

THE RAILWAY AT EASTWOOD – THE STORY OF WHAT CAN HAPPEN WHEN LOCAL RESIDENTS AND POLITICIANS ARE INFLUENTIAL

1886-1891 - THE SINGLE LINE DAYS

The years leading up to the opening of Eastwood station saw dramatic growth in the NSW railways. David Burke has documented the significant growth in the NSW railway system between 1881 and 1885. He provides statistics that tell that the number of route kilometres opened between those two years doubled.¹ In addition, the period witness substantial rebuilding of Sydney's metropolitan railways. Indeed, between 1880 and 1886, every station between Redfern and Parramatta received replacement or additional structures, except Newtown, such as the surviving 1886 First Class building at Petersham. Newtown had received a replacement Second Class station in 1876 and, in that same decade, Sydney received a First Class building in 1874.

The late 1870s and the 1880s are now labeled as the “railway boom” period because of the massive injection of overseas funds into the NSW rail system. Peter O'Connor is correct when he wrote that “New South Wales, in many respects, had the least ambitious, most affordable railway policy.”² He went on to express a number of errors in his book, such as the Sydney-Newcastle line “was the first built in NSW as a double-track line”.³ His most important error was not of fact but interpretation of the statistics relating the capital funding. He said that “by 1890 the boom had stalled”.⁴ The reality is that the peak of capital funding occurred in 1885 and declined from 1886 until 1890.⁵ In the very year, namely 1890, when O'Connor said that the boom had stalled, the sum was doubled that of 1889 and more than 1888. In 1891, a record sum of capital funding was allocated to the railways that was more than 10% higher than the peak year of the 1880s, 1885. In 1892, funding decreased but was still higher than the four years between 1887 and 1890 and in 1893 it was still higher than 1888 and 1889. Funding for railways in NSW did not start to decrease dramatically until 1894 and it continued falling until 1898.

¹ D. Burke, *Making the Railways*, Sydney, SRA, 1995, p. 72

² P. O'Connor, *On Wooden Rails*, Sydney, Rail, Tram and Bus Union, 2005, p. 14

³ *Ibid.*, p. 15. Sydney to Newtown was double track in 1855 and Redfern to Hurstville was double track in 1884.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ N. G. Butlin, *Investment in Australian Economic Development 1861-1890*, Canberra, Cambridge University Press, 1964, p. 322

In short, capital funding in the 1880s and 1890s is more complex than stating that the 1880s was a period of boom and followed by bust in the 1890s. The so-called boom is reflected by ever-increasing capital amounts from 1879 to 1885 and followed by ever-decreasing sums between 1885 and 1890. There was a rally in capital funding between 1891 and 1893 followed by a decline between 1894 and 1898. It cannot be assumed that all station buildings in the boom periods were grand and those in the bust periods were restrained. First Class buildings on island platforms were approved in 1892 at Kiama in a boom period and the same design was approved in 1894 for three stations on the Belmore branch, a time of bust. Thus, exceptions were the rule no matter what happened. Usually, when large sums of capital were expended on one building, many other structures approved at the same time were restrained.

The construction of the line between Strathfield and Hornsby occurred at the start of the decline in funding. The lower capital sums were reflected in the standards used on the entire Strathfield-Hamilton line. Apart from West Ryde and Hornsby, every other station on the line had timber platform buildings. It was the massive amount of tunnelling and the provision of the large bridge over the Hawkesbury River that soaked up much of the available money. Most of the gatekeeper's cottages on the line were timber, as well as some of the Station Master's residences, such as the surviving structures at Ourimbah and Fassifern. While all the station plans expressed the use of brick for the platform walls, many were timber.

Eastwood station was opened with the opening of the line between Strathfield and Hornsby in 1886. The other stations also opened at the same time were Rhodes, West Ryde, Epping, Beecroft, Pennant Hills and Thornleigh. All the station buildings were of timber construction, except West Ryde. Table 1 below sets out the intermediate stations between Strathfield and Hornsby at the opening of the line.

