

502-508 Discovery Street
BC Electric Railway Company Depot
Other Names



Statement of Significance

Description of Historic Place

The B.C. Electric Railway Company Depot is a large shed-type industrial building located at the northern end of Victoria's downtown. It has two bays that extend between Discovery and Pembroke Streets, with pitched gables at the Pembroke Street elevation, and hipped gables at Discovery Street.

Heritage Value

The B.C. Electric Railway (B.C.E.R.) Company Depot is valued because it is an important part of Victoria's and British Columbia's industrial and transportation history. It is an important illustration of a significant phase in the continuum of the company that started as the National Electric Tramway & Lighting Company in 1890, and became the B.C. Hydro and Power Authority in 1961.

Designed by architect Francis Mawson Rattenbury in 1901 with an addition in 1907, its utilitarian form, large size, open interior spaces, and proximity to the street are important because they reflect the building's intended use as a car shed for the electric streetcars which ran in the City in the first half of the twentieth century.

The juxtaposition of the B.C.E.R depot with other nearby industrial buildings located in the Rock Bay Complex across Pembroke Street is significant aspect of its heritage value as it evokes the history of Victoria's early infrastructure, which, for reasons of convenience and accessibility included industrial service buildings as part of the City's commercial downtown.

Character-Defining Elements

The character-defining elements of the B.C. Electric Railway Company Depot include:

- Its double form, with two matching long bays.
- Surviving elements which reflect its early industrial use, including large, open interior spaces, and the long Store Street elevation which spans the whole block.
- Elements relevant to its design by architect Rattenbury, including window and door openings, wooden windows and doors, light fixtures, and wrought-iron elements.
- Its juxtaposition with the collection of industrial buildings in the Rock Bay Complex across Pembroke Street.