
PARKERS ROAD GATEHOUSE

Location

RAIL CORRIDOR, DOWNSIDE: CORNER OF PARKERS ROAD AND FRANKSTON RAIL LINE. 92 PARKERS ROAD, PARKDALE, VIC, 3195

Municipality

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7922-0529

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - February 2, 2023

What is significant?

The Parkers Road Gatehouse was an important element of the Frankston Railway Line during the growth of early suburban railways, as manual operation of the level crossing gates was required. Due to this, accommodation was necessary for the employees staffing the level crossings. The Gatekeeper was therefore integral for the operation of trains running to schedule and ensuring the public's safety. The Parkers Road Gatehouse, inclusive of the primary residence, shed, and any associated archaeological deposits, thus have the potential to provide detail regarding the early operation of suburban railways and daily life during the early 20th century in greater Melbourne.

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Interpretation of Site

The Parkers Road Gatehouse was likely constructed in conjunction with the rail line in 1881, as the Argus (1881) reported the newly opened line had 22 level crossings with gatekeeper's houses. The Parkers Road Gatehouse is identified as Departmental Residence No. 314 and was constructed of wood with a verandah on the eastern side of the property (Figure 1). A photo of the Parkdale Station in 1919 (Figure 2) shows the location of the Gatehouse. The cottage is visible in a 1931 aerial photograph but was demolished or removed between 1939 and 1940. The property in which the gatehouse once stood has been subjected to a variety of impacts including the removal or demolition of the gatehouse structure, the widening and realignment of Parkers Road, the construction of a shop and factory brick building, alternations and additions to the shop and factory, installation of services, including underground gas and electricity lines and an overhead power line (DBYD 2022 and Rail Map 2022), the installation of rail infrastructure, remediation works and the residential development at 190-208 Como Parade East, Parkdale. The level of impact to the areas of the property that have been developed since the 1950s is considered to be high. This includes the current building footprints at 92 Parkers Road, Parkdale and 190-208 Como Parade East, Parkdale. These areas are not proposed to be included within the VHI site extent. The gatehouse was removed in 1939-1940, however, no evidence has currently been located that indicates if the residence was demolished or moved and what the impact to the site and potential archaeological deposits was. There is potential that archaeological features such as structural remains of the primary residence, shed, refuse puts, cess pits and other deposits may be located in the less disturbed areas of the site, for example under the asphalt driveway and within the rail corridor.

Hermes Number 209450

Property Number

History

The railway line from Caulfield to Mordialloc opened in December 1881 and was extended to Frankston in 1882. The line was duplicated to Mordialloc in 1888. The Frankston line was then electrified in 1922 and the installation of electrical signalling along the line began in 1933. In 2015, the line was upgraded as part of the Bayside Rail Project. Before the railway station was constructed in Parkdale, the area was sparsely populated, with 16 residents occupying four properties (Whitehead 2018). A station was first suggested for Parkers Road in 1908, with the local government appealing to the Premier of Victoria, Sir Thomas Bent. The local government argued that it would stimulate demographic and touristic growth in the area, but the request was subsequently rejected (Whitehead 2018 and Brighton Southern Cross 1909). The proposal for a station was brought up again in 1914, and after the cessation of the First World War, the new Parkdale station was opened in 1919 (VicSig 2006). After the implementation of the station, the population in the area grew steadily. The Parkers Road Gatehouse was likely constructed with the rail line in 1881 and is visible on aerial photographs until 1931. Identified as Department Residence No. 314, the gatehouse included the main building and two outbuildings. Correspondence to the Secretary of Victorian Railway from the Town Clerk of the City of Mordialloc indicates that in March 1939, a permit had been rejected to move the gatehouse from its present position to an allotment in Barkley Street, Mordialloc. A handwritten note from the secretary on the correspondence states "Tenders close 29/3/39 for the purchase and removal of DR314". Further correspondence from the Town Clerk from March 1940 outlines that the residence was recently removed before a meeting on the 26th of February 1940. It is unclear if the residence was demolished or moved to a new plot of land. The land was leased for five years in 1947 and for another five years in 1952 (Victorian Railways 1947; Victorian Railways 1952). A Victorian Railways memorandum from 1952 indicates the tenant operated a fuel and ice business from the property and had constructed a paling fence

around the inner boundary. A horse was also kept on the property to help with deliveries. A brick factory and shop were constructed in the northern section of the Gatehouse property in 1956. Correspondence by the Victorian Railways Estate Officer shows that an extension of the factory was proposed and approved in 1958; these changes were reflected in 1962 aerial (Figure 4). An electroplating business operated in the factory building from 1957 to 2003. The shop had concrete strip footings for the weight bearing walls that extended approximately 740 mm below the ground surface (Figure 8). An underfloor void visible on the plans suggests that the shop building footprint may have been graded for the construction of the shop building. Additions to the shop occurred between 1962 and 1969. Correspondence, applications, and plans from 1967 to 1969 request and approve an extension to add an outdoor washroom abutting the store and factory on the south side of 92 Parkers Road, Parkdale. The plans show that the extension consisted of floor joists, bearers and concrete footings. The shop was subleased to a dental practice and first appear on the Victorian Dentist Register in 1970 (Victorian Government 1970a and 1970b) and by 1976 the area south of the shop building was used for car parking. A 1971 Victorian Railway plan shows a veranda at the front of the dental surgery. The Electroplating factory building was demolished in 2007, and the land was developed into a block of town houses between 2007 and 2008 (Lane 2007). An EPA audit was conducted on 190-208 Como Parade East in 2007, before the development of apartment buildings on the site (Lane 2007). Laboratory tests showed metals contaminated the soil and remediation measures were completed. These included the excavation and removal of soil to a depth of 500 mm across the whole site and additional excavation to a maximum of 2 m depth in targeted areas (Figure 5). Introduced soil was used to backfill the site prior to the construction of the residential development. Features were recorded during an inspection in July 2006, prior to the demolition of the Electroplating business, and during the remediation works. These features, with the exception of services, were related to the Electroplating business. No archaeological remains associated with the earlier occupation of the property were recorded during the EPA audit. Soil testing at the site demonstrated that the topsoil was comprised of fill, suggesting the area had undergone levelling prior to the construction of the Electroplating building. The remediation works significantly impact the eastern section of the property (currently 190-208 Como Parade East, Parkdale), which contained a small outbuilding.

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/>