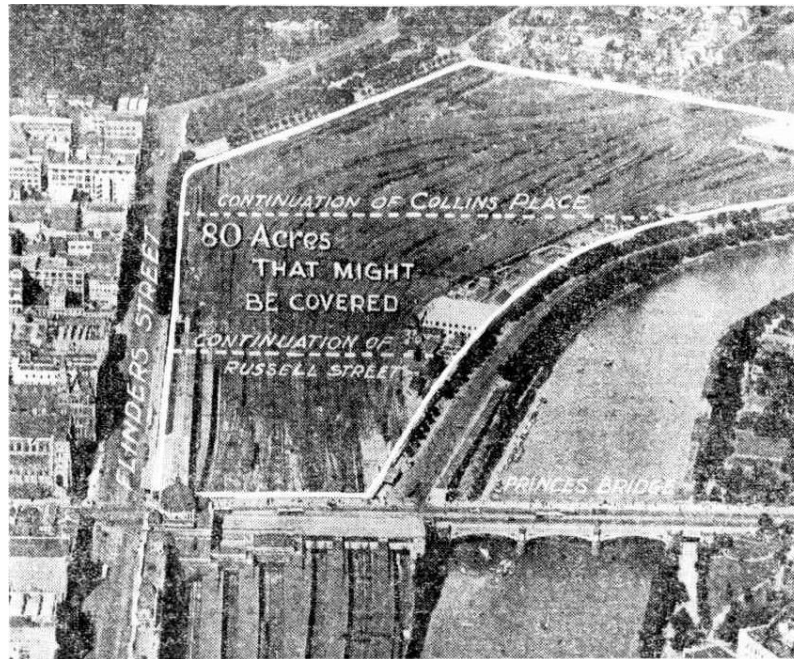


Figure 3. Weekly Times, 18 February 1928, p 5

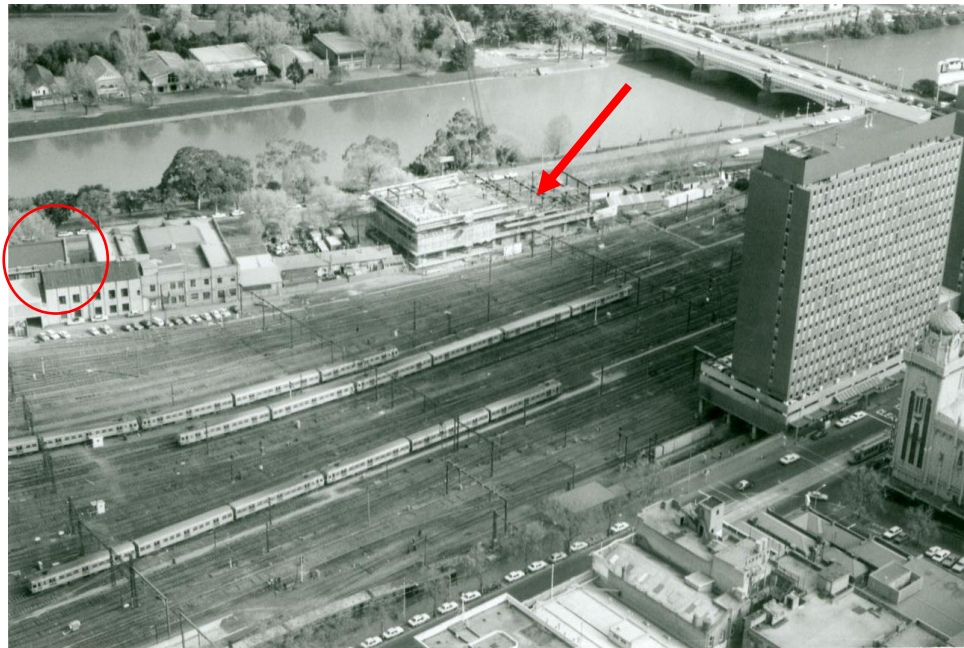


Figure 4. View of Jolimont Railway Yards from ANZ Tower, 1979, showing subject building (circled), Metro train control facility under construction (arrow) and Princes Gate tower to the right. (Source: Culture Victoria website).

Electrification of the Melbourne Metropolitan Railway System

[The following historical information is drawn from A Ward & Assoc, *Metropolitan Railway System Electricity Substations Heritage Analysis*, 1991]

Electrification of the Melbourne metropolitan railway network was first considered in the 1890s; however, it was not until 1907 that negotiations were entered into with English engineer Charles H Merz to investigate the conversion of the existing railway system to an electrical system. With experience of railway electrification as an engineer in England, Merz was engaged by the Victorian Government in June 1907 to examine the existing rail network and report on the feasibility of the conversion of 124 route miles (200 kilometres) of the metropolitan system by 1912. After

consideration it was decided that electrification was not warranted at the time, however some preparatory steps were taken.

