

# Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated 22/05/19



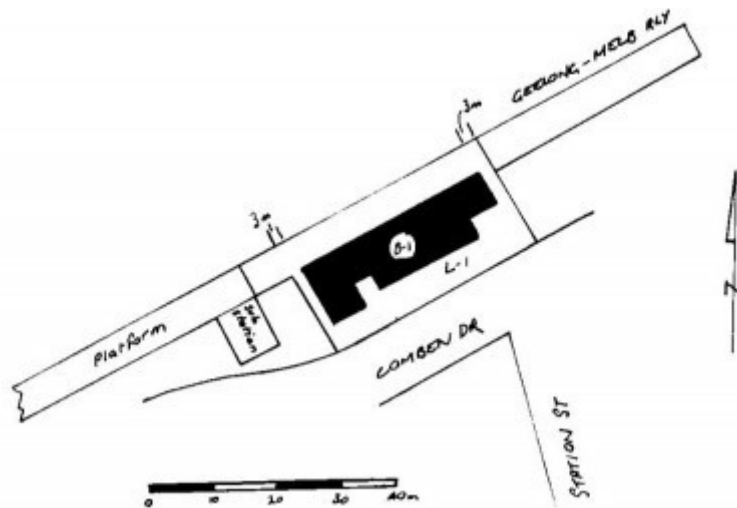
## WERRIBEE RAILWAY STATION



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2008



1 werribee railway station comben street  
werribee rear elevation oct1996



werribee railway station plan

### Location

COMBEN STREET WERRIBEE, Wyndham City

### Municipality

WYNDHAM CITY

### Level of significance

Registered

## **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H1309

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO4

## **VHR Registration**

April 17, 1997

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - May 13, 1999

What is significant?

Werribee Railway Station was completed in 1857 as part of the Geelong and Melbourne Railway, the first country railway in Australia. The station was designed either by architect and engineer Edward Snell, the railway's engineer or by his partner Ferdinand Kawerau, the company's principal architect. It was originally built in bluestone with sandstone quoins. In 1927 it was gutted by fire and a somewhat reduced building, with a low pitched, hipped, tiled roof and cement rendering, was the result. In 1970 the awning (of 1927) was partially demolished by a derailed wheat train. The building is mostly unused. Although there have been substantial alterations, much of the station's original fabric, including walls, part of the bluestone platform, and an unusual cellar, are still clearly discernible.

How is it significant?

Werribee Railway Station is of historical and architectural importance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Werribee Railway Station shares with the St Kilda railway station, also of 1857, the historical importance of being the oldest railway buildings in Victoria and among the oldest in Australia as well as being the last remaining fabric from the private railway era before the formation of the Victorian Railways. It is important for its associations with the Geelong and Melbourne Railway, Australia's first country railway, which was conceived in 1853 by a private company in Geelong, completed in 1857 and taken over by the colonial government in 1860. It is historically important for its links with the development of Werribee and the surrounding district.

Werribee Railway Station is of architectural and historical importance for its associations with the architects Edward Snell and Ferdinand Kawerau who were active in Geelong in the mid to late 1850s. Although altered by partial demolition and by replacement of the roof, the building still shows remnants of the styling used extensively by both architects.

## **Permit Exemptions**

Nil

Construction dates 1857,  
Heritage Act Categories Registered place,  
Hermes Number 2204  
Property Number

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## History

### Contextual History:History of Place:

The Werribee Railway Station was built as an integral part of the Geelong-Melbourne Railway which was begun in 1853 and opened in 1857. It was the first country railway in Australia and was constructed at the same time as the earlier Port Melbourne and St Kilda lines but took longer to complete. It was built, as were all railways in this early period, by a private company, but with government support and encouragement. The Melbourne-Mt Alexander line was the first of these companies to be taken over by government and completed. By 1860 all railways, including the Geelong line, were being operated by the government.

### History of Place:

The Werribee Railway Station is an original component of the Geelong line and was probably completed in 1857. The station was a "crossing station" where trains from Melbourne and Geelong met and could pass each other on the otherwise single line. Andrew Ward attributes the design of the building to Edward Snell, the engineer of the Geelong line. Certainly there are similarities with other Snell works in the Gothic style. Snell's partner in private practice in 1853-54 was Frederick Ferdinand (Fritz) Kawerau who also designed in the Gothic style, and as he was the Geelong railway's architect while Snell was the engineer, the design of the station building may well be Kawerau's. The station shows stylistic similarities with Snell's own house which was "put up in a rascally manner under the superintendence of Kawerau" in late 1854 after their private partnership had been dissolved. The house was next door to Kawerau's whimsical Swiss cottage.

The station building was gutted by fire in 1927. It was subsequently rebuilt with a tiled, low pitched, hipped roof. The bluestone ashlar and sandstone quoins were cement rendered and a 1920s style cantilevered station awning added. In 1979 a derailment of a wheat train demolished most of the awning.

The building has been disused for many years.

Associated People: Owner PUBLIC TRANSPORT CORPORATION;  
Owner PUBLIC TRANSPORT CORPORATION;

## Plaque Citation

Completed in 1857 as part of the Geelong and Melbourne Railway, Australia's first country railway, this is one of Victoria's oldest railway buildings. Although damaged by fire in 1927 it retains its original walls, platform and cellar.

## 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 by including the Heritage Register Number 1309 in the category described as a Heritage Place:

Werribee Railway Station, Station Street, Werribee, Wyndham City Council

## EXTENT

1. All of the building known as Werribee Railway Station (1857 building and part of platform) marked B-1 on Diagram 601593 held by the Executive Director of the Heritage Council.
2. All of the land marked L-1 on Diagram 601593 held by the Executive Director of the Heritage Council, being part of the and described in Certificate of Title Volume 9489 Folio 166.

Dated 20 March 1997

RAY TONKIN  
Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G 15 17 April 1997 888-889]

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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 data owner.*

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