
FORMER BRUNSWICK STEET CABLE TRAM ENGINE HOUSE

Location

81-89 VICTORIA PARADE FITZROY, YARRA CITY

Municipality

YARRA CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7822-0984

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - October 22, 2008

The Former Cable Tram Engine House, Fitzroy is of archaeological significance for its ability to demonstrate the pulley system of the tramway system prior to electrification. It is also significant for the potential to contain material culture relating to the tramway system.

The Former Brunswick Street Cable Tram Engine House is also of historical significance for its use from 1935 to 1985 by the Penfolds Wine company for distributing bulk interstate wines to a local market.

The Melbourne cable tram system was constructed by the Melbourne Tramways Trust during 1885-91. It was considered to be the world's largest cable tramway network under single ownership.

Archaeological
Significance

After the closure of the cable tram engine houses from the mid 1920's until 1940, all of the machinery, fixtures and fittings were removed. Despite the fact that some buildings were totally or partially demolished and most of the extant buildings have been remodeled internally and externally, the sites have the potential to contain significant 19th century archaeological remains underground pertaining to their original use. These features include deep brick lined pits, cable races that spanned the length of the buildings, and foundations of a chimney stack, well and weigh bridge.

The remains of the cable tram engine houses are highly significant as they assist an understanding of how Melbourne's cable tram system operated.

Other Names

PENFOLDS WINE VICTORIAN HEADQUARTERS, FORMER FITZROY CABLE TRAM ENGINE HOUSE,

Hermes
Number

56007

Property
Number

History

Built in 1886, the Former Cable Tram Engine House on the corner of Brunswick Street and Victoria Parade was designed by Alexander Davidson and built by Martin & Peacock for the Melbourne Tramways Trust. Twelve engine house were built in Melbourne between 1884 and 1891. Eleven were built by the Melbourne Tramways Trust and one was built in 1890 for a private company in Northcote.

The Former Brunswick Street Cable Tram Engine House was the second of the eleven buildings built by the Tramways Trust to provide power to what was considered to be the most advanced cable tram network of its time. The first of the Tramways Trust's engine houses was built in Richmond in 1885. The Richmond engine house was built in an L shaped configuration whereas the Brunswick Street engine house was rectangular, providing a more efficient use of space and setting the standard for the engine houses that followed.

The Former Brunswick Street Cable Tram Engine House propelled three underground cable lines which operated trams on routes travelling down Collins Street to Spencer Street, down Victoria Parade to Victoria Bridge and down Brunswick Street to North Fitzroy. The cables were propelled by two pairs of engines which used six Babcock & Willcox water tube boilers and two multi tube boilers. The Former Brunswick Street Cable Tram Engine House was the first in Melbourne to use rope gearing and is believed to be the first to use a Malcolm Moore conveyor system to handle coal.

The cable tram system continued to run until it was replaced by the electrical powered system during the 1920s and early 1930s. The Collins and Victoria Street lines closed in July 1929 and the Brunswick line was closed in June 1930.

Penfolds Wines bought the building from the Tramways Trust in 1935 and used it to bottle their bulk wine imports for the Victorian market until 1971. It was then used for wine storage until 1982. The reuse of the building by Penfolds Wines required the remodelling of the building, including the addition of a Moderne facade designed by architect Frederick Morsby to the Victoria Parade and Brunswick Street frontages. The reuse of the building also required the modification of the building's interior, including the removal of all of the engine house machinery and infrastructure, the introduction of a reinforced concrete mezzanine into two of the building's three bays, a wine tasting room at the front of the building and a row of reinforced rectangular structures believed to be associated

with bulk wine storage. The construction of the mezzanine floor resulted in two thirds of the height of the cast iron columns being cast into the mezzanine's concrete columns. Internally the building is now more illustrative of its use as a wine distribution facility.

Despite these changes, the form of the original building is still discernable underneath the 1936 additions, in the building's internal structure of cast iron columns and steel rod trusses and the three ventilation lanterns on the northern end of the roof, but no evidence remains of the function of the building as a cable tram engine house. The Former Brunswick Street Cable Tram Engine House is of local historical significance for its role in Melbourne's cable tram network.

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/>