Conversion was again recommended as a part of general improvements to Melbourne's transport services and Merz, now in partnership with William MacLellan, was engaged in 1912 to review his electrification plan. His scheme of utilising an overhead wire system was adopted, resulting in the authorised electrification of the entire suburban rail system of 150 route miles (241 kilometres). Merz subsequently travelled to London to arrange tenders and prepare contract specifications for drawings and E P Grove was appointed Chief Superintending Engineer for the project in October 1913.

Merz's initial proposal for electrification required the construction of a main power station and a number of substations to be placed in strategic positions on already established railway lines. The proposed location of the power station was Yarraville, with substations at Princes Bridge, Middle Brighton, Newmarket, Glenroy, Newport, Albion, Macleod, Caulfield, Springvale, Mentone, Seaford, East Camberwell, Mitcham, North Fitzroy and Reservoir (*Victorian Railways Annual Report* year ending 1914). By August 1913, a number of suitable sites had been selected: these were as close as possible to the tracks to be electrified and, in the majority of cases, on railway land (*Age* 27 August 1913:11).

The proposed power station was moved from Yarraville to Newport, at the mouth of the Yarra River to ensure an adequate flow of circulating water, and construction of this building commenced in December 1913 (Harrigan:110). The first turbo-generator at the power station began to supply energy on 20 June 1918 (Harrigan:111). The power station has since been demolished.

In early 1914, sites for a number of substations, including Newport, Princes Bridge (known as Jolimont after 1918), Newmarket, Middle Brighton and Glenroy, had been approved and contemporary photographs indicate that construction commenced that year. Construction of this group neared completion by the end of 1915 and additional substations at North Fitzroy and Albion were completed soon after. The substation at Princes Bridge (Jolimont) was the largest of these (Dornan & Henderson:15).

The first electric train service on the suburban railway network began operation between Essendon and Sandringham in May 1919, however it took another four years to complete the scheme, with lines to Ringwood and Eltham completed in 1923. On completion, the system was the first electric train service in Australia, the largest electrified suburban train service converted from steam operation in the world, and included the largest power generating plant in the southern hemisphere.

Electrification of the rail network resulted in reduced travel times and encouraged the development of many outlying Melbourne suburbs.

The original substations at Jolimont and Brighton have been demolished – the former was demolished in 1973 to enable construction of the underground city loop.

SITE HISTORY

The Former Princes Bridge Lecture Room, Birrarung Marr was completed in 1917 as part of the electrification of the Melbourne suburban railway network. Training of railway staff was an essential part of the electrification process and special facilities were required to adequately provide instruction on the control of electrically operated trains. It was estimated that approximately 150 skilled men would be required for the first section of line and railway employees were selected to attend classes (*Argus* 25 January 1918:6).

Initial plans were to equip the existing lecture theatre at Flinders Street station with electrical apparatus to provide technical instruction to motormen, guards and shunters (*Argus* 7 January 1916:4; *Age* 7 January 1916:6). The necessary installation of large pieces of demonstration equipment resulted in a decision to construct an entirely new facility for this purpose and a site in Batman Avenue, at the southern boundary of the Princes Bridge/Jolimont railway yards, was selected. The extensive Victorian Railway Jolimont car shed and workshop and the Jolimont substation, were being constructed at this time within the yards, on separate sites further to the east, also as part of the electrification of the Melbourne metropolitan railway system (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Part of Panoramic view of Flinders Street yard from C T Stephenson, *The Electrification of the metropolitan railway system of Melbourne*, 1919.

Drawings for the lecture room were completed in 1914 (see Figures 6-10), various tenders were called in 1915 (*The Argus*, 4 May:3 & 22 May 1915:11) and the building was nearing completion by early 1917 (*The Herald*, 18 January 1917:1). Samples of the apparatus that the staff were required to operate were installed and classes commenced on 1 February 1917 (*The Argus*, 25 January 1918:6) under the direction of instructor Mr J Rist, an employee of the Central London Railway with wide experience as an instructor of motormen (*The Herald*, 18 January 1917:1) (Figures 11-16).

The building was specifically designed as a single, well-lit double-height space with exposed steel trusses and large highlight windows. This enabled the accommodation of necessary equipment, including:

..... a complete car equipment arranged so to leave each part of the equipment easily accessible to the scholars and teacher. Adequate writing diagrams are hung on the walls, and when the men have received some knowledge of the principles underlying trains operation they are taken out on the trains and receive practical training under working conditions (C T Stephenson:58).

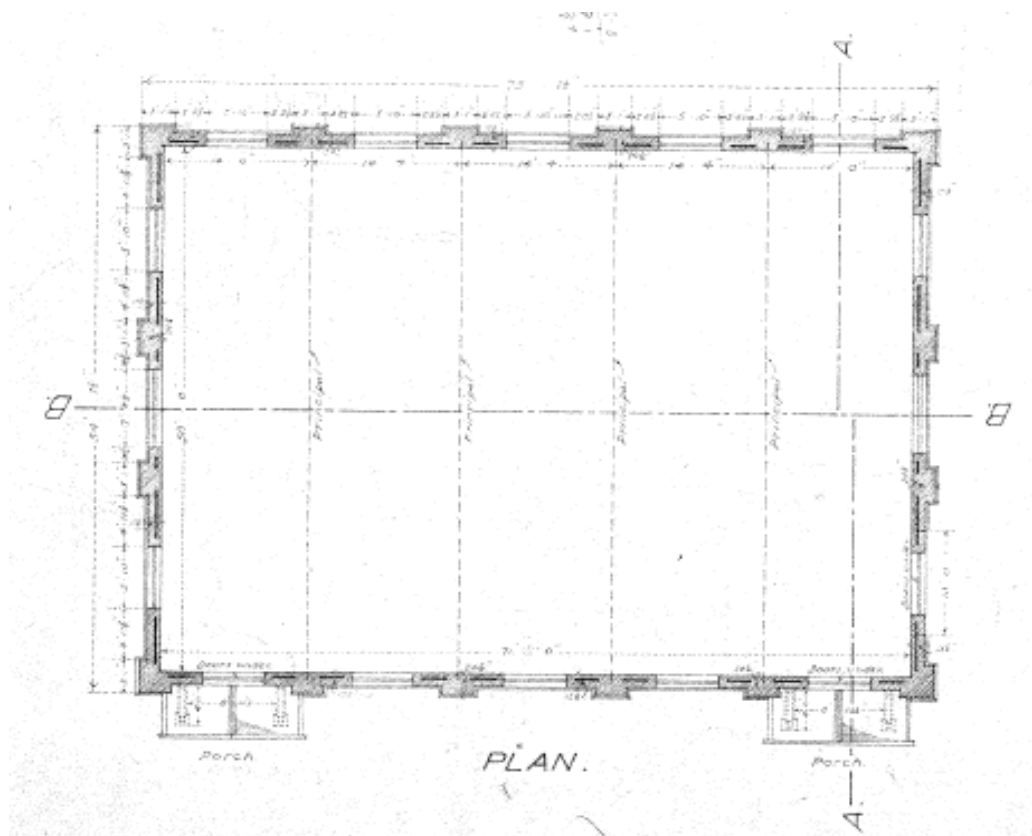
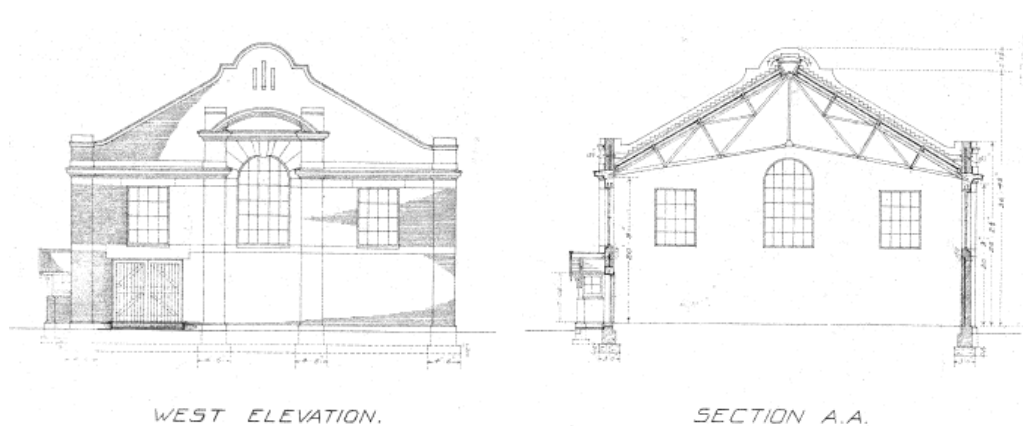


Figure 6. Plan of the Princes Bridge Lecture Room, dated 1914. (Source: PTV Drawing Management System)



Figures 7 & 8. West elevation and section, Princes Bridge Lecture Room, dated 1914. (Source: PTV Drawing Management System)