TABLE 1 – BUILDING DETAILS AT INTERMEDIATE STATIONS AS AT OPENING OF STRATHFIELD-HORNSBY LINE

| LOCATION | TYPE OF BUILDING | DIMENSIONS OF BUILDING (FEET) | BUILDING MATERIAL |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Rhodes | Waiting shed | 20 x 12 | Timber |
| West Ryde | Standard roadside station | 55 x 15 | Brick |
| Eastwood | Standard roadside station | 52 x 15 | Timber |
| Epping | Waiting shed | Unknown | Timber |
| Beecroft | Waiting shed | Unknown | Timber |
| Pennant Hills | Waiting shed | 15 x 8' 6" | Timber |
| Thornleigh | Mini-standard roadside station | 35 x 10 | Timber |

Table 1 indicates that three levels of building types were used at the time of line opening. At the top, was the standard roadside design built at West Ryde, Eastwood and Thornleigh. The classification of NSW railway stations was not based on length but function, both practical and symbolic. In the overall palette of station designs, the standard roadside station was the third class of station. Within each design was a myriad of differences, as indicated by the use of brick at West Ryde and the selection of the mini version at Thornleigh. Either Eastwood was a larger place than some others on the line or local, influential people lobbied the NSW Government to ensure that the best possible building would adorn their station. Whatever was the reason, Eastwood did well out of the exercise.

Below the level of the standard roadside design was the group known as waiting sheds. These were mostly about 20 feet long but the term was used also to apply to a building that provided a secondary function to the main building. At nearly all the stations between Redfern and Hurstville in 1884, the waiting sheds were built opposite the primary building on the duplicated lines but measured 100 feet in length. In short, Eastwood was near the top of the tree in terms of the status of the locality and the station but, on a Colony-wide basis, no location warranted a First or Second Class building between Strathfield and Newcastle.

The materials used for the platform walls between Strathfield and Hornsby were a mixture of timber and brick. Compacted earth had been the dominant form of platform construction from 1877, when the NSW Railways largely stopped using timber frames with timber decks. From 1877 to 1884, brick walls were widely used but, from 1884, timber started to be applied to walls but the platforms remained compacted earth. While the plan for Eastwood provided for a brick wall, timber was used.

Eastwood received what later became known as a standard roadside station, it being a composition of three timber buildings. The main, centre structure measured 52 feet by 15 feet. There were three rooms in the centre structure with detached/semi-detached pavilions at each end. On the roof was a transverse, centre gable over the rear with a porched entry and another, lower gable over the porch. It had a timber platform wall, sloping to the rail and a three rail fence at rear of platform. Drinking water was collected from the roof and stored in an underground water tank. The platform was standard 12 feet wide, extending to 15 feet wide in front of building with 15 feet ramps at each end. The contractor was William Robinson, who also built the Station Master's residence. There is a photograph in W. A. Bayley, *Sydney Suburban Steam Railway*, p. 30 of the station.

1892-1937 - DUPLICATION AND EXPANSION

In 1892, the line through the station was duplicated. A timber building was erected on the platform and, in accordance with the prevailing policy, a building with a single-pitched roof was erected. A photograph of the structure is in I. Wallace, “Eastwood Bank”, *Byways of Steam 3*, Matraville, Eveleigh Press, 1991, p. 64. The exclusive use of timber for all the platform walls in this period of boom capital funding demonstrates the caution against making generalities about the impacts of boom and bust times. The weirdness is further demonstrated by the total use of brick platform walls on the Hornsby-St. Leonards line in 1890, which was planned when capital funds were declining. The explanation is that funding was not the only consideration in the decision making process about the designs and materials applying to railway stations. Politics was also important. As a digression, the history of the NSW Railways may be summarised in three words – money and politics.

The platforms at Eastwood were lengthened twice, in 1908 and 1910. These used bricks and were abutted against the existing timber platform walls. In 1912, approval was given for a footbridge and overhead Booking and Parcels Office at the up end. The structure was built in 1915 and was the 12th example of overhead Booking Offices to be built, all of which were in the Sydney metropolitan area. Table 2 below sets out the previous examples.

TABLE 2 – EXAMPLES OF OVERHEAD BOOKING AND PARCELS OFFICES 1891-1912

| YEAR APPROVED | LOCATION | MATERIAL | EXTANT OR DEMOLISHED |
|---------------|--------------|----------|----------------------|
| 1891 | Redfern | Brick | Extant |
| 1891 | Newtown | Brick | Extant |
| 1891 | Homebush | Timber | Replica extant |
| 1892 | Waverton | Timber | Replica extant |
| 1896 | Petersham | Timber | Demolished |
| 1900 | Strathfield | Brick | Demolished |
| 1905 | Arncliffe | Timber | Extant |
| 1909 | Hornsby | Timber | Demolished |
| 1909 | Erskineville | Timber | Extant |
| 1910 | Gordon | Timber | Extant |
| 1910 | Granville | Timber | Demolished |
| 1912 | Eastwood | Timber | Demolished |

The Eastwood example was small and followed the design at Arncliffe in 1905. The roof was styled in what is known as the "Dutch" design, with the end hips cut off to form a small gable at the top. The roof covering was to be asbestos "slates" measuring 16 inches by 16 inches with a four inch overlap. At the ends of the ridging were zinc terminals. These roof materials were innovative at the time. The only prior use of asbestos slates on any sort of railway roof was at Erskineville in 1909 but there is evidence that corrugated iron was used instead of the asbestos slates. The ridge terminals in zinc were also rare on NSW railway buildings. Traditionally, the terminals, which replaced timber finials, were terracotta. It was only in 1912 that zinc started to be used for terminals. In the same year that the Eastwood building received its zinc terminals so did a building at Redfern and an extension to the RRR at Cowra. Were zinc terminals and asbestos slates purposefully chosen to demonstrate to the local community that the NSW Railways knew the geographic area had above-normal status? It seems that the NSW Railways had no master on the selection of materials and it did what suited itself.

Apart from a couple of other examples in 1924 and 1926, zinc terminals were never again applied to roofs. The walls of the Eastwood building sheathed externally with one inch thick Australian hardwood and called weatherboards. The footbridge was divided into separate passenger and public parts which were connected by pipe barriers patrolled by the Junior Porter collecting tickets. This division enabled local residents to cross the railway corridor. The glazed area of the two ticket windows was two feet six inches high and one foot wide, which had been the departmental standard since 1855.

Not much happened to Eastwood station between the new overhead Booking and Parcels Office built in 1915, and 1938. In 1923, both platform walls were renewed in pre-cast concrete units, which survive today. At the time, most of the platform walls of stations between Strathfield and Hornsby were renewed using this material. A few survive but Eastwood is the only station where both main line walls are extant.

The station was lit by electricity in 1925. The toilets for both sexes had improvements of an unknown nature in 1926 and in 1927 a toilet was built on the up platform. In 1929, approval was given for the construction of an eight foot wide subway, which was built at up end of station in 1930. It did not provide a connection to the platforms. This project was paid for by the NSW Treasury, which means that it was not funded by the NSW Railways and was probably some form of project for unemployed men.

Unemployment was significant throughout the 1920s in Sydney and the need to carry out public works to absorb unemployed workers was a popular measure. The then mayor of Eastwood, S.G. Small, proposed the construction of a railway line rather than a road between St. Leonards and Eastwood as an unemployment project. The NSW Parliament legislated for the connecting line in 1926 but it never went ahead. It was to

connect with the Main North 20 chains north of Eastwood station. While the legislation was very explicit about the route, the NSW Railways did not envisage that the connection at Eastwood would imply that Eastwood would be the interchange station. It seems that it was intended that Epping would fulfill that role. Even before Parliament passed the legislation, the NSW had approved (in 1925) an additional platform and building for the termination of trains on the proposed line from St. Leonards. In 1928, the first overhead Booking Office was built at Epping as part of the project as well as a new signal box. As if to make certain that Eastwood would not be the interchange station, the NSW Railways closed Eastwood signal box in 1928 and remotely controlled the main line crossover and connections to the goods siding from Epping signal box.

