

Item Details

Name
Blacktown Railway Signal Box

SHR/LEP/S170
s170

Address
George Street BLACKTOWN NSW 2148

Local Govt Area
Blacktown

Local Aboriginal Land Council
Unknown



| Item Type | Group/Collection | Category |
|-----------|------------------|------------|
| Built | Transport - Rail | Signal Box |

All Addresses

| Addresses | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------|----------------------|------------------|---------|----------|------------|------------|-----------------|
| Records Retrieved: 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Street No | Street Name | Suburb/Town/Postcode | Local Govt. Area | LALC | Parish | County | Electorate | Address Type |
| | George Street | BLACKTOWN/NSW/2148 | Blacktown | Unknown | Prospect | Cumberland | Unknown | Primary Address |

Boundary Description

North: RailCorp property boundary fronting George Street;
South: 5 metres from the building;
West: 5 metres from the building (excluding adjacent section hut);
East: 5 metres from the building (excluding adjacent signalling hut).

Significance

Statement Of Significance

Blacktown railway signal box is of local significance as the third of a series of four elevated power signal boxes built for track amplification works from Auburn to Blacktown during the 1950s, designed as a cohesive group in a post-World War II period functionalist style. The signal box has a high degree of integrity and is a good example of this last group of signal boxes to be built to a standard railway design in NSW. Although superseded in 1999 by the new Blacktown Station and Signalling complex, the Signal Box remains as an aesthetically pleasing reminder of past railway structures at Blacktown Junction.

Criteria a)

Historical Significance

The signal box has local historical significance marking an important phase in the rebuilding of the Main western line during the 1950s and is part of the last select group of a standard type of signal box design in the State. The signal box is the oldest remaining structure in and around Blacktown Station, with the main station precinct being redeveloped.

Criteria c)

Aesthetic/Technical Significance

Blacktown signal box is aesthetically a good example of post World War II period Functionalist style railway architecture that was used for quadruplication works on the railway system between Auburn and Blacktown. Brick was the usual construction medium for elevated signal boxes in the post war years up until about 1960.

Criteria e)

Research Potential

The signal box has low technical and research significance as it has lost its ability in demonstrating the operational layout of a signal box due to its conversion to offices. The 1960s signalling equipment survives on the top level, however, this type of equipment is found at many other operating signal boxes in the railway network.

Criteria f)

Rarity

The signal box is one of a series of four similar signal boxes built to a distinct Post World War II Functionalist style, although it is not the best example. The other examples are Granville, Clyde and Auburn.

Criteria g)

Representative

The signal box is representative of the Functionalist style signal boxes built between Auburn and Blacktown after World War II.

Integrity/Intactness

The signal box has been largely altered internally and equipment removed. Externally it has a high degree of intactness, apart from the first floor extension in a sympathetic manner.

Owners

| Records Retrieved: 0 | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Organisation | Stakeholder Category | Date Ownership Updated |
| No Results Found | | |

Description

| Designer | Builder/Maker |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| New South Wales Government Railways | NSW Department of Railways |

| Physical Description | Updated |
|----------------------|---------|
|----------------------|---------|

SIGNAL BOX (1955)

External: Blacktown signal box is a 'type S' post war version of the elevated power boxes. It is one of four similar signal boxes, the others are Clyde, Granville and Auburn. Blacktown signal box is no longer used for signalling purposes since its conversion to offices for communications and control systems consultants.

Constructed of polychromatic face brick and designed in the Functionalist style, it is a two storey former electric power signal box with stairwells in a three storey tower. The box has curved walls facing the railway lines. The parapet does not continue along the northern (street) frontage. Horizontal banding in the brickwork is created by projecting brick courses. Cantilevered reinforced concrete awnings over the first floor ribbon windows are a dominant feature. The ground floor windows are steel framed while top floor windows are timber framed and sashed. The tower windows are long strips of square panes with orange and clear glass, although these have been covered on the outside and are not visible externally. All windows have security grills.

Internal: The building is accessed by a small brick foyer with fibrous sheet lined ceiling, which has a doorway to the ground floor and a doorway to the stairs to the upper levels. The ground floor has been refurbished with new paint scheme, carpet, lighting and doors, although the main structural elements are visible, including the painted brick walls. A two flight timber staircase provides access to the second level where the upstairs signal control room has also been refurbished in the form of repainting, new floor coverings and lighting, and the removal of previous equipment. An additional room on this level is unrenovated. It includes fibrous cement ceiling and wall linings. The concrete floor is visible. Amenities are located on this level. Original doors are also extant on the second floor, unlike downstairs where most have been removed. The signal room is accessed by a metal spiral staircase.

MOVEABLE ITEMS

The c1960s signalling equipment that were in the signal room on the third level have been removed. There are no moveable items at the Signal Box.

Physical Condition

Updated

The signal box is generally in good condition internally and externally due to refurbishment works. However, an area of roof is only in moderate condition as there are leaks in the room on the second level at the top of the stairs.

Modifications And Dates

c1970: First floor extended for full length of building for additional relay equipment
1999: Signal box no longer used for signal purposes and converted to office space for communications and control systems consultants. The original equipment has been removed and relocated.

Further Comments

The adjacent signalling and section huts are excluded from the listing.

Current Use

Offices

Former Use

Railway Signal Box

Listings

Listings

| Heritage Listing | Listing Title | Listing Number | Gazette Date | Records Retrieved: 1 | |
|---|---------------|----------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|
| | | | | Gazette Number | Gazette Page |
| Heritage Act - s.170 NSW State agency heritage register | | | | | |

Procedures/Exemptions

| Section of Act | Description | Title | Comments | Action Date | Outcome |
|------------------|-------------|-------|----------|-------------|---------|
| No Results Found | | | | | |

History

Historical Notes or Provenance

Updated

A single track was opened through Auburn in 1860 and the line was duplicated in 1886. The station was opened as Blacktown in 1860 and adopted its present name in 1862. The line was quadrupled from Seven Hills in 1955 and a fifth track was provided in 1979. The station buildings were entirely rebuilt in the 1990s together with a bus interchange which involved the removal of most of the elements constructed as part of the quadruplication. The main remaining element appears to be part of the pedestrian overbridge and stairs which has been extended, reclad and generally refurbished.

The Blacktown signal box was the third built at Blacktown Junction (Blacktown) as part of the major track amplification works between Auburn and Blacktown. It was completed on 6 Feb 1955 as part of a new signal box and yard arrangement. The signal box was constructed to assist in the management of traffic at Blacktown where the number of main line tracks decreased from four to two. Specifically, it controlled access between the tracks and to the Richmond branch line. It was one part of a much larger scheme to increase the tracks to four main lines between Lidcombe and St. Marys during World War II in order to provide maximum track capacity to the American ammunition and general store built at Ropes Creek. It took over 32 years until all aspects of the quadruplication were completed between Westmead and Blacktown. Quadruplication reached St. Marys in 1978, while the Granville to Westmead section was finally completed in 1986.

Blacktown signal box was one of a number of similarly designed boxes between Auburn and Blacktown. They represented the last time when conventional, elevated signal boxes were built utilising the traditional model of a bottom level relay room and an upper level where the interlocking frame was operated. A subsequent design of elevated boxes was used in the 1960s but these did not accord to the classic, two-level design with a rectangular footprint.

The signal box is no longer in use, having been closed in 1999 and superseded by a new signalling complex being part of Blacktown Station. The interlocking frame, which was the first rotary switching mechanism used in NSW, has been removed and is preserved at the Transport, Signal and Communications Museum, Kurrajong.

