

# ORNAMENTAL TRAMWAY OVERHEAD POLES

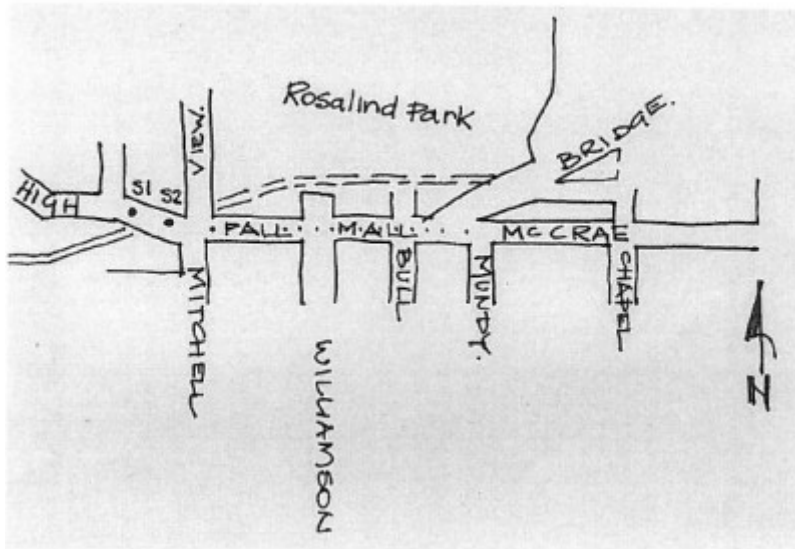


ORNAMENTAL TRAMWAY  
OVERHEAD POLES SOHE  
2008



1 tramway poles bendigo  
street view apr1997

DIAGRAM NUMBER: 605554



H1336 bendigo tramway poles plan

## Location

PALL MALL BENDIGO, GREATER BENDIGO CITY

## Municipality

GREATER BENDIGO CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H1336

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO215

## **VHR Registration**

August 14, 1997

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - May 13, 1999

What is significant?

The Bendigo overhead electric tramway poles were installed as part of the expansion and electrification of the Bendigo tramway system in 1903. This expansion was financed by the British owned Electric Supply Co. Ltd. and the poles were installed by their construction company the British Insulated Wire Company of Prescott, England. The expansion of the Bendigo system was one of the earliest of such undertakings in Australia and the company also constructed the electricity supply station nearby. The Bendigo tramway is today the only remaining system in a provincial city, one of the very few tramways remaining in Australia and one of the few systems retaining its original central ornamental tram poles.

How is it significant?

The Bendigo Ornamental Tramway Poles are historically and scientifically important to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Bendigo Ornamental Tramway Poles are historically and scientifically important as a unique and early survivor of the earliest period of electrification of public transport infrastructure in Victoria. Their uniqueness is compounded by their survival as a continuing part of a provincial city tramway service where all others have long been dismantled. Similar decorative tram-poles were installed much later in other parts of the State and only those in Melbourne now survive.

The present tramway system is historically associated with a once larger system which portrayed the size and industrial aspirations of Bendigo as one of the state's large provincial cities. The earlier tramway system originally used battery power then steam before the Electric Supply Company Ltd. set up its successful electrification of the Bendigo lines in 1903.

## **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:**

#### EXEMPTIONS FROM PERMITS:

(Classes of works or activities which may be undertaken without a permit under Part 4 of the Heritage Act 1995)

Temporary replacement of the ornamental poles and assembly where it is essential that the assembly or pole be replaced immediately to enable tram operations to continue. (This may be the result of a traffic accident, natural causes or inspections revealing serious structural deficiency which indicate a high probability of system failure if the problem is not immediately remedied. Any temporary pole or assembly shall be removed and replaced with works to the original configuration and design within 120 days of the original incident.)

Alterations and replacement of wiring provided no permanent alterations are made to the design of the poles.

Construction dates	1903,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	4667
Property Number	

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## **History**

Contextual History:History of Place:

Since the introduction of electric tramways around the world in the 1880s, three suspension have been adopted to carry the overhead trolley wire which supplies power to the trams - span wire construction, center wire construction and side pole construction.

In span wire construction a row of poles is placed along each kerb, and span wires are stretched across the

thoroughfare, from which the trolley wire is then suspended. In some cases such as in the city and suburban shopping strips the poles are substituted by nearby buildings.