1938-1950 - REPLACEMENT FACILITIES

The work on upgrading and replacing platform buildings between Strathfield and Hornsby was slow and sporadic. Table 3 below sets out those instances where new or replacement buildings were erected to replace the initial buildings at railway stations.

TABLE 3 NEW AND REPLACEMENT PLATFORM BUILDINGS STRATHFIELD-HORNSBY 1898 TO 1938

| YEAR OF APPROVAL | STATION | BUILDING MATERIAL | DESIGN | EXTANT OR DEMOLISHED |
|-------------------------|-------------------|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1899 | Epping | Brick | Federation influenced | Extant |
| 1905 | Meadowbank | Timber | Stripped Federation influenced | Demolished |
| 1912 | Beecroft | Brick | Federation influenced | Extant |
| 1917 | Thornleigh | Timber | Stripped Federation influenced | Demolished |
| 1917 | North Strathfield | Brick | Federation influenced | Extant |
| 1928 | Epping | Brick | Federation influenced | Demolished |
| 1935 | Pennant Hills | Timber | Stripped Federation influenced | Demolished |
| 1937 | Denistone | Brick on platforms, timber for overhead Booking Office | Inter-War Functionalist | Extant |

| YEAR OF APPROVAL | STATION | BUILDING MATERIAL | DESIGN | EXTANT OR DEMOLISHED |
|-------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1938 | Eastwood | Brick | Inter-War Functionalist | Demolished |

While new and replacement buildings were erected at eight stations, the remaining five stations received no replacement structures, merely the addition of a room or two to an existing low quality, timber structure.

The geographical area including Epping, Eastwood and Denistone had strong and influential representation in the State Parliament in the 1930s. This was evident in the initiative that involved the opening of a new station at Denistone in 1937, the approval for a new subway and underground booking office at Epping in 1937 (not built) and the construction of the new platform buildings at Eastwood in 1938. Eastwood station was indeed in a lucky spot politically.

Eastwood was the last station to receive a replacement platform building for the next 40 years, until the buildings at Cheltenham, Pennant Hills, Thornleigh and Normanhurst received new brick structures in 1978. Approval for replacement brick structures at Eastwood was given in 1938 and the buildings were erected in 1940. Not many stations received replacement structures between 1930 and 1940 and Table 4 sets out those locations that received new buildings to replace existing structures. The state Member of Parliament between 1932 and 1940 was Eric Spooner and he was the Minister for Public Works in the Bertram Stevens Ministry when approval was given for the new Denistone station and the replacement Eastwood buildings. He resigned from parliament in 1940, the year the Eastwood buildings were completed.

TABLE 4 – LOCATIONS RECEIVING REPLACEMENT PLATFORM BUILDINGS 1930-1940

| YEAR OF APPROVAL | LOCATION | STYLE | ISLAND OR SIDE PLATFORM | COMMENTS |
|-------------------------|-----------------|---|--------------------------------|---|
| 1931 | Warren | Absence of style | One side platform | Unusual awning sloping back to building with box gutter |
| 1934 | Dulwich Hill | Transitional to Inter War Functionalist | Island | |

| YEAR OF APPROVAL | LOCATION | STYLE | ISLAND OR SIDE PLATFORM | COMMENTS |
|-------------------------|-----------------|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1935 | Condobolin | Inter War Functionalist – domestic style | One side platform | |
| 1935 | Pennant Hills | Stripped Federation influenced | Two side platforms | Timber construction |
| 1936 | Wickham | Federation influenced | Two side platforms | Replaced Honeysuckle Point station |
| 1936 | Griffith | Inter War Functionalist – domestic style | One side platform with dock | |
| 1937 | Civic | Inter War Functionalist – Domestic style | Two side platforms | Replaced Honeysuckle Point station |
| 1937 | Morisset | Inter War Functionalist – Domestic style | One side platform | |
| 1937 | Belmore | Stripped Inter War Functionalist | Overhead Booking & Parcels office | Timber construction – replaced platform facilities |
| 1938 | Carramar | Inter War Functionalist – Domestic style | Island | Small booking office |
| 1938 | Eastwood | Inter War Functionalist – Domestic style | Two side platforms | |
| 1938 | Mendooran | Absence of design style | One side platform | Two, small waiting rooms – timber construction |
| 1939 | Quakers Hill | Stripped Inter War Functionalist | One side platform | Timber construction – small building |
| 1940 | Croydon | Inter War Functionalist – Flat roof | Platform Nos.1/2 | Waiting room and awning only |
| 1940 | Hopefield | Absence of style | One side platform | Two waiting rooms – timber construction |
| 1940 | Kempsey | Inter War Functionalist – | One side platform | Present Booking Office |

| YEAR OF APPROVAL | LOCATION | STYLE | ISLAND OR SIDE PLATFORM | COMMENTS |
|------------------|-------------|--|-------------------------|----------|
| | | Domestic style | | |
| 1940 | Cringilla | Inter War Functionalist – Domestic style | Island | |
| 1940 | Merrylands | Inter War Functionalist – Domestic style | No. 2 platform | |
| 1940 | Mullumbimby | Inter War Functionalist – Domestic style | One side platform | |

The impact of the 1930s Depression is obvious from Table 4. Only four stations received replacement structures between 1930 and 1935. There were 11 between 1936 and 1939 and six in 1940. World War Two witnessed a very substantial increase in the number of replacement buildings approved and erected because the Commonwealth Government supplied finance under the umbrella of essential, war-related works. After the War, the number of replacement structures dwindled rapidly when the Department of Railways had to provide the finance. The period between 1930 and 1940 marked the transition of design styles from Federation-influenced towards Inter War Functionalist, with obvious influences of the Art-deco design school. 1936 was the last year in which the Federation design was used but the transition away from it started in 1929 with the design of platform buildings for the East Hills branch. It was not until the approval of the Cronulla line buildings that the transition had stopped and the sole design influence was Inter War Functionalist from that year.

In essence, the two buildings at Eastwood were part of the design transition. The features of the buildings were:

1. Down platform building 74' x 11' internal with (from the up end) SM's office, open exit with ticket barrier, General Waiting Room, Ladies' Room and toilet, Out of room and gent's toilet
2. Up platform building 65' x 11' internal with (from the up end) General Waiting Room, Out of Room, Ladies' Room and toilet, Store and gent's toilet
3. Marseille tiles on roof with projecting gables – no chimneys – 66% of tiles to be Dark Red and 34% to be Chocolate Brown semi-glazed,
4. 11" cavity "OK face" brickwork (very dark red colour), except the sides of the buildings under the platform awnings, which were solid 9" brick walls,
5. Course of solder bricks above windows around exterior of buildings,
6. No "Ladies' Waiting Room" but a "Ladies Room" with fixed seating

7. Porched entry to ladies' toilet
8. 10' ceiling height
9. 11' wide, cantilevered awning on rail sides only, supported by RSJs – covered with 3" corrugated asbestos sloping backwards to a box gutter – wide fascia on awning
10. Soffits under awnings with 3/16" Fibrolite
11. No doors on General Waiting Room
12. An absence of fireplaces and chimneys
13. External doors feature glazed upper panels
14. All lower window sashes are obscure glass as is all toilet windows
15. Station name in one lower window sash on each side
16. ½" cement rendering on internal walls, including toilets
17. 1" thick tongue and grooved hardwood timber flooring, except for concrete in toilets
18. Toilet cubicles same for males and females 5' 5" x 3' 4"
19. Five stall urinals – no hand basin in male toilet, as was usual
20. Brick privacy screens in front of male toilets with a standard 3' 6" wide entrance
21. Latticed ceiling vents in the Out of Rooms and Store (an unusual feature)

Also in 1938, it was planned to remove the existing overhead Booking and Parcels office at Eastwood and relocate it to Wollongong as a new Parcels Office at that location. No information is available about what was intended to replace the structure at Eastwood.