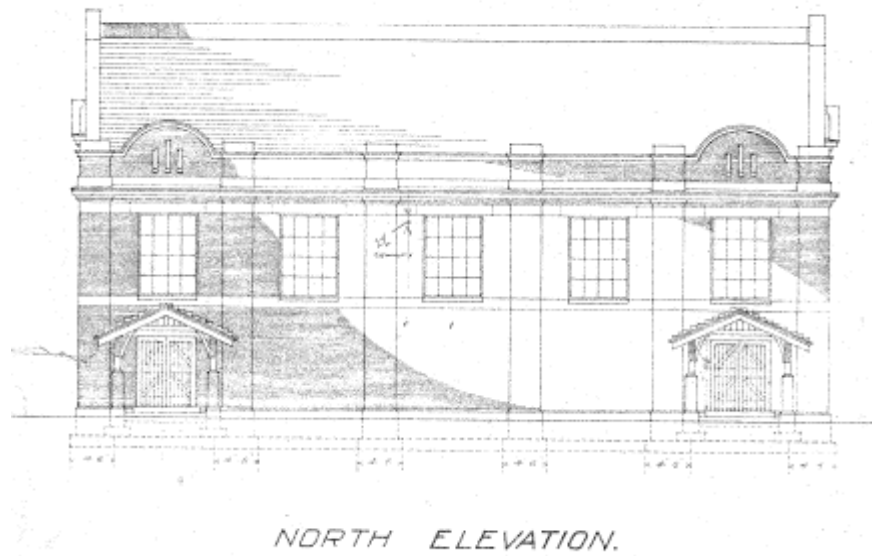


Figure 9. North elevation, Princes Bridge Lecture Room, dated 1914. (Source: PTV Drawing Management System)

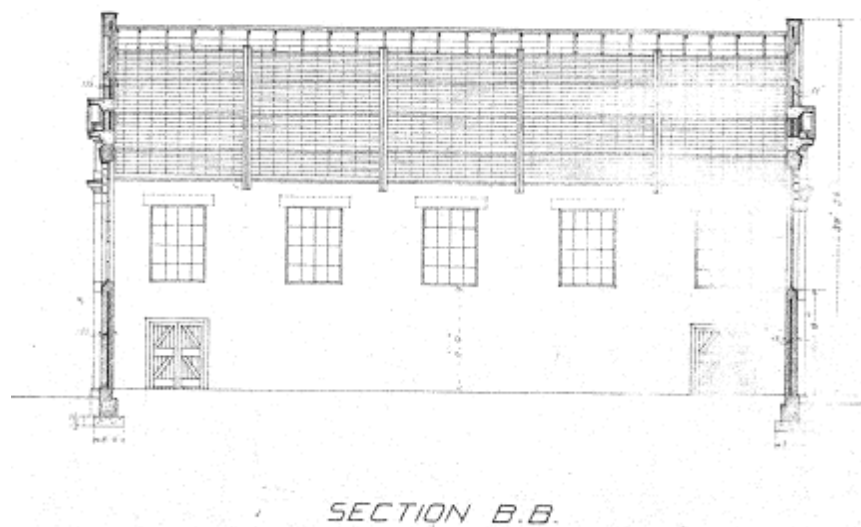
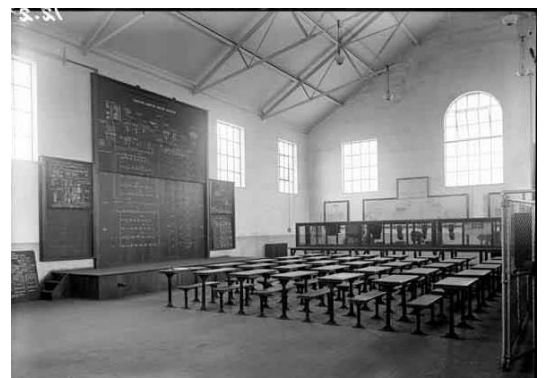
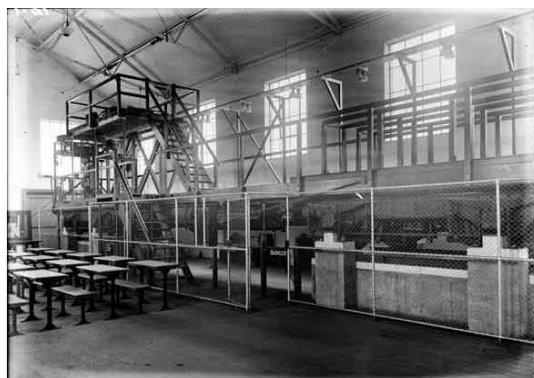


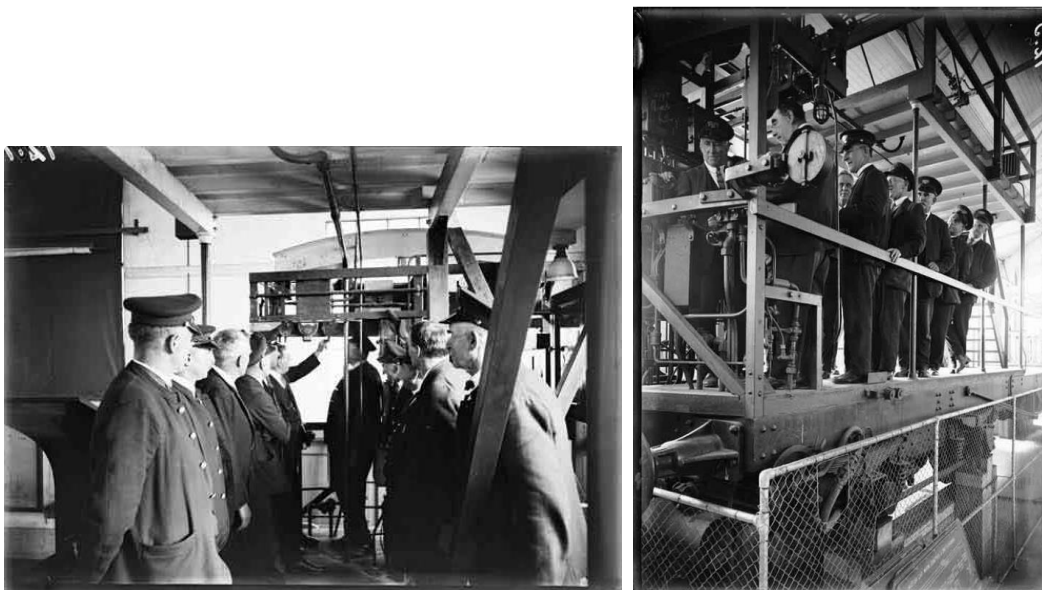
Figure 10. Longitudinal section, Princes Bridge Lecture Room, dated 1914. (Source: PTV Drawing Management System)



Figures 11 & 12. Photographs of the interior of the Princes Bridge Lecture Room, undated (Source: PROV, VPRS 12903/P1 item 012)



Figures 13 & 14. Photographs of the interior of the Princes Bridge Lecture Room, undated (Source: PROV, VPRS 12903/P1 item 012)



Figures 15 & 16. Photographs of the interior of the Princes Bridge Lecture Room, undated (Source: PROV, VPRS 12903/P1 item 012)

Over the next twenty years a number of railway buildings were constructed on railway land in the vicinity of the lecture room. By 1920, electrical offices and accommodation for motormen and car cleaners had been built and by 1925 an overhead depot and motor garages, signal supervisor's depot, office of the assistant senior yard superintendent, train examiners' room and equipment examiners' room had been added to the site (S&Mc, 1920 and 1925) (Figures 17-19).

Drawings indicate that the lecture room remained in use as a training facility until at least the late 1970s with instruction coaches in place along the northern length of the building. Minor changes were made to the building at this time - an enclosed mezzanine level was inserted along the southern side of the double-height interior and a separate lecture room (since removed) was added at the northern end of the east side. An external porch over the northern entrance at the west end had been removed by this date (Figures 20-21).

The Former Princes Bridge Lecture Room was opened as Art Play in 2002, a children's art and cultural centre. A large addition, with minimal connection to the original building, has been made at the east end and external screens have been added to the north, east (part) and west (part) elevations (Figures 23-27).

