

Identification and location

Name of Place: **Railway Station, Interlocking Gates & Goods Yards**

Other Name

Address off **Anderson & Woods Streets**

Yarraville

Place Identifier **21324**

Heritage Significance *state*

Creation date(s): 1870 c.

Map (Melway) 42 A8

Boundary description Site bounded by Woods St. Somerville Road, Birmingham St. and Anderson St.

Local Government Area: City of Maribyrnong

Ownership Type State

Description

Site Type: railway station and goods yard

Physical Description

The present station building is a hipped roof form with a picturesque central roof gable with overhanging canopy, hipped roof, polychrome brickwork and a basalt plinth. The king-post truss gable roof marks the original entrance to the booking hall facing Birmingham Street and overhangs the footpath by some 1.2 metres, but has since been closed in. Deeply bracketed but shallow canopies extend either side of the gable. the brackets are of carved timber and set in pairs at the gable. Walls are polychrome brick (red, brown, black), set on a dressed basalt plinth. Terra-cotta string moulds and eaves brackets add to the natural clay character of the walls and the chimneys (ribbed and banded with terra-cotta chimney pots) also add to the display of brickwork.

To the south is an Edwardian parapetted porch which provides a small booking hall. Although red brick is used, the inverted basket-arch parapet form is foreign in style to the original building. With the added porch is a brick-sided ramp with wrought-iron picket balustrade and Chinese brackets supporting the roof fascia. Ogee guttering (bracketed) survived on this roof in 1989 (Butler:29-30).

The Edwardian down-side station consists of simple weather-boarded gabled pavilion, with a cantilevered fringed canopy attached. Lock-up shops have been added at the south platform end. Adjacent is a two-level hipped-roof signal box and part of the railway crossing gates - mostly replaced and repositioned with modern automatic booms across Anderson street. Bluestone paved yards with rail siding north of Yarraville Station and on the east side of the main line once used for loading manufactured good and unloading supplies for the local area in the late 19th century. Part of paving was ripped up in 1988. The station building is distinguished by its picturesque roof gable. The down side platform has an Edwardian weatherboard pavilion with cantilevered canopy.

Condition

In good condition, restoration work having been undertaken in recent years by the PTC, although not necessarily to the original configuration of the building. The signal box is disused, disconnected from the system and boarded up.

Integrity

Openings have been bricked up or sealed off, otherwise finishes such as pressed metal ceilings and ceiling roses (Edwardian?) survive in the main building. The down-side building's post verandah has been replaced with a cantilever and the north gable sheeted over. Much of the original bluestone pitching has been removed, either by the PTC or have been stolen. The gates have been removed and relocated.

Context

Located adjacent to the local commercial centre of Yarraville focussed on Anderson and Ballarat Streets. A few small contemporary warehouse buildings are on Woods Street, while the major historical and physical connections of the goods yard were with the Yarraville Industries to the west on Whitehall Street. Part of a related complex of buildings including the signal box and railway crossing gates (mostly removed or repositioned). The nearby St. Georges Theatre and shops are contemporary with the Edwardian expansion of the station.

Threats

The goods yard may be under threat of redevelopment.

History

The present station was constructed in 1893 as a response to the burgeoning development of Yarraville as a commercial centre. However, the line dates to much earlier with the construction of the Williamstown - Melbourne Railway in 1859, closely following on the subdivision of the Yarraville Estate in 1855. Yarraville grew in response to post Gold Rush wealth and investment, which is historically expressed in the streets named after gold rushes and towns. By 1872 Yarraville was equipped with a station and in 1885-7 tenders were called for both a station master's residence and station building, both of which were won by William Rain.

The contract for the new station (the present building) was awarded to R.L. Gray in December 1892, providing Ladies' Toilets and Waiting, Waiting and Bicycles, Station Master's Office and a Booking Hall central to the building.

Some of the first decade of station attendants included John Dewsnap, William Williams and Henry Preston. D. Owen was station master for the first 17 years followed by George Daniell (Directories, 1890-1945; Andrew Ward V2. p336f.).

By 1910 stations also existed at Middle Footscray, Footscray West and Seddon (1906), apparently corresponding with some upgrading of the Yarraville complex down side building. (Ward:139-49). Trams were introduced to the area by 1921, connecting to Footscray, indicating the sequential growth and spread of the population (Butler 1989:29).