1951-1989 - QUADRUPLICATION

The quadruplication of the railway line between Strathfield and Hornsby was on the wish list for the Department of Railways since 1926. It is not clear whether the platform buildings were designed for conversion to island platforms. Certainly, the awnings were designed for single-sided use and there were no doors in the rear walls apart from the Out of Rooms. It is possible that these rear doors were placed to serve small stages on the up side, to serve the goods loop. A photograph of the rear of the up platform building is in the article by Stephen Halgren and Ken Groves in *Byways of Steam 21*, p. 119.⁶ The double door to the Out of Room is clearly visible.

From 1892, there had been a goods loop behind the up platform. In 1951, up and down relief lines were opened between Eastwood and Epping, exclusive. At that time, the existing Up Relief was extended behind the up platform at Eastwood using the former goods siding. The Down Relief commenced beyond the down end of the station and, thus, Eastwood had three platforms in use at that time. The station at Eastwood did not

⁶ S. Halgren and K. Groves, "in the Midst of Life....", *Byways of Steam 21*, Matraville, 2003, pp. 111-126

have running lines each side of both platforms until 1978. It was not until 1989 that the Up Relief line was extended just past the up end of Eastwood station. At that time, platform Nos. 3 and 4 were widened at the up end to meet the new track alignment.⁷ Also at that time, work was under way to replace the original overhead wiring stanchions.

In 1948, the official photographer of the Department of Railways visited Eastwood station. He found a shabby looking affair. The 1940 built platform buildings portrayed a dismal picture with their depressing dark-coloured bricks. The paint was peeling on the prominent fascias of both buildings after ten years of service. What made the site more unattractive was the construction of the brick platform awnings around existing portal structures for the overhead wiring.⁸ Most of the sheets of iron on the roof of the overhead booking office were rusted. The timber, picket fences along the rear of the platforms had not received a coat of paint in 40 years and looked terrible. It is, thus, of no surprise that, in the early 1950s, planning was underway for further quadruplication, which involved changes to the station access. Perhaps the station was consciously left in a near dilapidated state because the Department foreshadowed major changes at Eastwood. Local residents protested repeatedly about the physical condition of railway-owned land on the down side of the corridor. There was a strong community push for beautification works. The approaches to the station were described as being “a matter of concern” and the local residents wanted the land to “conform with the park it overlooks. The continued presence, in spite of much protest, of the unsightly railway shop-premises, causes an ugly eye-sore in an otherwise pretty locality”.⁹

The most obvious evidence for many years of the proposed quadruplication was the completion in 1952 of the concrete piers for a new bridge over the Parramatta River at Meadowbank. In 1950, the Chief Civil Engineer, Albert Fewtrell approved the construction of a subway under tracks connected to the platforms. A similar proposal was approved for West Ryde but not built. On the down side, there was a steel awning 12' 6" wide with the roof on a slope of 1 in 24 falling to a box gutter at the rear. It was an interesting use of butt welding between vertical and horizontal elements for the Department of Railways which continued to use riveted bridges, such as at Circular Quay, until 1956. As was the custom, the way and Works Branch ordered the steel work from the Comptroller of Stores. It was covered with one coat of Red Lead before dispatch. The subway was 19' 6 ½" wide on the down side and then narrowed to 12' wide to the up side. A 1 in 8 ramp was used to reach the up side street and continues in use today.

⁷ *Railway Digest*, Vol. 28 No. 1, January, 1990, p. 9

⁸ This was a bad precedent because the Electrical Branch of the Department assumed in future that it had the right to penetrate any and all platform awnings, ruining beautiful structures such as the 1894 building at Canterbury.

