

# PRESTON TRAMWAY WORKSHOPS



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h02031 1 preston tramway workshops ext paint shop may03 aj



h02031 preston tramway workshops admin building may03 aj



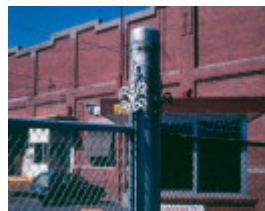
h02031 preston tramway workshops car straightening bay may03 aj



h02031 preston tramway workshops entry gates may03 aj



h02031 preston tramway workshops ext body shop may03 aj



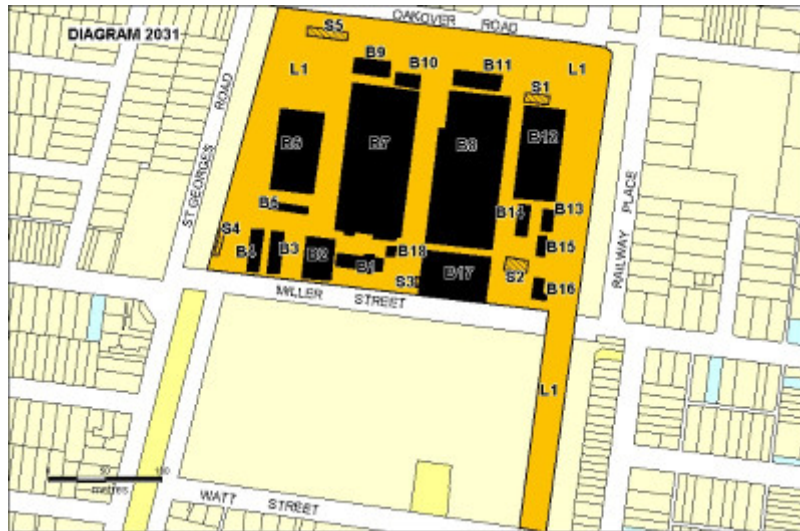
h02031 preston tramway workshops fence detail may03 aj



h02031 preston tramway workshops int foreman s office may03 aj



h02031 preston tramway  
workshops mess complex  
may03 aj



h02031 plan

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## Location

16-18 MILLER STREET PRESTON, DAREBIN CITY

## Municipality

DAREBIN CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2031

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7822-0960

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO144

## VHR Registration

October 9, 2003

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 15, 2023

#### What is significant?

The first section of the Preston tramway workshops, built for the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board in 1924-28, comprised a group of five large brick industrial buildings for the manufacture and maintenance of an increasing electric tram fleet. The principal buildings housed a foundry/ metalworking shop, mechanical/electrical shop, lifting/body shop, paint shop, and a central store. Two electric traversers enabled trams to be moved between the mechanical, body and paint shops, and auxiliary buildings comprised a two storey office, staff amenity hall and three timber stores. A substation to supply DC electricity for the East and West Preston tramways was constructed in the south east corner of the workshop compound in 1932.

During the 1930s and 1940s tramway buses were manufactured and maintained at the tramway workshops, and during the Second World War equipment was manufactured for the war effort. The office building was extended to house a laboratory in 1940, and in the mid 1940s the mechanical, body and paint shops, and their associated traversers were extended northwards. During the 1950s smaller light-weight buildings were erected further north to house an upholstery shop, tin smiths shop and cleaning and degreasing plant. A new steel store was also constructed south west of the blacksmiths shop and a tram body straightening bay was built north of the blacksmiths shop for the repair of serious accident damaged W Class trams.

During the late 1980s further northerly extensions were made to the mechanical and body shops for the specialised maintenance of new articulated light rail vehicles (LRVs) then being introduced. The two traverser tracks were also extended and new longer traversers introduced to deal with the larger vehicles. The existing tram test track along the Oakover Road frontage was extended south beside the adjoining railway reservation for some 0.8 km. for testing of the new generation LRVs. A state of the art below ground wheel lathe for the recontouring of tram wheels was installed in the former upholstery shop in the late 1990s. The workshops are now occupied by Alstom Australia who have contracted to supply new generation low-floor trams and to maintain the existing fleet.

#### How is it significant?

The Preston Tramway Workshops are of historical, technological, architectural and social significance to the State of Victoria.

#### Why is it significant?

The Preston Tramway Workshops are of historical significance as the sole surviving tramway workshop designed for the manufacture and maintenance of a large tram fleet - the fourth largest tramway network in the world and the largest outside Europe.

The Preston Tramway Workshops are of historical significance as a large scale early twentieth century work place where a large workforce with many migrant workers were employed over a long period.

The Preston Tramway Workshops are historically significant as the birthplace of Melbourne's famous W Class trams.

The Preston Tramway Workshops are of historical significance for the role they played in the development of tramway motor bus services during the 1930s and 1940s.

The Preston Tramway Workshops are of historical significance for the role they played during the Second World War, when construction of new trams was curtailed to allow for the construction of Bailey bridges and RAN Carley life rafts for the war effort. During the war, over one hundred "Munitions" and "Austerity" style buses were also built at the workshops to serve the munitions factories in Melbourne's industrial areas as well as supplementing services on existing busy routes.

The Preston Tramway Workshops are historically significant for their ability to demonstrate Melbourne's changing traffic patterns. For example, the construction of the tram straightening bay in the mid 1950s, for correcting tram bodies badly bent in collisions with other road vehicles, illustrates increases in Melbourne's motor traffic soon after the Second World War.

The Preston Tramway Workshops are of historical significance as the "studio" for three "Transporting Art" programs (1978-93), which produced numerous trams painted by prominent and emergent artists.

The Preston Tramway Workshops are of technological significance as the long standing centre of tramcar design and manufacturing in Australia.

The Preston Tramway Workshops are of technological significance for their ability to illustrate the changing work practices and facilities required for an evolving tram construction and maintenance facility. They also reflect the evolution of the trams that originated there - from the rigid timber bodied W Class trams of the 1920s to the all metal and fibreglass articulated light rail vehicles of the 1980s.

The equipment in the associated sub-station, which supplies power to the tramways outside the workshop compound, is technologically significant as it illustrates the evolution in equipment used for the conversion of electric current from AC to DC for electric traction purposes in the 1930s. The two different pieces of rectifier equipment were the first of their types to be used in Australia.

The Preston Tramway Workshops are architecturally significant as an intact 1920s specialised industrial complex, containing a mix of large-volume work areas and smaller auxiliary structures. The workshops are architecturally and technologically significant for their specialist industrial production layout, which incorporates the two traversers.

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must [notify](#) the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

### **Specific Exemptions:**

General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable. Exterior

Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.

Repainting of previously painted surfaces in the same colour.

Removal of extraneous items such as external lighting, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials, fly screens etc, and making good.

Installation or repair of damp-proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method.

The repair patching and replacement of the existing roadways, carriageways, tracks and path surfacing and associated kerbing with new bitumen or concrete paving.

The repair or replacement of tracks.

Repair, replacement and renewal of all overhead wires and cables related to the daily operation of the workshops. This work includes the installation of new poles and cable supports.

The repair or replacement of all underground services.

The process of gardening, mowing, mulching, bedding displays, removal of dead plants and trees up to 3 metres in height, disease and weed control, emergency and safety works.

Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard AS 4373 *Pruning of Amenity Trees*.

Installation, removal or replacement of garden watering, fire services and water supply systems to the grounds provided they are directed away from the buildings.

Removal or installation of freestanding signage, noticeboards, rubbish bins, seats, and the like within the curtilage.

The removal of non-original fencing Interior

Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of any original paint or other decorative scheme.

Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.

The repair, patching and replacement of existing paving to workshops (excluding woodblock flooring) with new bitumen/concrete paving

Installation, removal or replacement of curtain tracks, rods, blinds and other window dressings.

Removal or installation of non-original door and window furniture including, hinges, locks, knobsets and sash lifts.

Installation of commemorative plaques and the like.

Removal or installation of notice boards, white boards and the like.

Removal or installation of machinery, equipment, shelving, racking and the like in all buildings other than for the Sub-station in the south-east corner of the site, the Administration Building and the Mess Hall.

Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of pictures, mirrors and other wall-mounted items.

Demolition or removal of non-original stud/partition walls, suspended ceilings or non-original wall linings, doors, windows, bathroom partitions and tiling, sanitary and kitchen fixtures, fittings and equipment, lights, built-in cupboards, cubicle partitions, computer and office fitout and the like.

Refurbishment of existing bathrooms, toilets and kitchens including installation of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor finishes.

Installation, removal or replacement of hot water systems, either internal or external.

Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant heating in the Administration Building and Mess Hall, provided that the installation does not damage existing floors, skirtings and architraves and that the central plant is concealed.

Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ in the Administration Building and the Mess Hall.

Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring, which may be visible, in all buildings other than for the Administration Building and the Mess Hall.

Installation, removal or replacement of electric clocks, public address/EWIS systems, CCTV, smoke detectors, alarms, emergency lights, exit signs, luminaires and the like.

Installation of plant within roof spaces

The repair and replacement of all fire, electrical and hydraulic services including but not limited to emergency lighting, sprinklers and hydrant system

Installation of new built-in cupboards providing no alteration to the structure is required.