An extensive bluestone pitched goods yard with a public siding provided to serve local

industrial complexes until the riverside rail loop at Spotswood and the Maribyrnong St. siding were built as alternatives. The goods yards at Yarraville provided the main transshipment point for the industries along the river in Yarraville. Before the construction of the Maribyrnong St. Line CSR, Cuming Smith and Mt. Lyell all used the yards. Buildings around the bluestone paved area were used as storage sheds by these companies. Some of these survive. The yards also provided produce for the Yarraville shopping centre and local farms sent out hay and dairy produce.

Thematic context

Australian Principal Theme

PAHT Subtheme:

Local Theme

Cultural Significance

The Yarraville railway station complex is of State technical significance and of Regional architectural and historical significance. It is of technical significance at a State level as the only surviving example of multiple sector interlocked wheel-operated railway gates in Victoria. (However, this has been compromised by the removal and relocation of the gates.) (Criterion F1) These types of gates were once quite common in Victoria, but are now rare. The Yarraville railway complex is also historically significant at a Regional level for its associations with the development of the major manufacturing industries in the area along the Williamstown railway corridor. (Criterion A3)

The complex has architectural significance in that it represents a rare collection of railway buildings and works, comprising: a brick station building and platform, a timber station building and platform, signal box, interlocked wheel operated level crossing gates, disused siding gates, station master's residence and the remains of an important public siding with extensive pitched bluestone cart ways. (Criterion B2) The station building is (according to Andrew Ward) "an interesting variation on the Casterton Style Group in plan but the ornament is more classically oriented". It forms an important part of the Victorian character of the Anderson Street centre. Both the station and rail siding yards reflect the commercial and residential development of Yarraville and its key riverside industries. (Criterion D2)

The complex has social significance at the Regional level for the role it has played as an entrance to the Yarraville shopping centre and in shaping the suburb's commercial development. (Criterion C2)

Comparative Examples

Yarraville Station is of the Casterton group - a standard railways design although in a more classical form. The railway gates, prior to their alteration, were of a unique design and the only multiple sector interlocked wheel-operated gates in Victoria. The complex is one of the few examples of a suburban goods yard retaining its original character with bluestone paving and rail sidings intact. Most other sidings in the region were private and specific to a single industry. This and Essendon siding and railway goods yard were used for general goods transshipment. Essendon has, however, been turned into a car park.

Recommendations

Heritage Victoria Register

Register of the National Estate

National Trust Register

Other Heritage Listings

Planning Scheme Protection

External Paint Controls Apply?

Internal Alteration Controls Apply?

Tree Controls Apply?

Included on the Victorian Heritage Register under the Act

Are there Outbuildings or Fences not Exempt?

Prohibited Uses may be Permitted?

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.
- To encourage the continuance of the original railway uses of the place.
- To prepare a conservation management plan which embodies the above objectives.

Australian Heritage Commission Criteria

A3 Importance in exhibiting unusual richness or diversity of flora, fauna, landscape or cultural features.

A rare surviving railway complex with distinctive architectural treatment reflecting the historical development of Yarraville and local industrial, commercial and residential developments.

B2 Importance in demonstrating a distinctive way of life, custom, process, land-use, function or design no longer practised, in danger of being lost, or of exceptional interest.

The function of the Yarraville station and goods yard as the commercial focus of Yarraville can still be discerned from the area of pitched yards and sidings. This represents an era of manhandled goods transported by rail and horse drawn dray to and from local industry.

C2 Importance for information contributing to a wider understanding of the history of human occupation of Australia.

The development of the station and goods yards closely parallels the establishment and growth of Yarraville and the industries in the area .

D2 Importance in demonstrating the principle characteristics of the range of human activities in the Australian environment (including way of life, custom, process, land-use, function, design or technique).

The goods transport function of the station and siding demonstrate a past activity which is no longer practised, namely manhandling of goods, while the station building is an important part of the Victorian character of the Yarraville Village.

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

The interlocked wheel operated gates represent a technical development in railways safe working which was at the time the peak of sophistication, and now represents the last surviving example.

Documentation

References

Footscray's First Hundred Years, :photo,
 G. Butler *Footscray Conservation Study*, 1989:4-28,
 Andrew Ward *Survey of Victorian Railway Stations*.1980:139-40, 336f

Data recording

Assessed By

Assessed Date: