

Identification and location

Name of Place: 3LO Radio Transmission Station

Other Name

Address 170 Ashley Street

Braybrook

Place Identifier 20244

Heritage Significance regional

Creation date(s): 1924 c

Map (Melway) 27 F10

Boundary description The extent of the present allotment and incorporating the steel clad shed to the south (if this is on a separate title)

Local Government Area: City of Maribyrnong

Ownership Type Commonwealth

Description

Site Type: communication

Physical Description

Although the transmission tower of what may have been Melbourne's first domestic radio transmission station has long gone, a small rendered building in a vaguely Spanish Mission style of white-washed walls, arched openings and terracotta tile roof survives. This is believed to have housed the transmission equipment, as evidenced by the insulators still attached to one wall. In more recent years it has been used as a gatehouse and site office, with the rest of the site used as a storage yard.

The concrete pads for anchoring the tower can be seen and a large timber and iron store shed possibly of later date is located immediately to the south.

Condition

The Spanish Mission transmission building survives in fair condition although unused and requiring repair.

Integrity

Only the concrete footings of the tower remain, partly covered in gravel, however the small gatehouse and store are intact externally

Context

On a large mostly vacant block adjacent to the Maribyrnong River and Braybrook industrial area. Adjoining Telstra property and the nearby Radio Street, give indications of the site's former use.

Threats

Neglect is a present threat, while future redevelopment of the site will inevitably cause destruction of features.

History

Domestic radio began in Melbourne with the establishment of the Australian Broadcasting Commission and its regional radio stations including 3LO in Melbourne in 1923.

3LO began broadcasting on 13 October 1924, with an outside broadcast of a performance of 'La Boheme' from His Majesty's Theatre in Melbourne, which featured Dame Nellie Melba.

Named after 2LO London, it was owned by the Broadcasting Company of Australia which represented Farmer and Co., J. and N Tait, Buckley and Nunn Limited and the Herald and Weekly Times Limited. The first manager was Major W. T. Conder, a former Governor of Pentridge Prison. In 1928, control of 3LO passed to the Sydney-based Australian Broadcasting Company. In 1932, the Australian Broadcasting Commission was established and was given control of the two stations in Melbourne.

The short distances which could be covered by transmitters at the time necessitated they be placed close the listening audience. The transmission station at Braybrook was probably one of several around Melbourne. Information on comparable sites is not known. The centre of ABC operations in Melbourne was in the Lonsdale Street premises known as 'Broadcast House' where programs were presented live and pre-recorded. Land lines connected this to the various transmission towers at Sydenham, Braybrook, Mt.Dandenong, and Surrey Hills.

All programs went to air 'live' in the early days. Later hard disc and wire recorders were used to record material. Then, in the mid-fifties, tape arrived and transformed the recording of material for broadcast.

3LO moved from Broadcast House into the ABC Radio's new Southbank Complex in May 1995. Southbank is one of the most modern and sophisticated broadcast studio centres in the world.

The majority of the early programs were musical although other programs included children's sessions, sporting, news, stock exchange, shipping and religious programs. The station's charter focussed on its role as a community information provider. Significant developments in the station's history included: announcements of major events, including the proclamation of Australia's involvement in both the First and Second World Wars; the broadcast of news bulletins, originally compiled from newspapers and from 1947, through the ABC's own independent news service; and in 1956, coverage of the Melbourne Olympic Games.

Thematic context

Australian Principal Theme

PAHT Subtheme: **Local Theme**

Cultural Significance

The site of one of the first transmitting towers of the Melbourne domestic broadcaster 3LO is of Regional historical significance as one of the earliest installations relating to public broadcast radio in Victoria. (Criterion A4)

The site is sufficiently intact to recognise the original layout of the site, the form of the transmitter buildings and the location of the tower. (Criterion F1)

The period architecture of the transmitter building adds some distinction to the site and demonstrates visually its period of origin. (Criterion E1) Radio Street on the south side of the Telecom property commemorates the early activity.

Comparative Examples

The other major broadcasting facilities in Melbourne are on top of Mount Dandenong and the ABC tower at Sydenham. The latter includes a number of radio masts and small transmission building which may provide insight to the original design of this place.

Recommendations

Heritage Victoria Register	<input type="text" value="No"/>
Register of the National Estate	<input type="text" value="Recommended"/>
National Trust Register	<input type="text" value="Recommended"/>
Other Heritage Listings	<input type="text" value="No"/>
Planning Scheme Protection	<input type="text" value="Recommended"/>
External Paint Controls Apply?	<input type="text" value="Yes"/>
Internal Alteration Controls Apply?	<input type="text" value="No"/>
Tree Controls Apply?	<input type="text" value="No"/>
Included on the Victorian Heritage Register under the Act	<input type="text" value="No"/>
Are there Outbuildings or Fences not Exempt?	<input type="text" value="No"/>
Prohibited Uses may be Permitted?	<input type="text" value="Yes"/>

Recommendations

The following objectives relate to the Statement of Significance and the cited fabric or contributory elements.
To conserve and enhance the significant elements of the place.
To conserve and enhance the public view of these elements.
To conserve and enhance the visual relationships between the contributory elements.
To ensure that new or altered elements within the place are visually recessive and related to the contributory elements.

Australian Heritage Commission Criteria

A4 Importance for their association with events, developments or cultural phases which have had a significant role in the human occupation and evolution of the nation, state, region or community.

The place was associated with the beginnings of popular radio broadcasting in Melbourne, and part of the earliest days of ABC radio in Australia

F1 Importance for their technical, creative, design or artistic excellence, innovation or achievement.

The place is associated with the early development of radio broadcasting technology. The layout of the site and foundations provide some evidence of the former engineering of the broadcast tower.

E1 Importance for a community for aesthetic characteristics held in high esteem or otherwise valued by the community.

The period architecture of the transmitter building adds some distinction to the site.

Documentation

References

MMBW Sewerage Plan 1939.
Inglis K.S. *This is the ABC: Australian Broadcasting Commission 1932-1983* MUP.

Data recording

Assessed By

Assessed Date: