

# FOOTSCRAY RAILWAY STATION COMPLEX



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STATION COMPLEX SOHE  
2008



footscray railway station  
complex irving street  
footscray centre platform view  
sep1998



footscray railway station  
complex irving street  
footscray front view dec1985



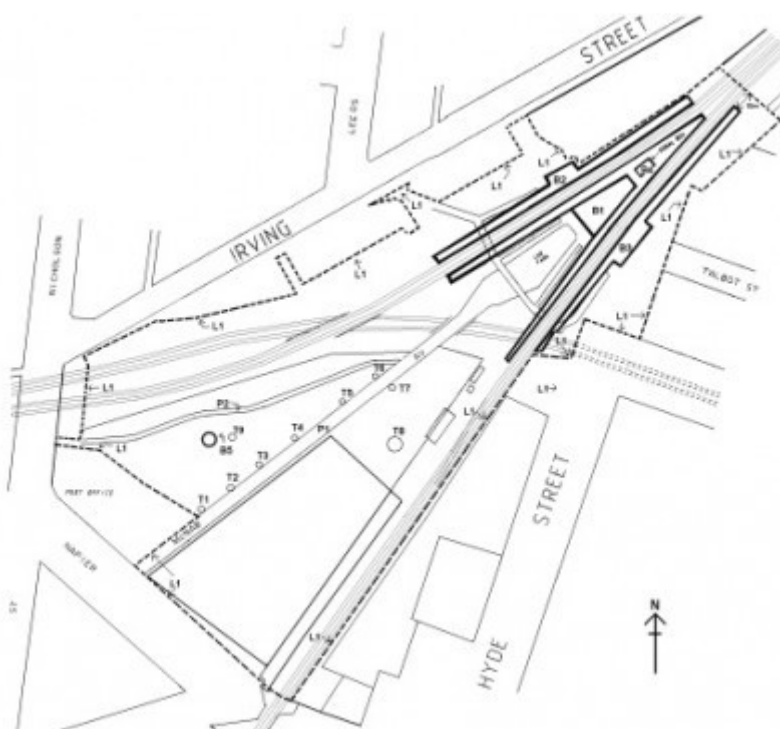
footscray railway station  
complex irving street  
footscray signal box sep1998



Footscray Railway Station  
Complex Reserve



Footscray Railway Station  
Complex Irving Street  
Footscray Reserve  
Bandstand October 1998



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## Location

IRVING AND HYDE STREETS FOOTSCRAY, MARIBYRNONG CITY

## Municipality

MARIBYRNONG CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1563

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO49

## VHR Registration

August 20, 1982

## Amendment to Registration

June 17, 1999

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 4, 2000

What is significant?

The railway station at Footscray is situated at the point of divergence of lines to Williamstown, Bendigo, Geelong and Ballarat. Originally two stations, one on the first major government-built railway (Bendigo 1859) in the colony and the other on the first rural line built (Geelong 1857, Williamstown by 1859), this became one extensive brick complex straddling the branching of these two lines during 1899-1908 (upside 1900, down 1908), some distance to the east of the original Napier Street site. R. Vickers and local Frank Shilabeer were the two contractors. A signal box was built at the end of the centre building after 1908. In place of the old Napier Street station site was the two-acre Railway Reserve ornamental gardens and rotunda, developed in the same period but in existence as a fenced reserve since the railway's construction. These gardens have been leased by Council from the Railways Department.

Footscray Railway Station Complex consists of three red brick station buildings and four platforms. The central building has a V configuration and elaborate detailing at the entry. Common details of the buildings include, cantilevered platform canopies, cement banding, bluestone quoin work around doors, arched windows and stucco cornice bands. At the end of the central building is an empty signal box, also constructed of red brick with render banding. The three buildings are linked by a footbridge and ramps. The remaining railway reserve is situated south-west of the station buildings. Elements of the dramatic landscaping include remnant, mainly exotic planting in the garden, dramatic cuttings and a path system. The focus of the Railway Reserve is the octagonal

band rotunda, built up on cast iron columns, with brackets and friezes adorning the timber-framed sheet iron clad roof with lantern.

How is it significant?

Footscray Railway Station Complex is of aesthetic, architectural, social and historical importance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Footscray Railway Station Complex is of aesthetic and architectural importance as an excellent intact example of a substantial railway complex constructed at the turn of the century. It is the precursor of a style also used at Jolimont and West Richmond (1901) and Williamstown Beach (1899-1900). It is important for its unusual V-shape configuration and elaborate stucco decoration on the front of the central station building. It is a striking example of a Federation Freestyle design with detailing consistent throughout the buildings. These details include, cantilevered platform canopies, cement banding, bluestone quoin work around doors, arched windows and stucco cornice bands. The surrounding Railway Reserve is of aesthetic importance as it places the buildings within a visually exciting Edwardian landscape characterised by impressive civil engineering works and gardens containing remnant, mainly exotic planting from the period when it was an ornamental garden. The landscaped reserve retains mature exotic trees such as Canary Island Date Palms. On the south the remaining reserve is visually held together by a Moreton Bay Figs and Palms. The bandstand and mound situated in the gardens is a fine example of a cast iron leisure structure with elaborate details.

Footscray Railway Station Complex is of social and historical importance as an early major metropolitan station. It has remained an important interchange station for rural and urban trains since the early establishment of Victoria's Railway Network in the 1850s. The complex is important for its potential to yield information on the changing nature of railways, locomotive technology and public transport use in Victoria. The Railway Reserve is important as one of only a few such Reserves to have been leased by the local council and used to provide gardens for the public. It is important for its former use as an ornamental garden, long history of continuous public recreational use and for its role in the social and leisure history of the Footscray area.

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must [notify](#) the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

#### General Conditions:

1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.
2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.
5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

#### Exterior

- \* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- \* Removal of any extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.
- \* Installation or repair of damp-proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method.
- \* Regular garden maintenance.

#### Interior

- \* Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative scheme.
- \* Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves, skirtings and decorative strapping.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted artworks.
- \* Refurbishment of bathrooms, toilets including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of kitchen benches and fixtures including sinks, stoves, ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers etc and associated plumbing and wiring.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves and provided that the location of the heating unit is concealed from view.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ. Note: if wiring original to the place was carried in timber conduits then the conduits should remain in-situ.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors

Construction dates	1899,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	503
Property Number	

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## History

#### Contextual History:

This station was identified in Andrew Wards 1984 Railway Station Study as being a precursor for the Footscray Style of station buildings.

This small group features details common to the Woodend Style with which the Department saw out the nineteenth century. They include similar cantilever verandahs, basalt quoining and banding, achieved by cement render in the twentieth. This group was designed for use in the metropolitan area, at Footscray, Williamstown Beach, Jolimont, West Richmond and Sandringham. With the exception of the Down platform building at Footscray, built in 1907 to harmonise with the existing complex, this group was built during the first two years of the twentieth century.

Although plan forms vary, its characteristic details are as follows:

- \* cement render banding at mid-window level, eaves level and across window heads,
- \* bluestone quoining to doorways, bluestone window sills and plinths, and
- \* pediment motifs to parapet walls around toilets.

They are complemented by red brick walls and slate roofs.

Each building borrows further classical details in the form of pilasters with simple capitals. At Williamstown Beach they stand either side of the main entrance and appear to support a pediment above. The most lavish display of decoration, for its own sake, however, graces the main facade to the platforms 2 and 3 buildings at Footscray.

#### History of Place:

The railway station at Footscray is situated at a critical junction, the point of divergence of lines to Williamstown (and thus Newport and Geelong), Bendigo and Ballarat. The railway from Geelong to Greenwich (Newport) was opened in 1857 and the line from Melbourne to Williamstown was opened two years later. The link between Greenwich and Melbourne was the last section to be completed, although the first train had traversed the section from Williamstown through Footscray to Saltwater River in September 1858. In June 1858 work had commenced near Footscray on the Melbourne to Sandhurst (Bendigo) line.

Originally two stations, one (Middle Footscray) on the first major government-built railway (Bendigo 1859) in the colony and the other on the first rural line built (Geelong 1857, Williamstown by 1859), this became one extensive brick complex straddling the branching of these two lines during 1899-1908 (upside 1900, down 1908), some distance to the east of the original Napier Street site. R. Vickers and local Frank Shilabeer were the two contractors.

