

Heritage Citation

Substation No.47

Key details

Addresses	At 35 Ross Street, Newstead, Queensland 4005
Type of place	Substation
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Stripped Classical
Lot plan	L1_RP117105
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 14 September 2018 Date of Citation — September 2016
Construction	Walls: Face brick
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (H) Historical association

This small brick substation was built in 1938 in response to the growing need for a reliable electricity source for the adjacent industrial facility, Queensland Oxygen Pty Ltd.. The design of the substation reflected that of Queensland Oxygen's large brick administration building which faced Breakfast Creek Road. The City Electric Light Company was responsible for constructing the substation and it was designed by Brisbane architects, Addison and McDonald. Although the factory no longer exists on the site, the substation is an important remnant of the heavy industrial nature of Newstead in the early twentieth century.

History

Breakfast Creek was initially bridged in the late 1830s. Two more bridges were built across the creek before the current one was constructed in the 1950s. A horse-drawn tram service began transporting passengers to Breakfast Creek in 1885. With its proximity to the Brisbane River and the railway line, Newstead became

increasingly industrial in the late nineteenth century, and this continued well into the twentieth. Parts of the area were subject to flooding, discouraging residential development. The main industry was the Newstead gas works and the construction of a branch railway line from Bowen Hills to New Farm in 1897 and the close proximity to wharves along the river ensured the industrial nature of Newstead continued. By the 1930s, this part of Newstead was a mix of heavy industrial site, such as J.Kitchen and Sons soap and candle factory, situated beside Breakfast Creek, and workers' cottages.

An important industry in Queensland in the interwar era was Queensland Oxygen Pty Ltd. which had been established in the 1920s. Originally, the factory was located beside the Brisbane River in Newstead. In 1937, however, with the imminent building of the Story Bridge, the government at the time resumed the properties along the Newstead stretch of the river to make way for the construction of new wharves which would support the bridge project, "the Breakfast Creek area has been the result of a bold Governmental policy of building the £2,000,000 Story bridge ... This has necessitated the erection of new wharves at Newstead" (*Courier Mail*, 20 December 1938, p8).

A large site fronting Breakfast Creek Road and close to Breakfast Creek was swiftly purchased by Queensland Oxygen. In 1937 the new factory and administration building were erected. Designed by respected Queensland architect, Ashley Shaw, the attractive two-storey brick administration building gave the factory an impressive frontage to Breakfast Creek Road. Behind the administration building was the large factory building. It was reported in 1936, "Their new premises will be opposite the entrance gates to Newstead Park. A two-storeyed administrative block will be in brick, and the factory proper will be in steel, concrete and fibro" (*Courier Mail*, 15 September 1936, p18).

As Queensland's only oxygen producing company, Queensland Oxygen was an important industry for the Newstead area. The oxygen produced was used mainly for engineering purposes, but also for medical purposes, "The company supplies not only oxygen and other gases, but all the equipment and accessories needed for their use. It goes even further by giving tuition to customers, besides service at any time, through a special service department" (*Courier Mail*, 2 August 1937, p2). As well as the large factory building behind the administration building there were also several auxiliary structures and tanks. At the rear of the factory was Ross Street.

Due to the large amount of electricity used in the factory, it became apparent to Queensland Oxygen, that a reliable source of power was needed. At the time, the New Farm power station supplied electricity for Brisbane City Council operations, the tramway system and some individual consumers, while City Electric Light Company (CEL) supplied industrial and commercial customers in and around the city. In 1938 CEL began to lease a very small 81m² portion of land along Ross Street at the very end of the factory site.

CEL commissioned Brisbane architectural firm, Addison and McDonald to design a brick substation which would supply the plant with reliable electricity. On completion in 1938, the small substation's design made reference to the impressive administration building with its dark brickwork and simple plastered detailing.

Queensland Oxygen remained on the Newstead site until the 1960s when it moved to another site in Rocklea. The original administration building and factory are no longer extant. The substation was subsequently purchased by the Brisbane City Council who sold it to Energex. The substation continues to supply electricity to the local network.

Description

Substation No. 47 is a small, brick, rectangular substation fronting Ross Street, Newstead. It retains its original elements including windows. Modest plaster detailing provides simple contrast to the dark brick.

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 a 1930s substation constructed for Queensland Oxygen Pty Ltd to provide a reliable source of electricity for the plant, it is an important remnant of the heavy industry that characterised Newstead from the 1880s to the 1960s.

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage

as a purpose-built 1930s substation constructed for Queensland Oxygen Pty Ltd, which has remained in continuous use as an electricity substation to the present day.

Historical association

CRITERION H

The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organization of importance in the city's or local area's history

as a purpose-built 1930s substation constructed by and for Queensland Oxygen Pty Ltd, which has remained in

continuous use as an electricity substation to the present day.

References

1. Brisbane City Council City Design, *BCC-owned Former Electricity and Tramways Substations Conservation Management Plan*
 2. Osford-Jordan, Christopher William. *Study of the Architectural History of Brisbane Electricity Substations Before 1953*. (Unpub Thesis University of Queensland) January 1984
 3. Department of Environment and Resource Management QHR 602495 citations -Coorparoo Substation No.210
 4. Queensland Certificates of Title
 5. Queensland Post Office Directories
 6. J. Simmers 'The coming of the light to suburban Brisbane', published in *Australian Journal of Electrical & Electronics Engineering*, Vol 1, No.2, 2004, p.127-141, accessed via Queensland Energy Exhibition Centre website
 7. M. Thomis *A History of the Electricity Supply Industry in Queensland* Vol. I 1888-1938, Booralong / Qld Electricity Commission, 1987
 8. Brisbane City Council Building Registers
 9. *A&B Journal of Queensland*, August 1936. p26
 10. *Courier Mail*, 20 December 1938, p8
 11. *Courier Mail*, 15 September 1936, p18
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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.

Citation prepared by — Brisbane City Council (page revised September 2020)



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