

## NORTH MELBOURNE RAILWAY STATION COMPLEX



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COMPLEX SOHE 2008



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1 north melbourne railway  
station railway place north  
melbourne station building  
sep1998



north melbourne railway  
station complex railway place  
north melbourne central  
platform sep1998



north melbourne railway  
station complex view from  
platform one sw sep1998



north melbourne railway  
station railway place north  
melbourne footbridge  
sep1998



north melbourne railway  
station railway place north  
melbourne front view of ram  
sep1998



north melbourne railway  
station railway place north  
melbourne side view of ramp  
sep1998



June 17, 1999

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 26, 1999

What is significant?

The Williamstown line and the first section of the Echuca Railway (to Sunbury) were opened simultaneously on January 13, 1859. North Melbourne Railway Station was the junction between these two lines. The first passenger station, with two platforms was opened at North Melbourne on December 6, 1859, and the present six platform station, constructed further towards the city, was opened on June 9 1886. The existing low-level lines leading to Essendon were regularly used by suburban trains until 1923. The high level tracks now used by suburban services were opened on January 20, 1924. North Melbourne Railway Complex as built in 1886 consisted of six platforms with four platform buildings containing ladies toilets and a ladies waiting room. A booking office and station masters office were situated over the entrance to the ramp of platform one. The bridge over the railway line was originally a road bridge, and arcaded with attractive stonework detailing. There were porters' rooms and male toilet facilities under each of the ramps. Sections of the 1886 station that still remain include three platform buildings, four platforms and ramps and remnants of the original bridge. A new station building at the top of ramp one was constructed in 1974, replacing the 1886 building. The 1886 platform buildings are constructed of red brick with cream brick banding. Each has a verandah, which extends to the end of the ramps and cantilevers over the platforms. The verandahs have low profile cast iron lace work. The ramps also built in 1886 are constructed of red brick and are supported by a series of brick arches; they still retain the rooms below, however the interiors are in poor condition.

How is it significant?

The North Melbourne Railway Station Complex is of architectural, aesthetic, social and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The North Melbourne Railway Station Complex is of architectural and aesthetic importance for its series of elegant platform buildings. The buildings, which each contain a ladies waiting room and toilets and include large verandahs, are unique in Victoria. Other details of note are, the splayed form of the buildings and the retention of interior details such as the pressed metal fire surround in the waiting room of platform 4-5, overhead water tanks in platform 4-5 and 6-7 and ceiling roses in all of the remaining 1886 platform buildings. The substantial ramps and the rooms situated under them are important structures. Although the interiors have deteriorated the floor plans are intact and remnant partitioning and details remain. Of particular note is the extant timber louvres used in the windows.

The North Melbourne Railway Station Complex is of social and historical significance as the platform buildings demonstrate the priority given to ladies' comfort during the Victorian era and are reminiscent of social attitudes at the time. Each platform building includes a waiting room and closets for the ladies, while the gentlemen were not provided with waiting rooms and their closets were situated under the ramps. The North Melbourne Railway Complex is important for its potential to yield information on the changing nature of railways, locomotive technology and public transport use in Victoria. The elegance of the buildings is indicative of the romantic nature of rail travel in the 1880s. The North Melbourne Railway Complex is historically important for its association with the early establishment of railway networks in Victoria. North Melbourne was the junction between the Williamstown line, and the first section of the Echuca Railway. These were both opened in 1859 and were the first lines to be opened by the Victorian Railways Department.

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

**Places of worship:** In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must **notify** the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

**Subdivision/consolidation:** Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

#### General Conditions:

1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.
2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.
5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

#### Exterior

- \* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- \* Removal of any extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.
- \* Installation or repair of damp-proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method.
- \* Regular garden maintenance.

#### Interior

- \* Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative scheme.
- \* Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves, skirtings and decorative strapping.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and

other wall mounted artworks.

\* Refurbishment of bathrooms, toilets including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.

\* Installation, removal or replacement of kitchen benches and fixtures including sinks, stoves, ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers etc and associated plumbing and wiring.

\* Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves and provided that the location of the heating unit is concealed from view.

\* Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ. Note: if wiring original to the place was carried in timber conduits then the conduits should remain in-situ.

\* Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.

\* Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors

Construction dates 1886,

Heritage Act Categories Registered place,

Hermes Number 889

Property Number

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## History

### Contextual History:

In June of 1852, the Melbourne, Mount Alexander and Murray River Railway Company was promulgated to build a main line of railway from Melbourne to Mount Alexander and the River Murray, at Echuca, and a branch line to Williamstown. Its inability to raise adequate funds, however led to its purchase by the government in 1856 and to the formation of the Victorian Railways Department during the same year .

Following lengthy debate during the 1850s, the Victorian Railways Department was created by an act passed by the Legislative Council in 1856. It authorised the government to purchase the property and interests of the Melbourne, Mount Alexander, and Murray River Railway Company which had failed in its task of building a line from Williamstown to the Murray River. It also empowered the Government to purchase railways at any time thereafter. Management of the Department was initially passed to the Commissioner of Public Works and the Surveyor General and then, in 1857, to the Board of Land and Works. During that same year, tenders were invited for the construction of main lines from Geelong to Ballarat and from Melbourne to Echuca .

The Williamstown line, and the first section of the Echuca Railway (to Sunbury) were opened simultaneously on January 13th, 1859. They were the first lines to be opened by the Victorian Railways Department. The balance of the Echuca Railway was opened as follows:

Sunbury to Woodend 8/7/61

Woodend to Kyneton 25/4/62

Kyneton to Bendigo 21/10/62

Bendigo to Echuca 19/9/64

The construction of the railway line and associated works, was the largest building enterprise in the colony at the time and was the focus of the battle for improved working conditions and the venue in 1859-60 for a strike against the principle of sub-contracting, for the direct importation of indentured German masons to undercut locally established conditions, and rates of pay for a partial alliance between German and local masons, and for the final collapse of the established level of wages .

### History of Place:

North Melbourne was the junction between the Government railway to Williamstown and Echuca and the actual

physical junction was near the crossing of the Moonee Ponds Creek. The first passenger station with two platforms was opened on December 6, 1859, and the present six platform station on June 9, 1886. The existing low-level lines leading to Essendon were regularly used by suburban trains until 1923. The high level tracks now used by suburban services were opened on January 20, 1924 .

The North Melbourne station is the first stop on the Mount Alexander Murray Line. Although the station was partly demolished in 1974, railway platforms from two to six and waiting rooms dating from 1886 still remain.

The previous station (1859) was on the other side of the bridge in the direction of Footscray, and consisted of two platforms .

The 1886 station complex consisted of six platforms with four platform buildings each containing ladies toilets and a ladies waiting room. There was a building over the entrance to the ramp for the first platform off Railway Place containing a booking office and a station masters office. The bridge over the railway line at the intersection of Railway Place and Ireland Street was arcaded with attractive stonework detailing and curved abutments. Under each of the platforms was a porter's room and gents closets.

The main station building was demolished in 1974 and replaced with new facilities. The 1886 building on platform one was demolished in c1980 and replaced with a new brown brick building.

A corrugated iron shelter shed at the south end of platform 6 was demolished in 1992.

There was a proposal in 1983 to demolish the remaining platform buildings to allow for widening of the tracks. There was significant lobbying from community groups to stop this. The platforms were not demolished, however widening of the tracks was still achieved.

It is unknown when the bridge was altered. Nearly all evidence of the earlier grand bridge has been lost.

## **Assessment Against Criteria**

### **Criterion A**

The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object.

North Melbourne Railway Complex is historically important for its association with the early establishment of railway networks in Victoria. North Melbourne was the junction between the Williamstown line, and the first section of the Echuca Railway. These were both opened in 1859 and were the first lines to be opened by the Victorian Railways Department

### **Criterion B**

The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness.

The elegant platform buildings which include large verandahs, and each contain a ladies waiting room and toilets are unique in Victoria.

### **Criterion C**

The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage.

The North Melbourne Railway Complex is important for its potential to yield information on the changing nature of railways, locomotive technology and public transport use in Victoria. The North Melbourne Railway Complex is of social and historical significance as the platform buildings demonstrate the priority given to ladies' comfort during the Victorian era and are reminiscent of social attitudes at the time. Each platform building includes a waiting room and closets for the ladies, while the gentlemen were not provided with waiting rooms and their closets were situated under the ramps.

### **Criterion D**

The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects.

#### Criterion E

The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.

The North Melbourne Railway Complex is of architectural and aesthetic importance for its series of elegant platform buildings. The buildings which include large verandahs, and each contain a ladies waiting room and toilets are unique in Victoria. Other details of interest are, the splayed form of the buildings and the retention of interior details such as the pressed metal fire surround in the waiting room of platform 4-5, overhead water tanks in platform 4-5 and 6-7 and ceiling roses in all of the remaining 1886 platform buildings. The substantial ramps and the rooms situated under them are important structures. Although the interiors have deteriorated the floor plans are intact and remnant partitioning and details remain. Of particular note are the timber louvres used in the windows of the ramps which are still intact.

#### Criterion F

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements.

#### Criterion G

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations.

The North Melbourne Railway Complex is of social and historical significance as the platform buildings demonstrate the priority given to ladies' comfort during the Victorian era and reflect social attitudes of the time. Each platform includes a waiting room and closets for the ladies, while the gentlemen were not provided with waiting rooms and their closets were situated under the ramps.

#### Criterion H

Any other matter which the Council considers relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

### 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 in that the Heritage Register Number 1582 is now described in the category as a Heritage Place:

North Melbourne Railway Station Complex, Railway Place, North Melbourne, Melbourne City Council.

#### EXTENT:

1. All the buildings and structures marked B1 Platform 1 and ramp including internal fittings; B2 Station Building, Platform 2-3 and ramp, including internal fittings; B3 Station Building, Platform 4-5 and ramp including internal fittings; B4 Station Building, Platform 6 and ramp including internal fittings and timber seating; B5 part of Footbridge on Diagram 602736 held by the Executive Director.
2. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 602736 held by the Executive Director, being part of the land described as Volume 3055 Folio 996.

Dated 3 June 1999.

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette G 24 17 June 1999 p.1431]

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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 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/>*