⁹ M.C. I. Levy, *Wallumetta*, Sydney, no publisher, 1947, p. 127

In 1956, Norm Vogan, the new Chief Civil Engineer, approved of an off-platform Booking and parcels Office at street level on the down side, where it is located today. It measured 58' 6 ³/₄ " by 17' 11 ¹/₄ ". There was an eight foot wide awning facing the street. Not only was the approving officer different but also was the way the plan measurements were expressed. Rather than providing overall building measurements, every design feature was individually expressed on the plan. For example, 13 individual measurements were expressed for the road elevation. The design features were:

1. Biscuit and Deep Red coloured face bricks
2. Single-pitched roof, sheeted with 26 gauge iron sheets hidden behind wall parapets extending above the roof line
3. 4" wide, cement rendered bands projecting 1 ¹/₂" beyond the face of the brickwork at top and bottom of windows only on street elevation
4. 3/16" asbestos cement sheeting for the ceiling
5. Deep red "texture" bricks for plinth course around base of structure
6. 9' ceiling height
7. Internal walls ¹/₂" cement rendered
8. Ticket window (metal framed) 3' 10" high
9. Ticket counter 5' from floor (standard height is 3' 6")
10. Cavity brickwork on all walls
11. Ten standard bicycle racks in Parcels Office
12. Basin and W.C. included
13. ¹/₄' plate glass doors to Parcels Office
14. Timber floor in Booking Office and concrete in Parcels Office
15. The words "Parcels Office" affixed to the exterior wall adjacent to the public entrance
16. Standard bicycle rack to hold ten bikes

The 1956 Booking and Parcels Office was a stronger example of Inter War Functionalist design, though was firmly in the same broad category as the platform buildings. The following features appeared on the structure which emphasized strong vertical and horizontal expressions so typical of Art-deco design.

- Continuous horizontal use of narrow windows
- Paired ticket windows with vertical emphasis
- Extended parapets hiding the roof
- Projecting horizontal band around external walls
- Flat, horizontal awning with white-coloured fascia

There is no record of the fate of the footbridge and its overhead Booking and Parcels Office. The structures on the platforms continued their original function to serve passengers' needs. There is a photograph in R. Howarth and G. Ryan, *Sydney's*

Suburban Standards – The Leeds Forge Power Cars, p. 74 taken in 1976. It shows a bitumen barrow strip on No. 3 Platform and Bishops’ Crooks style lamp posts. The original overhead wiring structures have pyramidal caps and the pre-cast, concrete unit wall on No. 2 platform is visible.

The existence of a new building at a NSW railway station in the 1950s was a rare act of expenditure by the NSW Department of Railways. Table 5 below sets out all the new buildings approved between 1950 and 1960.

TABLE 5 – NEW (REPLACEMENT) STATION BUILDINGS APPROVED IN NSW 1950-1960

| YEAR OF APPROVAL | LOCATION | BUILDING MATERIAL | DESIGN STYLE | STATUS |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|---|---|
| 1950 | Balldale | Timber | Stripped Inter War Functionalist | Not built |
| 1950 | Clyde | Brick | Platform building = Inter War Functionalist – | Extant - overhead timber structure is coastal holiday style with large, single-pitched roof |
| 1950 – not completed until 1960 | Granville | Brick | Platform building = Inter War Functionalist | Platform buildings only extant – overhead timber structure was coastal holiday style, with large, single-pitched roof |
| 1950 | Towradji | Timber | Stripped Inter War Functionalist | Not built |
| 1952 | Oak Flats | Timber | Waiting shed – absence of style | Demolished |