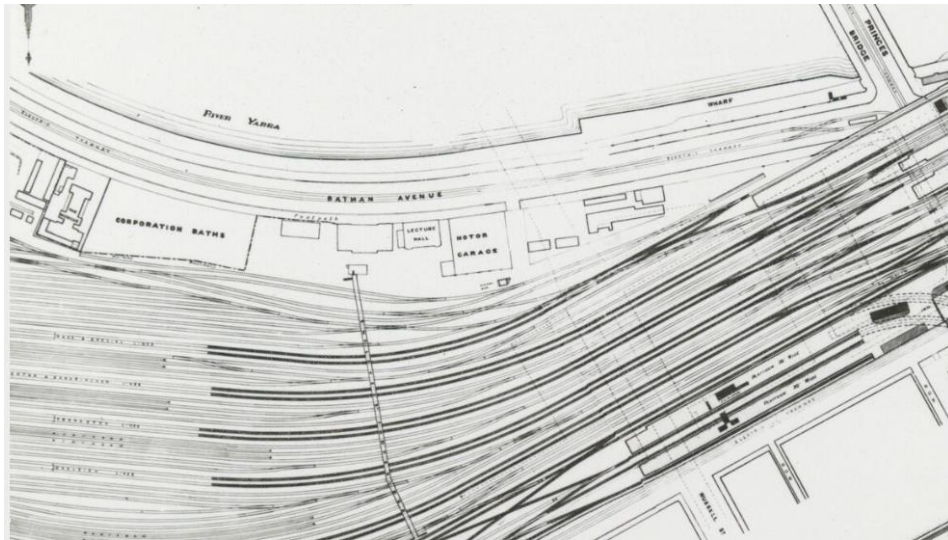


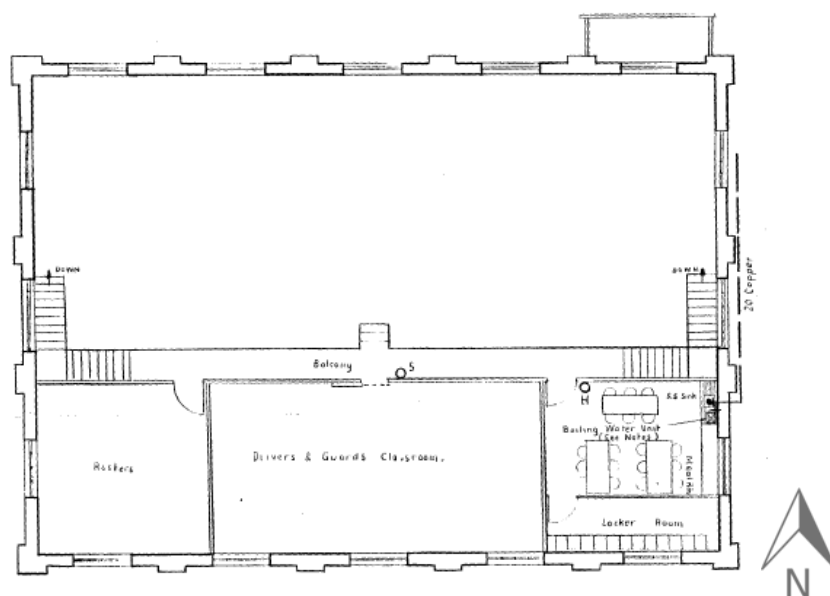
Figure 17. Detail of Flinders Street Station, showing Batman Avenue with labelled buildings from left: The Morgue, Corporation Baths, Lecture Room and Motor Garage, Victorian Railways c1930-c1950. (Source: SLV)



Figure 18. Detail of Aerial Panorama of Melbourne, Airspy, c1920-54 (Source:SLV).

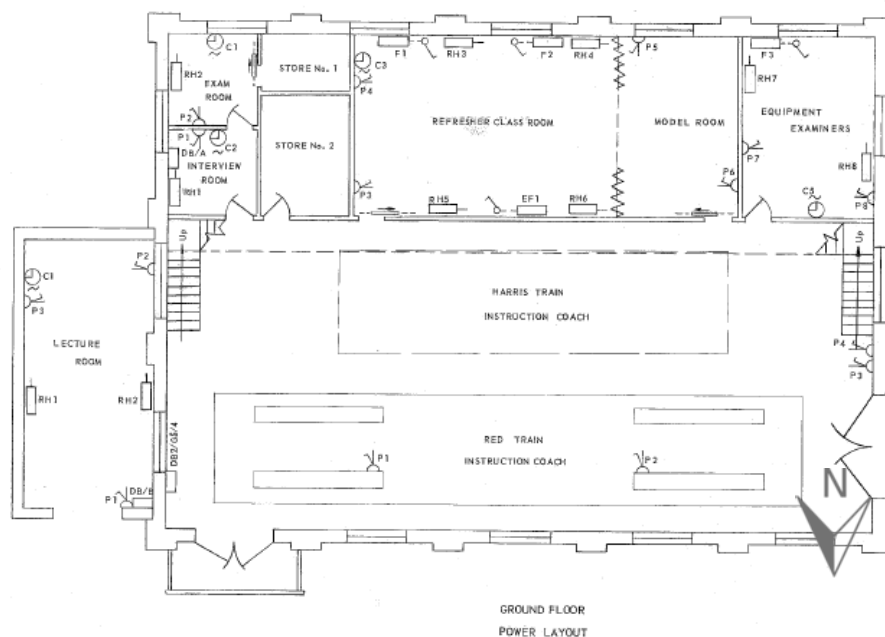


Figure 19. Aerial view showing the greatest extent of the western part of the Jolimont railway yards in c1950s, photographer unknown. Subject building circled. (Source: <http://geoffsrailpix.com/aerial.html>)



MEZZANINE FLOOR. Scale 1:100.

Figure 20. Plan of mezzanine floor added to the south side of the building, dated 1977. (Source: PTV Drawing Management System)



GROUND FLOOR
POWER LAYOUT

Figure 21. Plan of ground floor (power layout), showing later lecture theatre to east (since removed) and instruction coaches, dated 1977. (Source: PTV Drawing Management System)



Figure 22. View of Birrarung Marr from the east, undated. (Source: City of Melbourne Interactive Map).

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Former Princes Bridge Lecture Room is a two-storey building located on the north bank of the Yarra River, at the western end of the public recreation reserve known as Birrarung Marr. The building is set amongst landscaped parkland with Princes Walk and the Yarra River to the south and Federation Square to the west and north.

The building is a simple rectangular double-height gabled structure with parapetted red brick walls and contrasting cement render detailing. It has a corrugated steel-clad roof, with full length ridge-line ventilator, supported internally by canted steel trusses. Full height brick piers divide the north and south side elevations into regular bays with large rectangular multi-paned steel-framed windows at the upper level. Three large rectangular ground floor openings, with concrete lintels and sills, are located at the end bays of the building – at the east and west ends of the north elevation and at the north end of the west elevation. A fourth opening at the west end of the south elevation is a later doorway. All openings contain modern steel doors. A broad gable-roofed porch, with half-height brick side walls which support timber framing with large timber brackets, covers the west opening of the northern elevation. A similar porch has been removed from the opening at the east end of this elevation (removed prior to 1977).

