

TIME TRAVELER



New Westminster's Power House # 88 Tenth Street

In 1891 the City of New Westminster completed the first municipal run power utility on the Pacific coast of North America. The power generators were steam driven the with boilers fired by sawdust from the nearby Royal City Planing Mills. The plant was successfully operated by the City until they began purchasing power from the BC Electric Company in the early 20th century.



In 1907 the steam plant building was purchased by the Westminister Iron Works Company who operated out of this location until they moved to 12th Street in the 1940s. The steam plant was later demolished to make way for the construction of a new Safeway in 1950. The foundations of the electric light station were not dismantled but buried instead.

DSCN3184
Columbia Square
Plaza Today, the
foundations of
the electric light
station were
discovered
beneath where
Cockney Kings
currently stands.

IHP1577 &
IHP2658
(powerhouse
c. 1895)

In September 2008 Columbia Square Plaza Ltd. began excavation for a new development at #88 Tenth Street. During the excavation they uncovered the brick foundations of an old building along with several iron, glass and ceramic objects. Local residents saw these remains and brought them to the attention of the City who determined that they were from the original municipally owned Electric Light Station. The City and Columbia Square Plaza Ltd. began to work together to ensure no items of heritage value were lost through the course of the excavation. Bricks uncovered during this excavation are being incorporated into four plaques soon to be installed at the plaza.

