
THORNBURY RAILWAY GATEHOUSE HUTTON STREET

Location

23 HUTTON STREET, THORNBURY VIC 3071

Municipality

DAREBIN CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7822-2399

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 4, 2021

The gatehouse and signal box were important elements of the railway and to the function of Thornbury Railway Station in the earlier years, when manual operation of the level crossing gates was required, and when the signal box was in use prior to modernisation of the railway system.

The gatehouse was an important element of the Thornbury station complex and of the railway more broadly, especially in its earlier years when accommodation was necessary for the railway personnel staffing the level crossing and the signal box. Any archaeological remains associated with the house, especially those related to its 19th and early 20th century use and occupation, including early outbuildings and cess pits, have potential to provide valuable information on the development of transportation in the region and the nature of early domestic settlements, particularly that associated with the early railway.

If any structural features or buried deposits/artefacts remain they will have significant archaeological potential for investigating late 19th - early 20th century domestic and transportation features in the inner northern suburbs of Melbourne.

Interpretation of Site

Although the exact date is unknown, it is likely that the gatehouse was constructed around the same time as Thornbury Railway Station in 1889 and was expanded in 1910. It was intended to house personnel who were employed by Victorian Railways to operate the level crossing gates from the late 19th century onwards. The exact date of its removal is unknown but it was no longer present in 1984. The signal box on the south east corner of Hutton Street was constructed sometime between 1910 and 1945 but the exact date of its removal is also unknown. Today the south east corner of Hutton Street is partly used as informal carparking along Stott Street. The railway reserve is fenced on both the east and west sides, and the reserve includes underground services and railway related infrastructure (Figures 12, 13 & 14). The level of impact caused by the demolition of the buildings, tree growth and removal, and the levelling of the site is unknown. Underground services and infrastructure installation have likely caused moderate to high level impacts to any archaeological features within the immediate scope of those works. However, as these works may not have affected the entirety of the footprints of both former buildings, there is likelihood that sub-surface features and deposits remain, associated with the signal box, the gatehouse, its outbuildings and cess/refuse pits.

Hermes Number

206997

Property Number

History

Thornbury Railway Station opened on the 8th of October 1889 on the original Clifton Hill to Whittlesea railway line (incorporated into the Mernda line today). It was located between Croxton and Bell Railway Stations (VR, n.d.). The station was part of a network connecting Melbourne to the northern suburbs and to regional Victoria. The gatehouse, located on the south west corner of Hutton Street, Thornbury, was built sometime between 1889 and 1908 and was an irregular shaped structure (Figure 3) that was added to between 1909 and 1910 (Figures 4 & 5). The 1908 and 1909 MMBW plans (Figures 3 & 4) also show that there was a water closet located at the rear of the house to the south. As the gatehouse (or gatekeeper's cottage/residence) was an important building to facilitate staff working the level crossing, it is likely that it was constructed at the same time as the railway station opened in 1889.

A second structure was also built between 1910 and 1945 on the south east corner, as indicated in aerial photographs from 1945 onwards; these show a small square-shaped building (Figures 9 & 10). The engineering plan from 1910 (Figure 5) shows the faint outline of a structure in this position. Photographs of the Hutton Street level crossing from 1967 confirm that this building was a two-story structure and was likely to have been a signal box, as its appearance conforms with engineering plans of Victorian Railway signal boxes throughout the state (Figures 6, 7 & 8: VR, n.d.). The 1967 photographs also confirm that both the gatehouse and the signal box were weatherboard constructions with brick chimneys, enclosed by timber fencing (Figures 6, 7 & 8). The gatehouse also had a double open gable roof facing Hutton Street (Figures 6 & 7). The photograph of the signal box facing west indicates there was a fence on the northern boundary but not on the eastern boundary (Figure 8).

Aerial imagery and photographs from 1945 onwards indicate that the gatehouse was still standing in the late 1960's; however, it had been removed by 1984, as seen by the cleared/vacant land on the south west (Figure 11). The signal box was still present in 1984, with a row of trees running north to south on the eastern boundary (Figure 11). Sometime between 1984 and 2020 the signal box and trees were removed, and the carpark which is present today was constructed (Figure 1).

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/>