East and west elevations are symmetrical with simple Dutch gable roof forms, a dominant central bay and flanking rectangular windows. Central bays contain a single large multi-paned arch-headed window with exaggerated keystone and rendered spandrel, framed by brick piers and crowning rendered segmental pediment. The curved parapet of the end Dutch gables, with distinctive triple vertical recessed motif, is repeated above the end bays of the side elevations. Contrasting cement render is applied to a broad string course at window head height with projecting ledge, a simple string course below the window sills and the parapet edge.

A large addition, with minimal connection to the earlier building, has been made to the east end and steel screens have been bolted to the northern, part of the eastern and part of the western elevations of the building. These obscure the upper part of these elevations. Four solar panels have been placed on the centre of the northern roof gable and three large ventilation cowls have been added to the southern roof gable.



Figure 23. South elevation of the Former Princes Bridge Lecture Room. (Source: GJM Heritage May 2020)



Figure 24. West elevation of the Former Princes Bridge Lecture Room. (Source: GJM Heritage May 2020)



Figure 25. North elevation of the Former Princes Bridge Lecture Room, showing later external screen. (Source: GJM Heritage May 2020)



Figure 26. East elevation of the Former Princes Bridge Lecture Room, showing later addition. (Source: GJM Heritage May 2020)



Figure 27. Detail of connection between original building and later addition to the east. (Source: GJM Heritage May 2020)

INTEGRITY

The Former Princes Bridge Lecture Room, including the original form and the detailing of the exterior of the building, remains highly intact from its original construction in 1916-17.

The building retains a high degree of architectural integrity to the early twentieth century in fabric, form and detail. While additions have been made to the building – a large structure to the east end with minimal connection to the original building and a steel screen bolted to the north and part east and west elevations – these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of an early twentieth century railway building. Both additions could be removed from the original structure without adverse impact to early fabric.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Built to support the electrification of the Melbourne suburban railway network, the Former Princes Bridge Lecture Room remains as a fine and highly intact example of a purpose-built lecture hall constructed by the Victorian Railways Department.

The subject building has few comparators in the City of Melbourne. A lecture room for the use of railway employees was included in the new Flinders Street station (1910) and in the 1960s a lecture room was part of a proposed addition to the Victorian Railways Way and Works Maintenance Workshop, Laurens Street, North Melbourne (since demolished).

Flinders Street Station

Completed in 1910, Flinders Street station contained a large lecture hall that was situated on the top floor of the building, at the Elizabeth Street end. As part of a suite of facilities which were provided for the welfare of railway employees by the newly formed Victorian Railways Institute, the lecture hall provided a venue for evening educational classes which were intended to improve promotion opportunities within the Victorian Railways Department. The lecture room was adapted for use as a concert hall in 1912 and was altered and set up as a ballroom as part of a refurbishment programme in 1933 (Lovell Chen:45-46).



Figure 28. Opening of the Lecture Hall of the Victorian Railways Institute, at the Central Station, Melbourne, from *Weekly Times*, 29 January 1910, p 26

Victorian Railways Way and Works Maintenance Workshop at 191-99 Laurens Street, North Melbourne

The Victorian Railways Way and Works workshop was established c1913 and became part of a larger railway complex in Laurens Street, North Melbourne. In 1959-60, drawings indicate that a lecture room was part of a proposed addition to the maintenance workshop.

This complex has been demolished.

