
Gardiner Railway Signal Box



Gardiner switch house (left) and railway signal box (right)



Gardiner railway signal box



Gardiner switch house



Undated photograph of the Burke Road level crossing



Undated photograph of the Burke Road level crossing

Location

287 Burke Road, GLEN IRIS VIC 3146 - Property No 64261

Municipality

STONNINGTON CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO481

Heritage Listing

Stonnington City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

Relevant themes from the City of Stonnington Environmental History are indicated by TEH.

What is Significant?

The signal box at Gardiner Railway Station is a gable roofed timber framed building erected c1917 to a standard Victorian Railways design. It was built to control the Burke Road level crossing at time when the electric tram line was extended along Burke Road by the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust.

The switch house at Gardiner Railway Station is a modest red brick building with a gabled terracotta tiled roof. It was built c1922 when this section of the railway line was electrified. The switch house is understood to contain electrical equipment needed for the operation of the tramway square at the Burke Road level crossing.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The external form, materials and detailing of the signal box and switch house as originally built.
- The high level of intactness of the buildings to their original design.
- The freestanding form of the buildings and their modest scale.
- The siting of the buildings adjacent to the Gardiner Railway station and the Burke Road level crossing, and their close proximity to one another.
- Unimpeded views to the buildings from Burke Road.
- The limited presence of modern signage on the buildings and in their immediate curtilage.

Modern fabric, including signage and fencing in the curtilage of the buildings, does not contribute to the significance of the place.

How is it significant?

The signal box and switch house at Gardiner Railway Station are of local historical, architectural and technological significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

The signal box is historically significant as evidence of the impact of the extension of the electric tram network through the municipality in the 1910s (TEH 4.5.2 Prahran-Malvern Tramways Trust, Criterion A). The switch house is historically significant for its association with the electrification of the suburban rail network (TEH 4.4.3 Twentieth century improvements, Criterion A).

The signal box is architecturally significant as a substantially intact example of an early twentieth century Victorian railways building (Criterion D). Along with the adjacent switch house, the signal box provides rare evidence of the early character of the Glen Waverley line prior to its duplication in the 1950s and the associated modernisation of all station buildings. The signal box and switch house, and the matching signal box and switch house at Gardiner, are the only pre-World War II railway buildings known to survive on this line (with the possible exception of an altered c1928 signal box at Darling Railway Station) (Criterion B).

The Gardiner Railway Station signal box is technologically significant for its ability to demonstrate early twentieth century safe working practices at level crossings. The signal box and switch house are of added technological significance as infrastructure controlling one of only four tramway squares remaining in metropolitan Melbourne (Criterion B, F).

Heritage Study/Consultant	Stonnington - Heritage Places in the City of Stonnington - Heritage Citations Project, Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd, 2013;
Hermes Number	195520
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The signal box at Gardiner Railway Station is located at the eastern end of platform 2, overlooking the Burke Road level crossing. It was built to a standard Victorian Railway design consisting of a one-and-a-half-storey timber-framed building with a gable roof and an WC attached to the west side. External walls have weatherboard panels set between stop-chamfered timber posts. The roof has corrugated iron cladding (painted oxide red) and stop-chamfered bargeboards, with finials since removed. Timber-framed windows form a horizontal band along the south and east elevations providing the signalman with a clear view of the Burke Road level crossing. The windows on the east elevation are shaded by a narrow corrugated iron awning mounted on timber brackets. There are also two four-pane timber framed windows on the south elevation of the lower level.

The signal box exterior appears to remain in good original condition apart from some comparatively minor alterations, including the removal of the gable end screen from the east elevation and the removal of the turned timber gable finials. A metal chimney on the north side of the signal box has also been removed. The upper two panes on the signal box windows have been painted over and an air-conditioning unit has been mounted on the south elevation. The timber ramp that connects the signal box to the platform also appears to be modern.

The interior of the signal box was not inspected but it is understood to retain the original lever frame (ie levers and associated mechanisms used to operate the signalling, boom gates and to switch power between the trains and trams).

The switch house is located on the south side of the level crossing, opposite the signal box. Built c1922, the switch house is a modest red brick building with a late Edwardian architectural character. It has a gabled terracotta tiled roof with scroll finials, exposed rafters at the eaves and a monitor roof ventilator. The south elevation contains a V-jointed timber board door. The east and west elevations each have a pair of six-pane timber-framed windows with figured glass. The south elevation facing the railway line is blank apart from a series of terracotta floor vents.

The switch house appears to remain substantially intact externally apart from overpainting of brickwork on the east elevation and cables running through a damaged terracotta vent on the north elevation.

The signal box and switch house apart, the environs of the Burke Road level crossing have been greatly changed in recent decades as a consequence of road widening, the installation of modern boom gates and the construction of the South Eastern Arterial Road (Monash Freeway).

Local Historical Themes

The Gardiner railway station signal box and switch house illustrate the following local historical themes, as identified in the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (Context Pty Ltd, 2006):

4.4 Railways (4.4.3 Twentieth century improvements)

4.5 Tramways (4.5.2 Prahran-Malvern Tramways Trust)

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/>