A signal box was built at the end of the centre building after 1908.

In place of the old Napier Street station site was the two-acre Railway Reserve ornamental gardens and rotunda, developed in the same period but in existence as a fenced reserve since the railway's construction. James Cuming's statue (since removed) was placed in these gardens which were then leased by Council from the Railways Department. Further developments occurred this century with the cutting and tunnel which linked the Bendigo line (and some large strategic government complexes) with the Melbourne docks. The Bunbury Street tunnel was constructed in 1928.

#### The gardens

After the reconstruction of the Footscray Railway Station on its present site from 1899 this hitherto undeveloped reserve was landscaped as the entrance court to the new station. A view published in Footscray's First Fifty Years (1909) shows the fledgling landscape planting, a neatly fenced gravelled road and footpath comprising McNab Avenue and alongside the track, an ornate exotic planting layout with sinuously curved pathways, rockeries, succulents and shrubberies, and an Indian Bungalow style pavilion now forming the core of today's bowling club.

After a request in 1882 to use municipal land for a green, Footscray bowlers eventually formed today's club around 1900. In 1906 they expended 400 pounds for the pavilion and a six-rink green on its south side.

The bandstand is shown in 1909 at the northern sector of the reserve at the intersection of two pathways. Gas light standards lined both approaches to the station from Napier Street as did less sightly telegraph poles. Today the bungalow pavilion has been built over and much of the ornamental exotic garden which adjoined it on the east, replaced by another green.

Another development was the formation of the cutting and tunnel leading along Bunbury Street across the Maribyrnong River to Melbourne's docks in c1936. This provided another element in the man-made landscape

which attracted exotic planting to the sides of the rock-face cutting.

Associated People:

## **Assessment Against Criteria**

### **Criterion A**

The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object.

Footscray Railway Station Complex is of social and historical importance as an early major metropolitan station. It has remained an important interchange station for rural and urban trains since the early establishment of Victoria's Railway Network in the 1850s. The Reserve is important for its former use as an ornamental garden, long history of continuous public recreational use and for its role in the social and leisure history of the Footscray area.

### **Criterion B**

The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness.

The Railway Reserve is important as one of only a few such Reserves to have been leased by the local council and used to provide gardens for the public. A now rare surviving example of a railway reserve landscaped in the Edwardian period.

### **Criterion C**

The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage.

### **Criterion D**

The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects.

Footscray Railway Station was the precursor of a style also used at Jolimont and West Richmond (1901) and Williamstown Beach (1899-1900).

### **Criterion E**

The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.

Footscray Railway Station Complex is an excellent intact example of a substantial railway complex constructed at the turn of the century. It is important for its unusual V-shape configuration and elaborate stucco decoration on the front of the central station building. It is a striking example of a Federation Freestyle design with detailing consistent throughout the buildings. The complex is important for its potential to yield information on the changing nature of railways, locomotive technology and public transport use in Victoria.

### **Criterion F**

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements.

### **Criterion G**

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations.

### **Criterion H**

Any other matter which the Council considers relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

## **Extent of Registration**

### **NOTICE OF REGISTRATION**

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended in that the Heritage Register Number 1563 is now described in the category as a Heritage Place:

Footscray Railway Station Complex, Irving Street, Footscray, Maribyrnong City Council.

EXTENT:

1. All the buildings and structures marked B1 Station Building and Platforms 2 and 3; B2 Station Building and Platform 1; B3 Station Building and Platform 4; B4 Signal Box and B5 Bandstand and Mound on Diagram 602753 held by the Executive Director.
2. All the Trees and Garden features marked T1-T7 Phoenix canariensis; T8 Ficus Macrophylla; T9 Cupressus torulosa; P1 McNab Avenue including bluestone edging; P2 Path on Diagram 602753 held by the Executive Director.
3. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 602753 held by the Executive Director, being part of the land described as Volume 10159 Folio 864.

Dated 21 May 1999.

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette G 24 17 June 1999 p.1422]

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*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*