

## FORMER MELBOURNE ELECTRIC SUPPLY CO. POWER STATION Oddy's Lane

### History and Description

In 1886 the development of alternating current made it possible to transmit electrical energy over considerable distances so that it was no longer necessary to have the dynamo within a few hundred metres of the consumer. With the Melbourne City council planning to enter the electricity supply business, the Australian Electrical Co. Ltd. which had operated for some years in Russell Place, decided to move to Oddy's Lane, Richmond.

Renamed the New Australian Electric Lighting Co., the company erected a new power station to the design of architect Henry B. Gibbs which began operating in 1890. It supplied the southern part of Richmond, Prahran and South Melbourne. Its competitor was A.U. Alcock's Electric Light and Motive Power Company which had moved from Melbourne to Neptune Street, Richmond, in 1891.

In 1899 these two companies were taken over and were combined to form the Electric Light and Traction Co. of Australia in 1901. The new company increased the height of the engine house at Oddy's Lane and in 1908 it was renamed the Melbourne Electric Supply Co. In 1913 the engine room was extended to the east and a new chimney stack was built. A second chimney stack was erected in 1919 and a second floor was added to the office block in 1922.

The S.E.C. took over the power station in 1930 and new oil fired plant was installed in 1951. Power generation ceased in 1976 and the chimney stacks were demolished.

The facade of the building is substantially intact, the major defacements being the bricked up windows and relocation of the vehicle entrance door on the engine house. The sign has also been removed.

### Statement of Significance

A rare example of a late Victorian industrial building designed with an Italian Romanesque facade and associated with Melbourne's earliest electricity supply.

### References

The Story of Richmond Power Station, unpublished notes held by the S.E.C.  
Building and Engineering Journal, 20.12.1890, p.455.