

Heritage Citation



Nundah Substation No. 237

Key details

Addresses	At 32 Robinson Road, Nundah, Queensland 4012
Type of place	Substation
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Free Classical
Lot plan	L77_RP34499
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2005 Date of Citation — November 2010
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Face brick

People/associations Harold Austen Erwood (Architect)

Criterion for listing (A) Historical; (C) Scientific; (D) Representative

This substation was erected in 1938 to meet an increase in demand for power to the Nundah area. It was designed by Harold Erwood, city architect 1934-1940 and was constructed by the Brisbane City Council. It is significant as a remnant from the period when Brisbane City Council assumed responsibility for electricity delivery to residents, and for the evidence it provides of the introduction of large-scale electricity supply in Nundah.

History

This substation was erected in c1938 to meet an increase in demand for power to the Nundah area. The erection of substations for distribution of electricity was an essential component of the required electrical supply infrastructure.

The availability of electricity to ratepayers had been a commitment given by the newly elected Brisbane City Council following the establishment of the Greater Brisbane area in 1925.

Electricity during the mid to late 1930s was a topical issue within Brisbane and Queensland as demand for the utility grew. A Royal Commission into how best to organise and distribute electricity to the rest of South East Queensland commenced c1935 and resulted in the State Electricity Commission Act of 1937.

During the period 1930 to 1935 the City Electric Light Company, who had supplied electricity to consumers in a number of areas throughout Brisbane through franchise, transferred its supply of electricity to the Brisbane City Council as the franchises expired. Thus, the Council gradually assumed responsibility to supply electricity to Brisbane consumers. The supply and demand of electricity was proving quite a profitable enterprise for the Council. The Electricity Supply Department Annual Report and Balance Sheet for the 1937-38 financial year disclose a profit of £50,082.00.

Land for this substation was resumed in late 1937 for an offered settlement sum of £100/0/0. It was however found that further land was required and a portion fronting London Rd, some 3.6 perches in total, was acquired for £15/0/0.

The architect for the substation and that located at Newmarket, is identified as being Harold Erwood. Erwood served as city architect from 1934 until 1940 on the salary of £475 p.a. He was appointed to the position after the death of A.H.Foster in 1934. Erwood also designed substations at Kedron and Newstead. It is suggested here that Erwood's substations were similar in design to Foster's. Most likely Erwood utilised the same plans, altering the plan where it was required, to suit the specific site.

The construction and operation of this substation, and that at Newmarket, was dependant upon the arrival of switchgear for other substations. Both the Nundah and Newmarket substations were to be equipped with switchgear from other substations, which were being upgraded with higher capacity switchgear. Operation of the substation was planned to commence in the "early months of the next financial years" (1938-39). According to

Osford-Jordan there were only two electricity substations erected during 1938.

Osford-Jordan further suggests that this style of substation was designed “to harmonise with the class of building surrounding it.” However, as it was constructed out of brick, it contrasted with the timber residences of this particular neighbourhood.

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 it is an indicator of the response to the growing demand for electricity supply in Nundah in the interwar period.

Scientific

CRITERION C

The place has the potential to yield information that will contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the city's or local area's history

as a remnant from the period when Brisbane City Council assumed responsibility for electricity delivery to residents.

Representative

CRITERION D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places

as an example of the technology utilised to deliver electricity to consumers during the late interwar period within Brisbane.

References

1. Detail Plan No:1339. Dated 11.2.1950
 2. G. Greenwood and J. Lavery. *Brisbane 1859-1959: A History of Local Government*. Brisbane: BCC, 1959.
 3. Osford-Jordan, Christopher William. *Study of the Architectural History of Brisbane Electricity Substations Before 1953*. (Unpub Thesis University of Queensland) January 1984
 4. *Reports and Proceedings of the Brisbane City Council* For the years; July 1933 -June 1934; July1936-June 1937; July 1937-June 1938
 5. Watson, Donald and Judith McKay. *A Directory of Queensland Architects to 1940*. (St. Lucia: U of Q Press, 1984)
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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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