

# Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture

**RSTCA No:** R012

**Name of Place:** Kingston Powerhouse

**Other/Former Names:**

**Address/Location:** Mundaring Drive KINGSTON 2604

Block 1 Section 8 of Kingston

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Listing Status:	Registered	Other Heritage Listings:	
Date of Listing:	December 1983	Level of Significance:	National
Citation Revision No:	6	Category:	Industrial/ Manufacturing
Citation Revision Date:	May 1985	Style:	Stripped Classical

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Date of Design:	1912	Designer:	JS Murdoch, Chief Architect , Public Works Branch, Dept of Works & Railways
Construction Period: Date of Additions:	1915	Client/Owner/Lessee: Builder:	ACTEA Day labor for Dept Works & Railways

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## Statement of Significance

The building exhibits a high quality of architectural design and is well-delineated with regard to its function and form. It also exhibits strong classical influences. It has a consistent and surprisingly high standard of detail, materials and composition for an industrial building, comparable with its landmark qualities. Its technology and construction are advanced and innovative. As the first permanent building erected within the context of early Canberra development it has responded well to important social, community, urban design and national requirements. The building retains a high level of integrity of the original building fabric, but equipment and machinery have been removed.

## Description

The main part of the building has two gabled sections, each over three storeys high, being formerly the "Boiler Bay" and the "Engine Bay", with a two-storey parapet section to the front of formerly containing the transformer room below the switchboard platform, and with a single storey "Economiser Annexe" at the rear terminating at the base of the now demolished chimney. Coal and ash handling hoppers are located on the side of the building, and nearby a cooling water retention weir was built on the Molonglo River. The walls are concrete infill between structural steel columns, rough cast externally, off-form internally. The roofing is unglazed terra cotta tiles. The primary industrial functions of the building are well delineated and expressed by the architectural form, incorporating the advanced technology of the new coal-fired electricity generating machinery. This was the realisation of the policy that the new Capital city should be all electric. At the time it was considered to be the most modern Power House in Australia. The building was also used for many ancillary social and community functions. For example, it was one of the few buildings lit at night, had one of the few telephones, produced the only ice, and the weir was the venue for early water sports carnivals and recreation. This gives it an enhanced historical and social significance.

## Condition and Integrity

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### Background/History

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#### **Analysis against the Criteria specified in Schedule 2 of the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991**

*(i) a place which demonstrates a high degree of technical and/or creative achievement, by showing qualities of innovation or departure or representing a new achievement of its time*

*(ii) a place which exhibits outstanding design or aesthetic qualities valued by the community or a cultural group*

*(iii) a place which demonstrates a distinctive way of life, taste, tradition, religion, land use, custom, process, design or function which is no longer practised, is in danger or being lost, or is of exceptional interest*

*(iv) a place which is highly valued by the community or a cultural group for reasons of strong or special religious, spiritual, cultural, educational or social associations*

*(v) a place which is the only known or only comparatively intact example of its type*

*(vi) a place which is a notable example of a class of natural or cultural places or landscapes and which demonstrates the principal characteristics of that class*

*(vii) a place which has strong or special associations with person, group, event, development or cultural phase which played a significant part in local or national history*

*(xi) a place which demonstrates a likelihood of providing information which will contribute significantly to a wider understanding of natural or cultural history, by virtue of its use as a research site, teaching site, type locality or benchmark site*

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### References

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### Other Information Sources