

**Identifier** Electrical substation  
**Formerly** unknown



Not within a HO area

**Address** 13 Daley Street  
 ELWOOD

**Category** Public

**Constructed** 1910s?

**Designer** Unknown

## Significance

### *What is significant?*

The substation in Daley Street is a small single-storey red brick building with a gabled roof, and symmetrical street frontage with a central doorway flanked by a pair of downpipes with rainwater heads. Apparently dating from the 1910s, it is associated with the laying out of Elwood's domestic power supply at a time of intensive residential development.

### *How is it significant?*

The substation is of historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Port Phillip.

### *Why is it significant?*

Historically, the substation is significant for its associations with the laying out of Elwood's domestic power supply in the early twentieth century, which anticipated (or perhaps paralleled) a period of intensive residential development at that time. Probably dating from the 1910s, the small structure is one of few surviving non-residential/non-commercial buildings (cf the church at 31B Scott Street) that demonstrate the expansion of suburban services and infrastructure during this significant boom phase in Elwood's development.

Aesthetically, the substation is significant as an intact and representative example of an early twentieth century electrical substation, notable for a high level of architectural articulation including decorative brickwork to lintels and parapet, and interesting expression of rainwater heads. This small, sculptural building remains a distinctive element in the streetscape, which is otherwise overwhelmed by post-war redevelopment.

## Description

The substation is a small single-storey red brick building on a square plan, with an expressed plinth at the base and a gabled roof, concealed by a raked parapet with rendered coping. The street frontage has a central doorway, with ledged timber door and a soldier brick lintel with flanking stringcourses. The doorway is flanked by a pair of exposed rainwater heads, in the form of column capitals, with partly recessed downpipes.

## History

Records of the Melbourne Electric Supply Limited (predecessor of the SEC) reveal that domestic power supply was laid out in St Kilda (as far south as Acland Street and the Esplanade) during 1900, and in Brighton (as far north as Cole Street) during 1910, but there is no reference of any works in what is now Elwood. The electric tramway, laid out through Elwood in 1907, had its own supply, for which a dedicated power house (since demolished) was built on the northwestern corner of St Kilda Street and Head Street. Elwood's domestic power supply probably dates from the 1910s, when the suburb underwent intensive residential development. The late Edwardian detailing of the substation in Daley Street also suggests that it dates from that time.

Daley Street was typical of early twentieth century residential development in Elwood. The street was created in 1908 as part of a 32-lot estate on north-western corner of Tennyson Street and Glenhuntly Road. As elsewhere, subsequent development was retarded for a few years, with Daley Street not appearing in the *Sands & McDougall Directory* until 1911, with only two listings on the north side of the street. Development burgeoned over the next few years: there were four residents listed there by 1913, six by 1915, eight by 1916 and ten by 1920.

## Comparative Analysis

An exhaustive typological study of substations and other items of electricity supply infrastructure has not yet been undertaken. Within the City of Port Phillip, no substations were identified in any heritage studies prior to 2005, when an interesting example was documented at 52 Balston Street, East St Kilda (c.1929). Various other examples have been sighted across the municipality; there are some, probably dating from the 1930s, that are expressed as stark, cubic rendered brick volumes in a loosely Art Deco style (eg on the corner of Goldsmith and Byron Street in Elwood, and another at the intersection of Princes, Raglan & Nott Streets in Port Melbourne). There are others, probably dating from the 1920s, in the form of utilitarian red brick buildings (some with roughcast banding) with simple gabled roofs (some penetrated by vented bellcotes): examples survive in Johnson Street, Port Melbourne, in King's Way, South Melbourne and in Jacoby Reserve, Cowderoy Street, St Kilda West. The example in Daley Street is smaller and more compact, with a greater level of architectural enrichment, which suggests that it may be relatively early (c.1910s) in the broader context of substations across the municipality.

## Recommendations

recommended inclusions:

Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the City of Port Phillip Planning Scheme

## References

Orders-in-Council of the Melbourne Electric Supply Company, VPRS 9924/P1, Units 1-2. PRO.

*Sands & McDougall Directory*, various.

Lodged Plan No 4957, dated 22 May 1908.