
MELBOURNE CITY COUNCIL DESTRUCTOR, DYNON ROAD

Location

70 DYNON ROAD WEST MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7822-2379

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 1, 1900

The Melbourne City Council Destructor Complex is historically important as a largely undocumented remnant of an 1890s solution to the waste problem due to the rapid population growth of Melbourne. It was an interim measure put in place to deal with human and domestic waste that contributed to sanitary and health problems across the city. The Destructor is also historically significant because it was designed by a Melbourne-based engineer who created a more effective way of dealing with waste than his English competitors. This particular destructor was the first of its kind to be built in Australasia (Mountain 1900:42; Goordrich 1912:165).

Archaeological Significance	Documentary evidence suggests that the Melbourne City Council Destructor Complex was constructed in 1891 and was an interim sanitation measure put in place while a more permanent solution was considered. The complex consisted of the destructor, a blacksmiths and substantial stables. The destructor complex was in existence until sometime between 1946 and 1969. Archaeological remains of brick, bluestone and concrete paving as well as brick and bluestone footings are present between 1-2m below the present ground surface in a location on the western bank of the Moonee Ponds Creek, below the north-bound Citylink elevated freeway. The site has the potential to contain archaeological features, deposits and artefacts that could provide insights into the industrial Destructor complex.
Historical Significance	The Melbourne City Council Destructor Complex is historically important as a largely undocumented remnant of a late nineteenth century solution to the waste problem. The site was a reaction to the rapid population growth of Melbourne. The Destructor was designed by a Melbourne-based engineer who created a more effective way of dealing with waste than his English competitors. This destructor was the first of its kind to be built in Australasia.
Hermes Number	205707
Property Number	

History

The Melbourne City Council Destructor Complex was constructed in 1891 (Goodrich 1891:165) on the north side of Dynon Road (then Swamp Road) on the west bank of the Moonee Ponds Creek. A site to the south of Dynon Road was considered (*The Age*, 26 May 1890: 6); however, for unknown reasons it was constructed to the north.

The Destructor was an incinerator, a two-cell patented system for clean disposal of refuse, including human waste (nightsoil). It was designed to dry and then incinerate the waste. Associated with the destructor were a blacksmith workshop and stables that were capable of accommodating 80 horses and 60 wagons (*The Age*, 26 May 1890: 6). It was developed as an interim sanitation measure put in place by the Melbourne City Council while a more permanent solution was considered (*The Age*, 18 April 1899: 4).

The inventor was Mr E.W. Cracknell, whose patent for the Destructor was published in 1890 (*The Evening Journal*, 6 December 1890: 5). It was claimed by the Mr Cracknell that the facility could dispose of 60 tons of waste in a 24-hour period, however, it was noted to be disposing of 40 tons per day (*Mercury and Weekly Courier*, 14 July 1892: 3).

Due to its proximity to the Moonee Ponds Creek, its foundations may have become unstable in the years after its construction and developed a lean (*The Age*, 9 July 1894: 6).

It is unknown when the Destructor ceased to be used, however, it is likely that the need for it decreased after the opening of the Melbourne Sewage System opened and more and more residences were connected to the new system.

The Destructor Complex was in existence until at least 1946 with a photo showing the Destructor during a flood in that year (Fleet 1946) (see attached Figure 5).

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/>