

Heritage Citation



Moorooka Electricity Sub Station No. 213

Key details

Also known as	Sub Station No. 13
Addresses	At 43 Beaudesert Road, Moorooka, Queensland 4105
Type of place	Substation
Period	Interwar 1919-1939, Postwar 1945-1960
Style	Free Classical
Lot plan	L507_SL1195
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2005 Date of Citation — March 2004
Construction	Walls: Face brick

People/associations	Albert Mason - 1929 substation (Builder); Alfred Herbert Foster - 1929 substation (Architect); Frank Costello - 1942 substation (Architect)
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Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (D) Representative; (E) Aesthetic
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The first building on this site, Substation No. 13, was constructed by contractor Albert Mason in 1929 and is believed to have been designed by City Architect Alfred Foster. The brick substation became part of the power supply system then expanding to meet the growing demands for retail electricity for residential power and street lighting to suburbs. The second, additional building on the Substation No. 13 site, believed to have been designed by City Architect Frank Costello, was constructed in 1942 and reconstructed following damage in 1988. The establishment of the Rocklea Munitions Works in Evans Road, Salisbury, along with the construction of a temporary military camp at Moorooka, led to an even greater demand for electricity. This building, a single mass substation of one principal internal volume, has been described as of an elegant simplicity that is both modern and civic in appearance.

History

Land purchases and selections in the area around the substation site commenced in the 1860s, although until the opening of the South Coast Railway in July 1885 little residential development occurred. Even after the sale of allotments in estates near the Moorooka railway station, development was slow, affected by the oversupply of available sites and by the Depression of the 1890s. By 1900 the number of households in Moorooka had reached forty-one, by the mid-1920s this number had increased only to 217.

The land on which the substations were constructed was set aside by the Queensland government as a reserve for municipal purposes (electricity substation) in June 1930. At the edge of Stimpson Park, the initial 10 perches of substation land was close to an area known locally as the Four Mile Swamp. This wetland was part of Moolabin Creek.

The first supply of electricity for public use in Brisbane was to the General Post Office and some nearby buildings in 1888. The Barton and White Company, which had provided the service was one of a number of private companies which supplied electric power before 1904. In that year the City Electric Light Company Limited, an amalgamation of companies, was formed. By 1916 this company supplied power to the City, Fortitude Valley and South Brisbane areas.

The Electricity Department of the Brisbane City Council undertook responsibility for the provision of electricity after the formation of the Greater Brisbane City Council in 1925. Because of contracts between the previous local authorities and the City Electric Light Company, the actual distribution of power was complex. In 1928 the Brisbane City Council constructed its own powerhouse at New Farm. From there a network of distribution cables were linked to substations where the current was reduced and transferred to feeder mains for distribution to buildings and the street lighting network. To meet the demands of the expanding city, a considerable number of substations were constructed during this period. The first substation on this site, referred to as Number 13 was constructed at this time. Its role was to augment supply, to constitute a node from which power could be

delivered.

In June 1930 the Queensland Government Gazette reported that land for municipal purposes (the substation) and for a park, Park Reserve No. 518 at the intersection of Beaudesert and Ipswich Road, had been set aside. Local residents petitioned against part of the reserve being used for this purpose. They were advised that the building, on account of its design, would add to the beauty of the park.¹

In September 1929, following receipt of twelve tenders, Albert Mason of Torwood, with the lowest quotation of £741. 4.0, was chosen. The design of the first substation on this site is attributed to City Architect Albert Foster. As well as being responsible for the design of the Kurilpa Library (1927) and Victoria Park golf clubhouse (1931), Foster designed a number of the city's substations including Gregory Terrace (1928), Lang Park (1928, demolished), Hamilton (1929, demolished) and Coorparoo (1930).

Albert Herbert Foster (1873-1932) commenced work as assistant architect and building surveyor with the Brisbane Municipal Council in 1913, becoming city architect in 1925. Prior to this he had been in private practice and worked for the Queensland Department of Public Works. He had also lectured part-time in the history of architecture and building construction at the University of Queensland. Tiled hip roofs and pedimented entries with elaborate cornices, as can be seen in Substation No. 13, were characteristic of Foster's designs.

The second substation on this site was constructed in 1942 to allow for the additional electricity needs of the Rocklea Munitions Works. Construction of the Rocklea Munitions Works commenced early in 1941 after the Commonwealth government committed £1,500,000 to the development of a complex of workshops, mills, foundries and munitions assembly buildings in Compo (later Evans) Road. Prior to October 1943, the Small Arms Ammunition Factory, the nation's fifth, produced over 150 million rounds of ammunition, notably .303 calibre, and over 1 million brass cartridge cases for 25-pounder shells. Limited production of munitions commenced in December 1941 and full production was reached by March 1942.