Historic Themes

Records Retrieved: 3

| National Theme | State Theme | Local Theme |
|----------------|--------------------|---|
| 8. Culture | Creative endeavour | Evolution of design in railway engineering and architecture |
| 3. Economy | Transport | Building the railway network |
| 3. Economy | Communication | Signalling and safe working |

Recommended Management

Management Summary

- 1. Conservation principles: Conserve cultural heritage significance and minimise impacts on heritage values and fabric in accordance with the ‘Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance’.
- 2. Specialist advice: Seek advice from a qualified heritage specialist during all phases of a proposed project from feasibility, concept and option planning stage; detailed design; heritage approval and assessment; through to construction and finalisation.
- 3. Documentation: Prepare a Statement of Heritage Impact (SOHI) to assess, minimise and prevent heritage impacts as part of the assessment and approval phase of a project. Prepare a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) prior to proposing major works (such as new additions, change of use or proposed demolition) at all places of State significance and all complex sites of Local significance.
- 4. Maintenance and repair: Undertake annual inspections and proactive routine maintenance works to conserve heritage fabric in accordance with the ‘Minimum Standards of Maintenance & Repair’.
- 5. Movable heritage: Retain in situ and care for historic contents, fixtures, fittings, equipment and objects which contribute to cultural heritage significance. Return or reinstate missing features or relocated items where opportunities arise.
- 6. Aboriginal, archaeology and natural heritage: Consider all aspects of potential heritage significance as part of assessing and minimising potential impacts, including Aboriginal, archaeology and natural heritage.
- 7. Unidentified heritage items: Heritage inventory sheets do not describe or capture all contributory heritage items within an identified curtilage (such as minor buildings, structures, archaeology, landscape elements, movable heritage and significant interiors and finishes). Ensure heritage advice is sought on all proposed changes within a curtilage to conserve heritage significance.
- 8. Recording and register update: Record changes at heritage places through adequate project records and archival photography. Notify all changes to the Section 170 Heritage & Conservation Register administrator upon project completion.

Management

Records Retrieved: 0

| Management Category | Management Name | Date Updated |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| No Results Found | | |

Report/Study

Heritage Studies

Records Retrieved: 13

| Report/Study Name | Report/Study Code | Report/Study Type | Report/Study Year | Organisation | Author |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|--|
| S170 Heritage & Conservation Register Update | | | 2009 | | Office of Rail Heritage (ORH) - Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) |
| S170 Heritage & Conservation Register Update | | | 2009 | | City Plan Heritage |
| S170 Heritage & Conservation Register Update | | | 2009 | | Godden Mackay Logan |
| S170 Heritage & Conservation Register Update | | | 2009 | | Hughes Trueman |
| S170 Heritage & Conservation Register Update | | | 2009 | | NSW Department of Commerce |
| S170 Heritage & Conservation Register Update | | | 2009 | | OCP Architects |
| S170 Heritage & Conservation Register Update | | | 2009 | | Office of Rail Heritage - Australian Rail Track Corporation |
| S170 Heritage & Conservation Register Update | | | 2009 | | ORH |
| S170 Heritage & Conservation Register Update | | | 2009 | | Paul Davies Pty Ltd |
| State Rail Authority Heritage Register Study | | | 1999 | | State Rail |
| State Rail Authority Heritage Register Study | | | 1999 | | State Rail Authority |
| State Rail Authority Heritage Register Study | | | 1999 | | SRA |
| Heritage and Conservation Register State Rail Authority of NSW | | | 1993 | | Paul Davies for SRA |

Reference & Internet Links

References

Records Retrieved: 5

| Type | Author | Year | Title | Link |
|---------|-----------------|------|---|------|
| Written | ARHS | 2009 | Historical information prepared for S170 update project | |
| Written | Taaffe, R.T. | 1990 | The Use and Selection of Materials in Railway Signal Box Construction | |
| Written | NSWR | 1979 | Signal Diagrams: WN 43 NSWR Signal Diagrams: WN 43-1979 Signal Diagrams: WN 43-1979 | |
| Written | John Forsyth | 1974 | Historical Notes on Railway Lines | |
| Written | Singleton, C.C. | 1960 | 'Centenary of the Opening of the Western Line to Blacktown' ARHS Bulletin No.273, July | |

Data Source

The information for this entry comes from the following source:

| Data Source | Record Owner | Heritage Item ID |
|------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| State Government | TAHE - Sydney Trains | 4801043 |

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