With center pole construction a row of poles is placed along the centre of the thoroughfare and between the tracks. Each pole has a pair of rigid cross arms which cantilever across the track each side of the pole to support the trolley wire.

Side pole construction comprises a line of poles along the curb or beside the track with each pole having a single cantilevered arm to carry trolley wire to a single track.

All three overhead systems have been used for electric tramways in Melbourne, Bendigo (1903-72), Ballarat (1905-71) and Geelong (1912- 56). The use of ornamental centre poles occurred in Melbourne, Bendigo, Geelong Adelaide and Sydney.

A variation of the standard suspension systems mentioned above has recently been adopted in Melbourne. Here a row of poles has been placed along one side of a double track tramway. Each pole supports a single arm which reaches across both tracks. The use of large diameter concrete poles has allowed this design to be realised. Prior to this installation poles were either wood or steel.

The first use of ornamental steel centre poles in Melbourne occurred in 1910, with the opening of the Prahran and Malvern Tramway Trust's (P & MTT) initial lines in High Street, Wattleree and Glenferrie Roads. The trust's lines were based on those previously installed in Adelaide. Although centre poles were also adopted for the Trusts line in Dandenong Road (opened 1911), the Trust ceased using them for new lines. While the centre poles were successful in broad thoroughfares, they were unsatisfactory in standard width suburban streets with the growing volume of motor traffic. In 1915 the Trust were forced to remove its original installation of center poles, and now only the Dandenong Road poles remain.

Centre poles were not used again in Melbourne until the 1920s when the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramway Board (MMTB), which had taken over the various separate electric tramways in 1920-22, began electrifying the cable tramways and building new electric lines. The MMTB installed ornamental centre poles as follows:

Swanston St Melbourne between Lonsdale and Queensberry St. (Subsequently removed)

Opened 13.04.1924

Peel St, North Melbourne and William St Melbourne between Flemington Rd and Collins St (Poles removed from Peel St southern end and William St in the early 1970s)

19.07.1925

Fitzroy St , St Kilda between St Kilda Junction and the Esplanade.

27.12.1925

Mt Alexander Rd Essendon between Shamrock St and Keilor Rd. (In 1992 the PTC removed the original cross arms and ornamental iron work)

31.03.1929

Victoria Parade East Melbourne between Brunswick and Hoddle St. 8.12.1929

#### History of Place:

In the early years of the 20th century , the newly established Electric Supply Co of Victoria Ltd, purchased the existing power generating systems and tramways at Ballarat and Bendigo. The Electric Supply Co had been set up in Liverpool in May 1900, and almost all the shares were held by the British Insulated Wire Company Ltd, which had its works in nearby Prescot.

The Electric Supply Co immediately set about the electrification of the horse drawn tramway system at Ballarat, and the steam drawn tramway system between Bendigo Railway Station and Eaglehawk Town Hall. The overhead wirework installation was carried out by the British Insulated Wire Co Ltd . Ornamental centre poles were installed in Pall Mall, Mitchell and View Streets, Bendigo and High Streets, Eaglehawk.

Electric Trams commenced running over the former route of the Bendigo steam tramway, and along new lines to Lake Weeroona, Quarry Hill and Golden Square in April 1903. By comparison, electric trams did not begin in Ballarat until 1905.

From 1 July 1934 the tramways were operated by the State Electricity Commission of Victoria, which began to

rehabilitate the rundown systems. During 1942 the Lake Weeroona line was extended to North Bendigo to service the Government Ordnance factory.

Although bus services replaced the Bendigo tram system in 1972, the Bendigo Trust arranged to retain the line between North Bendigo and the Central Deborah Mine, on the Golden Square route, for tourist purposes. The new tourist service opened in December 1972 and has operated continuously since.

The stand of centre poles in Pall Mall are the last remaining section of a larger installation of similar poles which dominated three of Bendigo's main thoroughfares. They were the first ornamental centre tramway poles erected in Victoria and reflect the affluence and status of one of Victoria's provincial cities soon after the turn of the century.

The poles reflect the refined ornamental design of early 20th century street furniture, and demonstrate the high standard of infrastructure adopted by the Electric Supply Co of Victoria Ltd. They also demonstrate the type of equipment used in the formative years of tramways of, electricity supply and street lighting.

## **Extent of Registration**

1. Thirteen centre, double arm tramway poles in Pall Mall between Mundy and Mitchell Streets and two single arm tramway poles in High Street marked S1 and S2 on Diagram 605554 held by the Executive Director.

*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/>*