
FORMER KEON PARK RAILWAY STATION BUILDINGS

Location

KEON PARADE/ HIGH STREET THOMASTOWN, WHITTLESEA CITY

Municipality

WHITTLESEA CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7922-0524

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 17, 2022

What is significant?

The following information provided is based on Heritage Victoria's *Framework of Historical Themes*, which have been established to ensure that objects, places, and events, can be understood, assessed, and presented within the context of a broad theme, rather than as singular item of interest.

The Former Keon Park Station is relevant to the theme *Connecting Victorians by transport and communications* presented in Heritage Victoria's *Framework of Historical Themes*. This site has the potential to provide insight into how early to mid-20th century residents commuted in the Darebin area. This specifically relates to theme: *Linking Victorians by rail* and has potential to expand our knowledge on how Victorians expanded the railway network, improved country services in the 20th century, administered and serviced the railway network, and electrified the suburban network.

The Burra Charter defines 'cultural significance' as 'aesthetic, historical, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations' (2013). The Former Keon Park Station has been assessed against these values and is considered to be of low historical significance at a local level for its association with the development of the Victorian rail network. The site has no known aesthetic, social, spiritual or scientific significance.

How is it significant?
Why is it significant?

Hermes Number 208894

Property Number

History

Following several decades of community agitation, the Fitzroy to Whittlesea line opened in 1889. The line commenced in North Fitzroy with stations at Northcote, Thornbury, Preston, Reservoir, Thomastown, Epping and Whittlesea. In 1925 Sections A and B in Reservoir were offered for auction. The proposed subdivision of Section A is depicted in the advertisement including 98 shop sites and '368 spacious villa allotments', alongside the proposed Merrilands Station.

The subdivision took off slowly, a station was constructed in 1929 and named Keon Park with a single platform on the west side of the railway. In the same year, the railway line between Reservoir and Thomastown was electrified, providing residents with faster transport to the city for work (Payne, 1975). The newly electrified station and rail line was ushered in with a degree of enthusiasm in *The Age*, promising an increase of ten extra trains daily to commuters (1929 *The Age*. December 12). The station was plagued by a series of misfortunes: from two minor break-ins where money and items were stolen to a fatal accident involving a rail-worker, who was the husband to the caretaker of the station (1930 *Advertiser* June 20; 1930 *The Herald* September 8; 1932 *Advertiser* October 14).

A rectangular building is evident at the southern end of the platform in the 1931 aerial image, with an additional smaller structure towards the centre of the platform. The structures remain consistent in the 1945 and 1951 aerial images. The 1950 MMBW plan depicts what appear to be two rectangular buildings and then a much smaller additional building at the southern end of the platform. However, with consideration of the aerial photos it seems likely that these two rectangular buildings are two rooms with a walkway between and a verandah extending over the platform all under the same roofline. The 1950 MMBW depicts the building at the centre of the platform consistent with the aerial imagery.

A photograph of Keon Park Station from c.1950s demonstrates the positioning and exterior of a weatherboard building adjacent to the south end of the platform, this building is believed to be a signal box. At the south end of the platform it is clear that the building had a verandah, the smaller building is also evident halfway along the platform.

The railway tracks between Reservoir Station and Keon Park were duplicated in 1959; however, the line remained a single track after Keon Park Station and no additional platform was constructed (Keon Park n.d.). On 1st September 1973, the station and signal box were damaged in a fire (Newsrail, 1973) and in 1983 new station buildings were constructed at the south end of the platform, replacing the earlier structures (Newsrail, 1983). The new structures are clearly depicted in the 1987 aerial image, the former building in the centre of the platform appears to have been demolished along with the other buildings but no new structure has been built in its place. The island platform was constructed in 1988 (Keon Park n.d.). In 2011 the railway line was duplicated between Keon Park and Epping and Nearmap aerial imagery demonstrates that in February 2015, the northern station building at the south end of the platform was rebuilt to house PSOs.

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/>