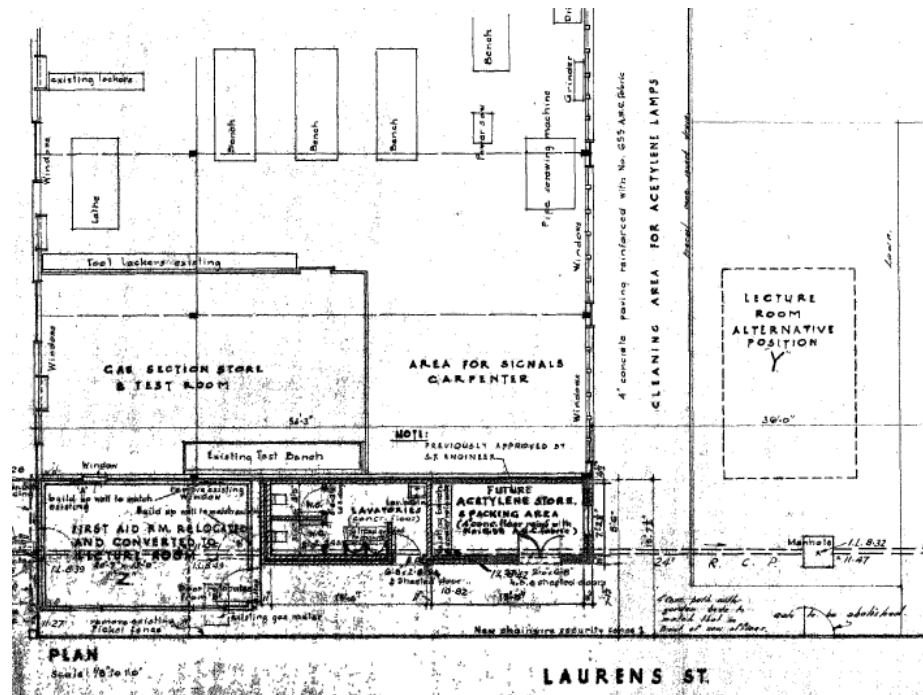


Figure 29. Drawing showing proposed lecture room addition to the Victorian Railways Way and Works Maintenance Workshop, North Melbourne, 1960. (Source: PTV Drawing Management System).

Analysis

The Former Princes Bridge Lecture Room is the only known example of a purpose-built lecture hall built by the Victorian Railways Department in the City of Melbourne. The Flinders Street station lecture room was subsequently converted to a ballroom and a lecture room was part of a proposed addition to the Victorian Railways Way and Works Maintenance Workshop in North Melbourne c1960 (since demolished).

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

✓	CRITERION A Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).
✓	CRITERION B Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).
	CRITERION C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).
	CRITERION D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).
	CRITERION E Importance of exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).
	CRITERION F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance)
	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).
	CRITERION H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an Individual Heritage Place.

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

REFERENCES

- Brown-May, A and Swain, S (ed) (2003), *Federation Square*, South Yarra.
- Butler, G (2012), *Arden Macaulay Heritage Review*.
- Dornan & Henderson (1979), *The Electric Railways of Victoria: a brief history of the electrified railway system operated by the Victorian Railways, 1919 to 1979*, Sydney.
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- Stephenson, C T, ed (1919), *The Electrification of the Metropolitan Railway System of Melbourne*, Melbourne.
- The Age*.
- The Argus*.
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- The Herald*.
- Weekly Times*.
- Williams, M (2005), 'Jolimont Railway Yards', *The Encyclopedia of Melbourne*, p 380.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

**Central Activities District
Conservation Study 1985** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 1993** C [Note: unclear if grading referred to subject building, appears to
be noted as one of two 1917 workshops]

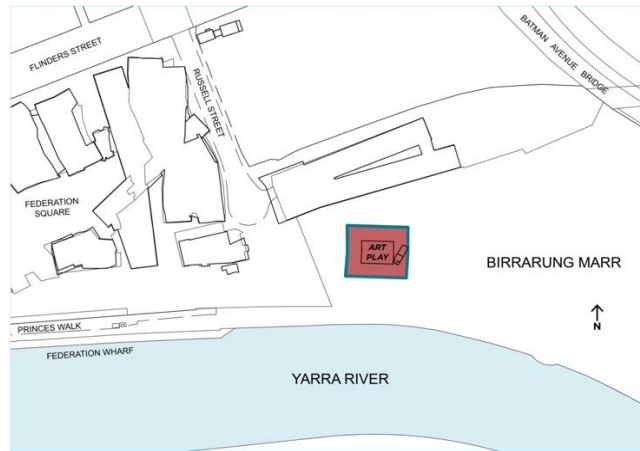
**Review of Heritage
Overlay Listings in the
CBD 2002** Ungraded

**Central City Heritage
Review 2011** Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Former Princes Bridge Lecture Room

PS ref no: HOXXXX



What is significant?

The Former Princes Bridge Lecture Room, Princes Walk, Birrarung Marr, a purpose-built railway training building constructed in 1916-17.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The building's original external form, materials and detailing; and
- The building's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later additions and alterations made to the building, including the building addition to the east and screens added to the northern, part of the eastern and part of the western elevations, are not significant.

How it is significant?

The Former Princes Bridge Lecture Room, Birrarung Marr, Russell Street Extension is of historical significance to the City of Melbourne. It has rarity value as a lecture room constructed by the Victorian Railways Department.

Why it is significant?

Constructed in 1916-17, the Former Princes Bridge Lecture Room was built to support the electrification of the Melbourne metropolitan railway network by providing a training facility for railway staff. The electrification of the railway network in Melbourne in the twentieth century represented a substantial shift in the development of the rail network by increasing the efficiency of train services, increasing rail patronage and facilitating the growth and development of central Melbourne and surrounding suburbs. The building continued to play an important educational role for railway employees until at least the 1970s (Criterion A).

The Former Princes Bridge Lecture Room is the only remaining purpose-built educational facility constructed by the Victorian Railways Department within the City of Melbourne. Designed for the

practical training of railway employees in preparation for the electrification of the railway network, the building remains highly intact to clearly demonstrate this uncommon building type in the City of Melbourne (Criterion B).

Primary source

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

