

Powerstation

A fine example of early twentieth century industrial design, the New Farm Powerhouse was designed by the architect for the Brisbane City Council Tramway Department, Roy Rusden Ogg.

Constructed in stages between 1926 and 1940, the Powerhouse became operational in 1928 using water from the Brisbane River for cooling, and was serviced by a rail link providing coal supplies.

In 1929 the second section of the Stores Building was built and in 1934 the Turbine Room was extended. In the same year the switch house, the portion fronting the river, was built and the Stores Building also was extended.

An additional bay to the Boiler House was added in 1936, along with a staff accommodation wing and a final extension to the Boiler House was completed in 1940.

Brisbane Powerhouse, then known as the New Farm Powerhouse, supplied electricity to the entire tramway system of Brisbane as well

as power and lighting loads for the suburbs of Ithaca, Toowong and Yeerongpilly.

Transporting commuters in and around the city, the first electric tram was introduced to Brisbane in 1897 a form of transport that dominated the city's streets until 1969.

Akin to other major capital cities, buses were introduced in 1940 and eventually replaced Brisbane's trams in 1969. During these postwar years the Powerhouse began to operate at peak capacity, increasing the supply of electricity to further suburban areas. Additional railway sidings were extended from Lamington Street and by the 1960's additional river loading facilities were introduced.

Brisbane City Council sold the New Farm Powerhouse in 1963 to the State Electricity body. Declining workloads, output and upkeep, the grand industrial giant gradually disappeared off the Brisbane landscape until finally being decommissioned in 1971. The SEQEB continued to occupy the site until 1989 when a land exchange restored ownership to Brisbane City Council.

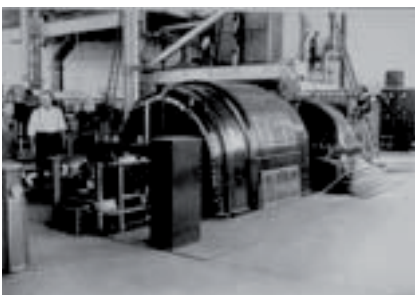
Derelict Building

From the late 1970s to 1990s the Turbine Building stood commercially barren. The building gradually deteriorated and appeared derelict to the naked eye.

Homeless people sheltered in empty rooms, filmmakers used the walls and floors as a canvas for creating alternative film, and street kids found refuge in the cavernous ruins. The Army used the site for 'target practice' and various army exercises have been undertaken on site.

In September 1994, the innovative artistic event Trance-Plant was undertaken on site by Andrew Forbes, Jaimes Dabrowski and Richard Mansfield. Many well known visual and performing artists were involved in this significant cultural event.

Various photographers and film makers also have used the site to produce both commercial and artistic works.



Entwined, the urban legacy of the homeless, the creatives and the street kids is to be found as graffiti and textures on the walls of the Powerhouse building and surrounding structures, each with a unique and individual tale to tell.

Stage two of the Powerhouse ended and the age of reason returned in 1989 when Brisbane City Council re-acquired the building through a land exchange. Within three years, the council had identified the Powerhouse as being culturally significant and the raw concept of the Brisbane Powerhouse as a centre for the arts was born.

Arts Centre

An ever-evolving, dynamic and challenging cultural asset, Brisbane Powerhouse – centre for the arts is a unique inner city space created within the shell of a derelict powerhouse on the New Farm reach of the Brisbane River.

An initiative of Brisbane City Council, the redeveloped Brisbane Powerhouse was opened on May 10, 2000 by Lord Mayor of the day Cr Jim Soorley.

Designed by architect Peter Roy it combines bold industrial structures, raw textures and graffiti walls with contemporary performance spaces, meeting and rehearsal rooms, outdoor performance areas, and an enviable riverside location adjacent to the open spaces of New Farm.

Brisbane Powerhouse now boasts two state of the art theatres; the 425 seat Powerhouse Theatre and the 200 seat Visy Theatre. The program showcases outstanding performances from local, national, and international artists spanning all genres of music, theatre, dance, comedy, children's programming, community-based arts and visual art exhibitions.

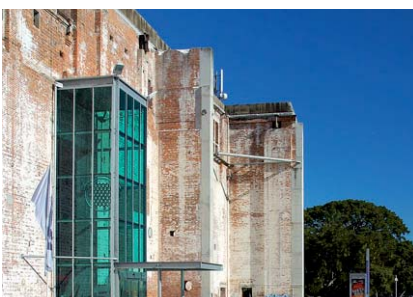
More than a performance space, Brisbane Powerhouse is a multi-purpose centre which includes the dramatic apex of the Turbine Hall, myriad gallery walls, an expansive outdoor plaza with green spaces - host of Jan Power's Farmers Markets, the riverfront restaurant watt modern dining, a mass of local cultural tenants housed in the Stores Building, the highly sought after Rooftop Terrace, and several smaller function and special event rooms.

From powering the largest tram network in the southern hemisphere in the twenties, to energising Brisbane's arts scene in the noughties, Brisbane Powerhouse is now the home of an innovative and progressive program of contemporary arts powering the Brisbane arts scene and generating an adventurous program designed to both challenge and entertain.

From the architectural origins of Roy Ogg came the architectural brilliance of Peter Roy, commissioned with the task of creating a formidable arts venue.

The design philosophy aims to preserve the twin histories of the old powerhouse; as an industrial site generating coal-powered electricity; and from 1971 as a derelict building where people found refuge, staged parties and left their marks.

Under strict community and industry guidelines, Architect Peter Roy maintained existing fixtures, ensuring each period of the sites history was documented and acknowledged physically in the walls, the floors and the three hectare environs of the New Farm precinct.



Where extensions or major repair was required Roy, without any attempt to blend the structural designs, created a new work, fusing past and present architectural philosophies. This is evident throughout the four sections of the Powerhouse, the Turbine Building; the Switch Room, the Stores Building and the Boiler House ruins.

The buildings were in reasonable condition although the internal fabric and roofing had deteriorated significantly.

Most of the original equipment had been removed when the plant was decommissioned in 1971 with only two of the original pieces remaining. The first is a switch, which is

situated near the Spark Bar. The second is a gantry crane positioned high above the Turbine Platform. Once used to remove turbines when they needed to be repaired or replaced the crane can still be winched by hand today.