Installation of bulk insulation to the roof space

Construction dates	1924,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	Tram Depot,
Hermes Number	12621
Property Number	

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## History

The Preston Tramway Workshops are of historical significance as the sole surviving tramway workshop designed for the manufacture and maintenance of a large tram fleet in Australia. Since their construction they have been pivotal to the development and maintenance of the principal street public transport system of inner Melbourne. Melbourne has the fourth largest tramway network in the world and the largest outside Europe.

The Preston Tramway Workshops are of historical significance as a large scale early twentieth century work place where a large workforce was employed over a long period. The workshops were a major employer in the northern suburbs during the Great Depression, and after the Second World War many European migrants began

their new working lives there. The workshops were regarded as a community within a community.

The Preston Tramway Workshops are historically significant as the birthplace of Melbourne's famous W Class trams - more than xxx were constructed there between 1926 and 1956. Following the near demise of the last W Class cars in the late 1980s a number were refurbished and assigned to a special "City Circle" tourist service where they continue to reinforce the status of the tram as one of Melbourne's historic and tourist icons.

The Preston Tramways Workshops are of historical significance for the role they played in the development of tramway motor bus services during the 1930s and 1940s, when buses were used during the conversion of the cable tramways to electric traction and extensively during the Second World War. More than two hundred buses were constructed at Preston between 1935 and 1949, and until the 1950s, much of the bus maintenance was carried out there.

The Preston Tramway Workshops are of historical significance for the role they played during the Second World War, when construction of new trams was curtailed to allow for the construction of Bailey bridges and RAN Carley life rafts for the war effort. During the war, over one hundred "Munitions" and "Austerity" style buses were built at the workshops to serve the munitions factories in Melbourne's industrial areas as well as supplementing services on existing busy routes.

The Preston Tramway Workshops are of historical significance as the "studio" for three "Transporting Art" programs (1978-93), which produced xx trams painted by prominent and emergent artists. The painted trams project became an expression of Melbourne's artistic culture, while highlighting the status of Melbourne trams as social and cultural icons. In 1982 the project received a Merit Award for an Outstanding Contribution to the Built Environment by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.

The Preston Tramway Workshops are historically significant for their ability to demonstrate changing patterns in the community of which they are a part. For example, the construction of the tram straightening bay in the mid 1950s, where tram bodies badly bent in collisions with other road vehicles could be straightened, illustrate the changes in Melbourne's traffic soon after the Second World War.

The Preston Tramway Workshops are of technological significance as the long standing centre of tramcar design and manufacturing in Australia. Since the mid 1920s more than xxx new trams have been constructed or commissioned there. The workshops are renowned for their high degree of skill, craftsmanship, technical innovation and work practices.

The Preston Tramway Workshops are of technological significance for their ability to illustrate the changing work practices and facilities required for an evolving tram construction and maintenance facility. They also reflect the evolution of the trams that originated there - from the rigid timber bodied W Class trams of the 1920s to the all metal and fibreglass articulated light rail vehicles of the 1980s.

The equipment in the sub station, which supplies power to the tramways outside the workshop compound, is technologically significant as it illustrates the evolution in equipment used for the conversion of electric current from AC to DC for electric traction purposes in the 1930s. The two different pieces of rectifier equipment were the first of their types to be used in Australia.

The Preston Tramway Workshops are architecturally significant as an intact 1920s specialised industrial complex, containing a mix of large-volume work areas and smaller auxiliary structures. The workshops are architecturally and technologically significant for their specialist industrial production layout, which incorporates the two traversers.

## **Extent of Registration**

1. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 2031 held by the Executive Director
2. All the following buildings marked as follows on Diagram 2031 held by the Executive Director:
  - B1 Administration Building
  - B2 Mess Hall Complex
  - B3 Timber Store I
  - B4 Timber Store II
  - B5 Timber Store III
  - B6 Paint Shop

B7 Body Shop (Car Erecting Shop) including saw dust extractor and washing bay  
B8 Truck Shop (Machine Shop)  
B9 Wheel Grinding Shop (Former Upholstery Shop)  
B10 Degreasing Shed (Truck Cleaning Area)  
B11 Tram Parts Store (Former Sheet Metal Shop)  
B12 Plate/Blacksmith Shop (Former Plate Shop/Foundry/Sheet Metal Shop)  
B14 Steel Store  
B15 Metal Store  
B16 Substation  
B17 Main Store  
B18 Small Substation

3. All tram tracks, including tracks inside the workshop buildings, test tracks, sidings, associated supports and all traversers

4. All structures marked as follows on Diagram 2031 held by the Executive Director

S1 Car Straightening Bay  
S2 Paint Testing Racks and Storage Platform  
S3 Weigh Bridge  
S4 Unloading Bay  
S5 Test Pits

5. Main entry gate and tram entry gate on Miller Street and all dwarf brick walls with galvanised pipe and Cyclone wire panels decorated with cast iron heads on which rows of barbed wire are suspended

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*