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# Victorian Railways Type A Electricity Sub-Station (Former)



Victorian Railways Type A  
Electricity Sub-station  
(former), Hobsons Bay  
Heritage Study 2006

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## Location

1 Market Street NEWPORT, Hobsons Bay City

## Municipality

HOBSONS BAY CITY

## Level of significance

Incl in HO area contributory

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO175

## Heritage Listing

Hobsons Bay City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is Significant?

The Victorian Railways Type A Electricity Sub-station (former), designed by the Victorian Railways Way & Works in conjunction with Merz & MacLellan and constructed in 1915-16, at 1 Market Street, Newport.

How is it Significant?

The Victorian Railways Type A Electricity Sub-station (former) at 1 Market Street, Newport is of local historic and aesthetic significance to the City of Hobsons Bay.

Why is it Significant?

Historically, it is significant for its strong associations with the Victorian Railways and the electrification of the Melbourne suburban railway network as one of the five surviving Type A DC substations, which were the first to be built during the period 1914-16. It is one of a number of major buildings constructed by the Victorian Railways in the Newport and Spotswood areas during the Edwardian and Interwar periods when it was a centre of railway engineering in Victoria. (AHC criteria A4, B2 and H1)

Aesthetically, it is significant as a massive landmark building with distinctive architectural treatment in the Edwardian-Baroque style, which dominates its immediate surroundings. (AHC criteria E1 and F1)

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Heritage Study/Consultant | Hobsons Bay - Hobsons Bay Heritage Study, Hobsons Bay City Council, 2006; |
| Construction dates        | 1915,   |
| Architect/Designer        | Victorian Railways, Merz & MacLellan,                                     |
| Hermes Number             | 15107   |
| Property Number           |   |

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## Physical Description 1

The substation at Newport is an example of the 'Type A' design used for the first five substations constructed by the VR as part of the electrification of the Melbourne metropolitan network. It is a giant red brick and stucco cement render Edwardian Baroque/Neo Classical building. Key features include:

- The division of the facade into three sections comprising:
- A cement rendered basement with square perforated metal ventilation openings.
- A face brick lower floor with rectangular window openings having cement rendered voussoirs, and
- A 'piano nobile' with tall round arched window openings having rendered drip moulds and keystones.

A rendered moulding separates the lower floor from the main level, and another encircles the building at the arch springing line. The building is topped by a rendered cornice and a brick parapet. (Ward 1991:31)

- The internal spaces that clearly delineate the functions of the building:
- The whole of one side is taken up by the machine hall, which is a full height space broken up at the lower level by dividing walls, forming separate bays which originally housed the rotary converters. At one end is a loading bay, originally served by a siding from the adjacent track. At basement level on this side are separate walls to support the heavy equipment; these form a series of catacomb-like rooms.

- On the other side of the building is the switchgear, housed on three levels in 14 separate cells that once had interlocked doors; each cell was once continuous through all three levels. Various types of switching apparatus was once located on the first two levels, the second level being open to the balcony. At the top level is the bus bar chamber, which provided power to all cells. Stairwells at each end of this section provided access to all levels; the bus bar chamber is reached by steel ladders. (Ward 1991:31)

Much of the internal machinery and equipment has been removed, however some examples remain along with original signage that indicates the function of particular spaces and equipment.

- Externally, the massing of the building expresses the internal layout by:
- The projecting forward of the machine hall to form a separate pavilion, topped by a semi-circular pediment.
- The switch cell section using brick panels dividing the upper window openings, and has an inset balcony along the side of the building at mid-level; wrought iron balustrading spans between the brick piers. (Ward 1991:31)

## **Integrity**

External Condition

Good.

External Integrity

High.

## **Physical Description 2**

Context

Adjacent to the Newport Commercial and Civic heritage precinct, this building is part of a series of related railway heritage buildings including the stations at Newport and Spotswood, the Way and Works Building in Melbourne Road and the nearby Newport Railway workshops. (q.v.). The now demolished Newport Power station was an integral part of this vast undertaking, leaving the substations as the sole reminders of this early enterprise.

## **Historical Australian Themes**

Moving Goods and People, Railways

## **Physical Description 3**

*Associations*

Victorian Railways Way & Works, Merz & MacLelland.

*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/>*