
Ararat Railway Station Complex



B6679 Railway Station Complex



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Location

ARARAT VIC 3377 - Property No B6679

Municipality

ARARAT RURAL CITY

Level of significance

State

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1094

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - July 19, 2004

The Ararat Railway complex, developed mainly between 1875 and 1929, is of state historical, technical, architectural and social significance. It was originally established as a link between the gold centre of Ararat, and Melbourne, and subsequently became a link in the main interstate line to Adelaide. With the establishment of a branch line to Portland in 1877 Ararat became an important junction, and the further link to Avoca-Maryborough in 1890 established it as the crosspoint of an interstate and port-hinterland system. It was also the controlling point for the Maroona-Geelong line, established in 1913. It thus became the chief freight junction of the north-western railway system which covered the Wimmera, Western District and part of the Mallee. The development of

the extensive wheat-lands of these areas depended entirely on the extension of this railway system into the hinterlands. Ararat's freight marshalling yards, and its signalling system, expresses this function.

The provision of direct links through the controlling centre of Ararat to the ports, especially Portland and Geelong, also made the complex a key point in the development of Victoria's important export wheat industry. Ararat also expresses a momentous, railway-induced, change in international economic development in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, wherein port-hinterland railways allowed "new world" countries such as Australia to exploit their vast plains and become granaries for an industrialising Europe.

With the introduction of larger steam locomotives in the early twentieth century, Ararat was chosen to become the main locomotive servicing depot of the north-west system. Train change-overs and increasing crew change-overs at Ararat saw the railway assume a major role in the development of the town, as a large employer, a provider of housing, and as a stimulant to commerce and service industry.

By the mid twentieth century it was the busiest provincial railyard in Victoria, with the largest and best equipped locomotive depot outside of the metropolis. It is one of the last remaining rail junction terminal yards in country Victoria. The locomotive shed and turntable (1929) were the hub of the locomotive servicing function. The complex retains three bays of what was originally Victoria's most complete locomotive roundhouse. It is one of only two surviving portions of a roundhouse in Victoria . The associated 85' turntable is the largest in Victoria and possibly, Australia. Signal post no 1 is the only timber two doll post remaining in Victoria.

Signal box A (1891) controlled one of the last operating Winter block signalling systems in Victoria. With the associated semaphore and disc signaling systyem, it is an important example of the now rare late nineteenth century railway safe-working system. Other Structures from the steam age of railways which are now rare are the corrugated iron goods shed and the cast-iron water towers.

The station building (1875), built in the classical style of the period and featuring the polychrome brickwork and decorative cast-iron verandahs of the boom style stations, is an important example of Boom Style railway architecture . The substantially intact "control room" building (1885) on the station platform is unique. Examples of the numerous additions and alterations to the station include the Portland line platform and island canopy, the refreshment rooms, control room, and the accommodation facilities provided for the male and feamale crews of The Overland train. While these accretions detract from the stations' architectural integrity, they also express the escalating importance of the centre.

Classified: 12/12/1995

Hermes Number 67266

Property Number

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