
BRUNSWICK GAS & COKE CO. RETORT BUILDING (FORMER)

Location

21-35 HOPE STREET, and 2-10 LUX WAY, BRUNSWICK, MERRI-BEK CITY

Municipality

MERRI-BEK CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2027

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO94

Heritage Listing

Merri-bek City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 1, 2008

This place is included on the Victorian Heritage Register (H2027), as a place of State significance. Please refer to the VHR place record for the statement of significance for this place.

The local statement of significance is as follows:

The former gas retort building in Hope Street, Brunswick, is of local historical and architectural significance. It is the only remaining structure of the former Brunswick Gas and Coke Company works, which was instrumental in the manufacture and distribution of gas to Brunswick from 1891. The site retains its associations with the gas industry. Architecturally, the gas retort building is distinctive in the simplicity of its form, but its impact and significance have been lessened by the construction of other buildings surrounding it.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Moreland - City of Moreland Heritage Review, Allen Lovell and Associates, 1999; Moreland - Northern Suburbs Factory Study, Vines, G and M, Churchward, 1992; Moreland - Keeping Brunswick's heritage: A Report on the Review of the Brunswick Conservation Study, Context Pty Ltd, 1990;
Other Names	Craig & Seeley, Factory,
Hermes Number	59048
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The gas retort building is a large red brick building with a low arched roof. Each end has a curved parapet, which is topped by a small scrolled pediment. Although the gas retort building remains externally intact, it has been almost completely surrounded by other buildings. Its architectural Significance as somewhat of a landmark is now significantly reduced. The roof form and part of the curved parapet are now only just visible.

DESCRIPTION: As constructed the gasworks comprised a large retort house abutting the railway land, a large gas holder near Percy St and a smaller one behind the retort house, a classifying pit for grading the coal, a group of workshops and stores along the southern boundary of the site and an office building on Hope Street. It appears that the present bow string truss roof is a later addition to the retort house, probably added in the mid 1890s. Of these only the retort buildings and some of the workshops at the rear of the site appear to survive. However, these are substantial components of the gas works. The eastern boundary of the site comprises brickwork of the various buildings demonstrating a range of styles including a row of windows with contrasting cream brick arches. The main retort building has an unusually large timber bow string truss with brick walls at either end following the roof line and featuring a large oculus vent surmounted by a decorative moulding. The radial brick patterning around the vent is of note.

Key Architectural Elements: large curved roof form and pediments

Conservation Guidelines: preferably remove surrounding building to expose form of gas retort building

Principal Historic Themes: provision of essential services and urban infrastructure (power, transport, fire prevention, water, lights, sewerage)

Context: The location, adjacent to sidings of the Upfield railway line reflects the work's dependence on coal imported by rail.

Condition and integrity: While the site has suffered the same destructive fate of most Melbourne and Victorian gas works, substantial buildings of the works remain. The retort house is believed to be the only 19th century retort house remaining in Victoria. The front of the works is obscured by brick buildings erected in the last decade.

Comparative Analysis: No comparable gas works building is known to survive in Victoria. The building form of the retort house is itself unusual. A comparable example is the Brunswick Market.

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/>