
FORMER WARRNAMBOOL GAS COMPANY LIMITED

Location

209-215 MERRI STREET WARRNAMBOOL, WARRNAMBOOL CITY

Municipality

WARRNAMBOOL CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7321-0089

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO221

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Interpretation of Site

The former Gas Manager's residence, which was taken over by the Station Manager when the rail line was constructed in the 1880s, appears to be in its original form with some inevitable modern upgrades. What appears to be a mock heritage style garage has been recently constructed adjacent to the north west. The vacant land fronting Merri Street shows evidence of disturbance with grassed mounds and piles of stone. Some of this material appears to have been dumped here recently. On the south side the ground slopes away gradually southwards. To the extreme east of the site, obscured by bushes were observed what appeared to be large gas cylinders or drums. These are probably related to the more recent use of the site as a gas store facility.

Archaeological Significance

There does not appear to have been any major levelling or filling and so it is likely that the footings of the facilities and buried services associated with the Gas Works would be present under the bitumen and grass. The site has potential archaeological significance for its ability to demonstrate changes in gas manufacture technology in Warrnambool over time.

Historical Significance	Following the establishment of the gas industry in Melbourne in the 1850s, numerous small independent gas companies were formed across Victoria. By the 1880s over fifty gasworks had been constructed. The creation of the Gas Works in the 1870s provided a regular supply of illumination to Warrnambool's streets at night and eventually homes. It represents the development of Warrnambool as a regional centre
Other Names	GAS SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED; GAS AND FUEL CORPORATION; GOVERNMENT GAS WORKS,
Hermes Number	149746
Property Number	

History

The idea to establish a gasworks in Warrnambool was first raised at a public meeting in early 1869, involving the proposal to create a co-operative or joint-stock company with capital in shares. The idea of co-operating to raise funds by a local community or group was common throughout the Warrnambool region in the 19th century.

In 1873 the Warrnambool Gas Company Limited was registered as an incorporated company. Gas engineer Thomas Bowman, C.E. was engaged to prepare plans and specifications for the gasworks. In August of 1874 the construction of the gasworks was complete, and on 31st August, Warrnambool was supplied with gas for the first time.

Despite overwhelming support by local residents, the Warrnambool Gas Company did not succeed as anticipated and was wound up voluntarily in 1881-82. Warrnambool Borough Council raised a loan to purchase the gasworks. The purchase was completed in December 1881 and the gasworks handed over to council. Supply was extended to South Warrnambool.

The Warrnambool gasworks were the source of all street and shop lighting and most domestic lighting until the coming of electricity in 1923, which created strong competition for the gas industry. By the late 1940s, the gasworks were run down and the business losing money.

The gasworks were privatised in 1952, and facilities upgraded. However by 1972, the town supply was converted to liquid petroleum gas. In the late 1970s or early 1980s, the gasworks were closed down and in 1986, Warrnambool received its supply of natural gas from Parette near Port Campbell.

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/>