To meet these electricity requirements an additional part of Park Reserve No. 518 was acquired in 1941 and the site's second substation constructed. Its design is attributed to City Architect Frank Costello (1903-1987). Having trained as an architect in Sydney, Costello worked and travelled through Europe in the late 1920s and early 1930s. In Holland he was influenced by the work of Willem Dudok, whose modern view he translated through the careful manipulation of scale and proportion to create what he referred to as a 'civic sense'. Returning to Australia in 1936 he worked privately and lectured part-time at the Sydney Technical College until taking up the position Brisbane City Architect in 1941.

Costello's substation for Moorooka was of a simplified, modern design, one which has been described as of elegant simplicity and both modern and civic in appearance. It was a single mass substation consisting of one volume of space with a small secondary space for facilities at the rear. A distinct external feature was the pattern created by the mix of red/brown and cream bricks at the top of the walls and immediately below the concrete roof.

In 1942, with considerable wartime construction being undertaken in Brisbane, the Brisbane City Council was unable to hire bricklayers and called for tenders. Only two were received. The contract for £2,278.14.0, reduced to £2,250 by the contingency item being removed, was awarded to Ernest Taylor.

This second (1942) substation building was reconstructed in 1988 following a switching gear problem that caused structural damage to the double brick walls and concrete ceiling. Although in design very similar, the rebuilt substation has been reduced in height and some decorative features have been altered.

Description

This site, the former Substation No. 13, includes two buildings. The first, a symmetrical brick building designed in 1929, features a tiled hip roof and pedimented entries with elaborate cornices. The second, constructed originally in 1942 and reconstructed in 1988, is a rectangular, orange brick building with an internal frame supporting a flat roof. It sits on a plinth of brown bricks from floor level to ground. The junction between the wall and roof is created from red/brown bricks and cream brick in a distinct pattern.

Statement of significance

Relevant assessment criteria

This is a place of local heritage significance and meets one or more of the local heritage criteria under the Heritage planning scheme policy of the *Brisbane City Plan 2014*. It is significant because:

Historical

CRITERION A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history
as substations constructed in Moorooka to meet both prewar and increased wartime demand.

Representative

CRITERION D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places
as an intact example of an interwar and postwar substation.

Aesthetic

CRITERION E

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance
as the 1929 substation building uses classical referencing and symmetry in order to portray civil presence and

was specifically designed to harmonise with surrounding residential development.

Supporting images

This is an image of 'B.C.C. Sub Station No. 13, corner Beaudesert Road and Colebrook Avenue, Moorooka, 1949', looking

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Brisbane City Council,
'B.C.C. Sub Station No. 13, corner Beaudesert Road
and Colebrook Avenue, Moorooka, 1949',
Brisbane Images Collection, Brisbane City Council
Library Services.

References

1. Brisbane City Council Minutes 1929, 1,362/1929, p. 399
2. *BCC owned former electricity and tramways substations: Conservation management plan*, City Design, Brisbane City Council, 2003
3. Brisbane City Council Minutes 1929, 1940-41, 1941-42
4. Brisbane City Council Water Supply and Sewerage Detail Plans, no. 2689
5. Blake, Thom, Gerard Murtagh and BCC Heritage Unit, West End Library – Conservation Plan
6. Chaseling, Scott, Frank Costello: City Architect 1941-1952, City Planner 1946-1952. B. Arch. Thesis,

University of Queensland, 1997

7. City Plan Heritage Register – 72A Cairns Street, Kangaroo Point (substation)
8. Cole, John R. *Shaping a city: Greater Brisbane 1925-1985* (Brisbane: William Brooks, 1984) p. 27
9. Gardiner, Fiona, *Register of significant twentieth century architecture* (Australian Heritage Commission, 1988)
10. Osford-Jordan, Christopher William. *Study of the Architectural History of Brisbane Electricity Substations Before 1953*. (Unpub Thesis University of Queensland) January 1984
11. *Queensland Government Gazette*, 28 June 1930, p. 2,163
12. Queensland Heritage Register file no. 601620. Notes on 163 Evans Road, Salisbury. (Since removed from Register.)
13. Watson, Donald and Judith McKay. *Queensland Architects of the 19th Century: A Biographical Dictionary*. Brisbane: Queensland Museum, 1994

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Note: This citation has been prepared on the basis of evidence available at the time including an external examination of the building. The statement of significance is a summary of the most culturally important aspects of the property based on the available evidence, and may be re-assessed if further information becomes available. The purpose of this citation is to provide an informed evaluation for heritage registration and information. This does not negate the necessity for a thorough conservation study by a qualified practitioner, before any action is taken which may affect its heritage significance.

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