| | | | | |
|------|---------------|---------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 1954 | Dora Creek | Timber | Coastal holiday – large, single-pitched roof | Demolished |
| 1955 | Broken Hill | Brick | Coastal holiday – large, single-pitched roof | Extant |
| 1955 | Circular Quay | Brick, stone and concrete | Modern | Extant |
| 1955 | Koolewong | Timber | Waiting shed – absence of style | Demolished |
| 1955 | Moree | Timber | Booking office – absence of style | Demolished |
| 1956 | Nevertire | Timber | Stripped Inter War Functionalist | Not built |
| 1956 | Eastwood | Brick | Inter War Functionalist | Extant, in modified form |
| 1956 | Warrimoo | Brick | Waiting shed – absence of style | Extant |
| 1959 | Mount Colah | Timber | Booking office – absence of style | Extant, in modified form |
| 1959 | Trangie | Timber | Booking office – absence of style | Extant |

From Table 5, 15 stations were approved to receive new platform and off-platform station buildings. Nine were planned as timber buildings. Three of those station buildings did not get built. That left a total of 12 stations received new buildings in 11 years. Four of the 12 that did get built were small, utilitarian structures. Only circular Quay, Granville, Clyde and Broken Hill were large projects. It is clear that very little funding was allocated to stations in the 1950-1960 period. Eastwood and Warrimoo stations were the last planned on the NSW railway system to feature the Inter War Functionalist style and it is fairly safe to say that Eastwood was lucky to receive a replacement Booking and Parcels Office in 1956.

1990-TO DATE THE CITYRAIL PERIOD

Sometime after 1979, the 1956 ticket windows were modernized by the application of fibreglass surrounds and brightly painted, as had been done in 1979 on the stations on the Eastern Suburbs Railway.

In 1990, the newly formed CityRail undertook a major upgrading of the station. The improvements included:

1. Provision of a Countrylink Travel Centre in the old Parcels Office on down side, featuring the then standard curved counter,
2. new staff toilet,
3. Demolition of brick platform buildings and construction of awnings both island platforms
4. Renewed Booking Office
5. Anti-graffiti finishes to external walls
6. Jazzed-up entrance with CityRail logo and station name in the gable over the subway on down side
7. "CityRail style information centre" (a notice board) on down side

It appears that a small commuter car park was established in 1990 on the up side where the Station Master's residence was located.

The demolition of existing platform buildings has been pursued by senior CityRail managers with the enthusiasm of an exciting sport. Since the establishment of CityRail in 1989, platform buildings at 95 stations, or 31% of all CityRail stations, have been demolished and replaced by simple platform canopies. At many of these stations more than one platform has been the subject of building demolition. In fact, 175 platforms have had their buildings removed and replaced by nothing more than an awning, including the platforms at Eastwood.

Standard workstations were fitted to the Booking Office ticket counters in 1997, as part of a system-wide policy to provide improved staff working conditions and increased safety.

Major upgrading occurred in 2008. Leighton Holdings Pty Limited spent \$9 million of the taxpayers' money to build three lifts, a family accessible toilet, extensions to the platform canopies and platform resurfacing including tactile tiles. Apart from the lifts, the most obvious change to the station was the alterations in the platform canopies. The CCTV was also extended and the PA system, lighting, signage arrangements were improved. There was also new wall and floor tiling in the subway and new "landscapes". All of these improvements combine "to make rail travel more comfortable, safe and convenient to customers", according to Leighton's webpage. It seems that

Eastwood continued to be endowed with luck when it received the lengthening of the platform canopies. Not only were they lengthened, but their shape was altered and they now are the only instance on the CityRail network of variable-width platform awnings.

Amazingly, a new structure was provided on platform Nos. 3 and 4 in 2006. It was a little building at the up end of platform and was placed there while trains terminated at Eastwood in the course of the construction of the new Epping station, opened in 2009. It enabled electric train drivers to get access to water to make a cup of tea. It is still there but little used today.

In review, the suburb of Eastwood has always been very lucky to be endowed with local, articulate residents who were influential and local parliamentary representatives who could persuade State Governments to do a little something extra for Eastwood railway station. Being in a swinging electoral seat helped in the allocation of State-funded projects. The evidence of influential political effort serves commuters today.

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Stuart Sharp

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