

Identification and location

Name of Place: **Footscray Railway Station**

Other Name

Address

McNab Avenue

Footscray

Place Identifier

61

Heritage Significance

state

Creation date(s):

1899-1900

Map (Melway)

42 D5

Boundary description

Comprising station buildings and approaches on the Williamstown and Sunshine Lines including the footbridge and McNab Avenue gardens approach and turn around.

Local Government Area:

City of Maribyrnong

Ownership Type

PTC

Description

Site Type: railway station

Physical Description

Station building and signal box of red brick with associated timber foot-bridges and platforms set in the V junction between two major lines. The arcaded porch entry is the prominent feature from the approach along McNab Avenue with its neglected Edwardian landscaping and the rebuilt footbridge. Pedimented parapet bays face each main line. Styling in red brick and cement render are carried through the station buildings in an Edwardian Baroque manner. Each station building has a cantilevered canopy with a scalloped ripple-iron valence. A small roof lantern lights the entry linked to the booking hall. Rooms are fitted with vertical boarded dados now repainted in overall green. Rail cuttings are an impressive engineering feature. Tree plantings along the perimeter of the precinct relate to both Victorian Railways and Council landscaping and link to the adjacent Railway Reserve landscape.

Condition

Good

Integrity

Generally original except the removal of iron roof cresting, balls from pediments at the entrance, replacement of slate with corrugated iron roofing and sheeting over of windows. The footbridge has been altered a number of times.

Context

Adjacent to the Footscray commercial district with an important Edwardian park (Railway Reserve) as its original public approach. Historically positioned between the pre gold rush settlement and the later commercial hub which developed in the late 19th century.

Threats

The adjacent Railway Reserve and gardens have been proposed for replacement with private commercial and residential development (Footscray Central Concept Plan, City of Maribyrnong).

History

Built 1899 to replace the two earlier stations, one on the first rural line (Geelong 1857, Williamstown 1859) at Napier Street. and the other (Middle Footscray) on the first Government-built railway in the colony (Bendigo 1859) replacing a station which itself was reconstructed to accommodate the Bendigo Junction and line. The new station was an extensive brick complex straddling the branching of these two lines which was progressively expanded with the up-side buildings erected in 1900 and the down-side in 1908. R Vickers and local Frank Shillabeer were the contractors. The site of the earlier station became a landscaped public park and ornamental gardens which contained James Cuming's statue (removed) and a rotunda (survives).

The Station is a stylistic precursor to Jolimont and Richmond. Additional modification to the station's surrounds occurred when the Bunbury Street tunnel was constructed in 1928 to connect the Bendigo line and some large strategic government complexes, directly with the Melbourne docks.

Thematic context

Australian Principal Theme

PAHT Subtheme:

Local Theme

Cultural Significance

Footscray Station is of State historical and architectural significance as an important and elaborate Edwardian railway station with intact original landscape elements. The station and its landscaped surrounds present a rich cultural landscape and built environment. (Criterion A3) Architecturally, a design made more impressive by its unusual configuration. Its "V" plan is distinctive when seen in context of the impressive contemporary landscape and civil engineering works. Andrew Ward (1981) has allotted the highest level of importance to the station in his state-wide study and describes it as '...an architectural tour de force quite rare in stations of this size'. Both the station and gardens have been highly prized for their beauty and enhancement of the local area by past and present residents of Footscray. (Criterion E1) The associated landscaping provides a rare contemporary environmental context.

Historically it has served as a major public building for nearly 90 years and has been a focus of civic pride as demonstrated in the Council sponsored maintenance and development of the adjacent gardens, now sadly neglected. (Butler 1989) (Criterion A4) Both as a portal for commuting in and out of Footscray and as a symbol of civic pride the station reflects the community aspirations. (Criterion G1)

The design solution to a difficult junction site are clearly and successfully articulated, enhanced by the elaborate engineering and technical solution to the goods line bypass at the western end. (Criterion F1)

Comparative Examples

Andrew Ward in his Victorian Railway Stations has noted Footscray as a precursor of a style also used at Jolimont and West Richmond (1901) and Williamstown Beach (1899-1900), all on a much smaller scale.

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 prepare a conservation management plan which embodies the above objectives, specifically to inform future conservation and development. This should also deal with the local environs including the railway cuttings, pedestrian bridge, McNab Road Parkland/Railway Reserve.
- To encourage continuation of the original use of the place.

Australian Heritage Commission Criteria

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

The station and its landscaped surrounds present a rich cultural landscape and built environment.

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.

Closely connected to the fortunes and development of Footscray as the major commercial and industrial hum of the Western Suburbs.

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

Both the station and gardens have been highly prized for their beauty and enhancement of the local area by past and present residents of Footscray. The involvement of the council in the landscaping of the area demonstrates this.

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

The buildings are of a unique design and elaboration not otherwise seen in buildings of this function and scale.

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G1 Importance as places highly valued by a community for reasons of religious, spiritual, cultural, educational or social associations.

Both as a portal for commuting in and out of Footscray and as a symbol of civic pride the station reflects the community aspirations.

Documentation

References

Butler 1989:4:89,
Ward *Victoria's Railway Stations, An Architectural Survey, V2* 1981p.11ff.

Data recording

Assessed By

Assessed Date: