

THE DUCK'S GUTS - THE TOP TEN (OR SO) MESSAGES

MESSAGE NO. 1 – THE BUILDING CENTENARY

The year, 2016, is the centenary of the construction of the present, brick platform building at Artarmon station. The 1916 building has survived! Other examples of the same design family in the Sydney area have not been so lucky and examples have been destroyed since 1990 at Chatswood, Epping, Newtown, St Peters, Asquith, Burwood, Lidcombe, Meadowbank, Yagoona and Waterfall. Railway heritage is important.

MESSAGE NO. 2 – THE HILLS ARE ALIVE WITH MONEY

Elevated, leafy areas attract people with power and money. The North Shore region of Sydney has been an area where wealthy and powerful people have lived and this continues to be the case. Their ability to influence politicians and bureaucrats has been reflected in the priority allocated to the region for a long list of transport improvements. The list contains 33 projects that were publicly funded for the private benefit of North Shore residents and these are listed in Table 3.1.

MESSAGE NO. 3 – ARTARMON STATION HAS BEEN THE ONLY EXAMPLE OF THE RELOCATION OF A MASONRY PLATFORM BUILDING

In the 118 years of the existence Artarmon station, the dominant message revealed by the building fabric and extant documents is a reluctance to expend public money on the facility. There is one period that was the exception, namely the years 1982 to 1995, when large amounts of money were expended to create a positive message that both the customer and staff were important.

What's the evidence about the paucity of funds? Two timber platform buildings of small to moderate size and the use of a second-hand structure in 1916 that stands today represent good evidence. When the subway opened in 1900, it served the western side of the line only and it was only after sustained, local protest that it was extended to the eastern side four years later. It took the Chief Railway Commissioner seven years to deliver his 1909 promise for a new station building.

The almost complete omission of any capital improvements between the years 1916 and 1982 certainly indicates other, non-urban policies and priorities. Between the years 1928 and 1941, beautiful gardens were a feature of the station and this effort was driven by the local community but stopped when the community lost leadership. It is a demonstration of the importance of leaders, primarily by Charles Wickham, and showed what could be achieved if a community could work together. Importantly, the gardens were funded primarily by private donations. It was a demonstration of the exercise of local power. After 1995, there was a series of

technical changes to the way all railway stations operate, manifested by the appearance of lots of electronic gadgets and the gradual disappearance of staff.

Even in 2015, the provision of lifts to access the station is a display about spending as little money as possible in the name of customer care and ruining totally the ambience of the station. Just like the 1899 subway, the lift bridge serves only west side of the station. Why? No official explanation has been presented to the residents but there are two possible explanations – one is that it was the lowest cost option and the other is that the eastern side has been marked for future high-rise and/or air right development. What is amazing about the story of the lifts is that the local Member of Parliament was also the Minister for Transport at the time and what she approved to be built in her own electorate is proof of the present government attitude towards rail users and her electors. She was in a position of power to approve a much better solution and she chose not to act to implement a better outcome.

MESSAGE NO. 4 – CAPITAL EXPENDITURE IS LINKED TO THE WAY GOVERNMENTS VIEW THE NSW ECONOMY

The pattern of improvements to Artarmon station is not related to the nature of the political party forming the State government. Rather, change to and stability of station developments has been linked to the perception by governments of the way they see railway operations as supporting the State economy. Up until the 1970s, governments viewed the primary role of the New South Wales Railways as supporting primary industries. It is interesting to note that the massive expenditure in the suburban rail system in the 1920s, involving electrification and the City Railway, were done at a time when the urban manufacturing sector was growing rapidly and in fact reached a peak before the 1929 economic crash.

There was a notion in the 1960s and 1970s that the state economy was shifting its orientation away from farm products to mining and the support sector. The absence of large-scale improvements to Sydney's urban rail system before 1976 was related more to the backlog of urgent and essential repairs to virtually the States entire railway network than negligence of urban transport needs. Broken down stations were not essential for operational safety and, accordingly, not allocated the little funds available. In the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, the identity of a Sydney urban network took shape and that was due to an acknowledgement by governments that the service and mining sectors were far more important than primary production. From 1995, state governments have aligned the urban network increasingly to the idea that it should look like and act as if it were on a parallel with major overseas cities. In short, the role of the New South Wales Railways changed according to what products left Australian shores and what products and services arrived from overseas. Artarmon station looks like just a piddling, average little building but its history mirrors very important changes in the economy.

MESSAGE NO. 5 – THE ROLE OF ARTARMON STATION AS A MARKER BETWEEN THE LOWER AND UPPER NORTH SHORE

The station shows the pivotal role the station played in the division of the North Shore region into a lower and upper geographic district. Up to 1916, Artarmon station was the northern limit of the Lower North Shore because all the stations south of Artarmon inclusive were of timber construction but, by the construction of a platform building which matched all platform buildings between Artarmon and Hornsby, the northern limit of the Lower North Shore was relocated to St. Leonards station.

The role of Artarmon station in the division of the Lower and Upper North Shore did not end in 1916. With the destruction of the Federation-influenced platform buildings at Chatswood in 2004 and the provision of the poorly designed lift bridge at Artarmon in 2015, the station at Artarmon has once again played a singular role in the division of the North Shore. From 2015, the boundary between the Lower and Upper North Shore has moved back to Chatswood station and Artarmon station shares with all the other stations between Chatswood and Wynyard the worst features of contemporary design treatment of railway stations. Now, the Upper North Shore is a smaller group of Federation-influenced platform buildings between Roseville and Hornsby. Of course, an observer may say why so because the Federation-influenced platform building still exists at Artarmon. The tragedy is that the 2015 lift bridge has severely reduced the heritage values of the station as a whole entity. The difference between the Lower and Upper North Shore in 2016 is marked by the contrasts between ugliness and attractiveness of station facilities.

MESSAGE NO. 6 – ARTARMON WAS THE FLAGSHIP STATION TO ANNOUNCE THE BIRTH OF A PURELY URBAN RAIL SYSTEM FOR SYDNEY

In 1989, Artarmon station was chosen as the first application of the then improvement programme called Station Sparkle and it marked the start of a huge effort to improve platform buildings for the first time since 1855. The enthusiasm throughout the railway organisation from 1989 to 1995 was marked by a big effort to improve customer-staff relations. Artarmon station became the prototype for the creation of a purely Sydney urban rail network, with its own clear identity.

MESSAGE NO. 7 – THE STUDY OF ARTARMON STATION TELLS THE WAY GOVERNMENTS OPERATE

Artarmon station stands today is a monument to the way power has been used by governments to demonstrate their urban transport policies and that power is shown by the way public money is either spent or not spent on the station.

The provision of lifts between Hampton Road and the platform in 2015 is an excellent example of the absence of importance to provide the best available access solution, keeping in mind that the Minister for Transport who approved the lifts was also the local Member of Parliament.

MESSAGE NO. 8 – THE FAILURE OF GOVERNMENTS TO PLACE URBAN PUBLIC TRANSPORT ABOVE THE PRIVATE MOTOR VEHICLE

All governments in New South Wales have failed provide priority for urban public transport over the use of private motor cars. Labor Governments have done far more to support public transport since 1976 but they too failed to inculcate into the public mind that travel by urban public transport is morally and environmentally more important than sustaining massive expenditure on roads used by privately owned motor vehicles.

MESSAGE NO. 9 – WAS ARTARMON STATION TREATED FAVOURABLY OR THE SAME AS OTHER SUBURBAN STATIONS?

The answer is yes and no. Yes, the evidence suggests that it was favourably treated in 1916 when it received its present masonry structure. It was also treated favourably in 1989 when became the prototype example of the “Station Sparkle” programme. Again, in 2015 it received favourable attention when it received the lifts between Hampden Road and the platforms. Why? It seems that public servants and politicians acted beyond their officially granted authority and exercised personal power for their own advantage under the name of improvements for the community.

No, it was treated exactly the same as other suburban and country stations between the years 1930 and 1980 – a time when all New South Wales Governments moved away from the concept and reality of urban rail transport as a high priority.

MESSAGE NO. 10 – WHAT DOES THE STUDY SAY ABOUT THE DISCIPLINE OF HISTORY?

The study shows that one tiny, insignificant item, in this case Artarmon railway station, is capable of revealing much about how the world works, how power is exercised and how public money has been used and misused. The tragedy is that no one in a key position of transport planning or management today is interested in using history to help the present generation of decision-makers make better decisions.

MESSAGE NO. 11 – WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR ARTARMON STATION?

Apart from the excellent work of Dr. John Bradfield in the 1920s and the 1974 Sydney Area Transportation Study, the dominant characteristic of urban transport

planning for the rail system has been based on the personal views of politicians. What serving public servant would recommend the ripping up of existing railway lines and replacing them with either light rail or a Metro system?

The answer to the question is unknown.

FOR A QUICK QUIZ

If the reader has another 30 seconds to spend, the chronology of events of Artarmon station is summarised in table form in Appendix 1 at the end of this document.

STATIONS OF THE STATION - A SELF-GUIDED TOUR AROUND THE STATION SITE

This final chapter lists the visible features of the station. It is a walking tour starting on the platform that precedes in an anticlockwise direction around the site. Each of the ten places to see something has been called a station.

STATION 1 - SYDNEY END OF THE PLATFORM BUILDING

- six pairs of back-to-back platform seats with station name plates attached to the rear of the seats in the new corporate colours of orange and white – installed 2015,
- latest style of transparent garbage bins that allow staff to view the contents of the receptacles – installed 2015,
- the total absence of vegetation on the platform,
- the height of both platforms about 100mm below the floor level of train carriages,
- the over-abundance of vegetation on the fences on the corridor boundaries, &
- the store at the end of the building numbered “7” with vent for storage of wet and dry stores, the door marking the entrance to the former male toilet. Male toilets were traditionally placed as far as possible from the platform entry point and the entrance to the female toilet around the Hornsby-bound platform side of the building, &
- The platform end does not join in an elegant tip as in the 1890s but has been squared off.

STATION 2A - NO. 1 PLATFORM SIDE OF THE BUILDING

- The bizarre location of parts of awning brackets near ceiling level on the external wall at the Sydney end,
- Symmetry of awning brackets, except at the Hornsby end where major alterations were made in 1982 and 1989,
- The existence of two former ticket windows, one using a conventional window, with change tray still in place covered by bars and the other window covered by a roller shutter,
- Door No. 1 at the Hornsby end providing access to the former booking office, &
- The contrast between the 1916 Flemish bond of the brickwork and the alterations at both ends using Stretcher bond brickwork.

STATION 2B - NO. 2 PLATFORM SIDE OF THE BUILDING

- Door No. 9 to the “Toilets”, which is a single uni-sex/accessible toilet,
- Remnant tuck-pointing on Flemish bond brickwork,
- the colour pattern platform train indicators – old or new

STATION 3 - HORNSBY END OF THE PLATFORM BUILDING

- The 1994 bullet-proof ticket window
- The awning extension from the building to the brick columns marks the position of the former, timber-clad signal box,
- The vertical brick columns that used to hold the platform train indicators from 1989,
- The crowded appearance of the area with multiple machinery,
- The narrowness of the platform width, &
- One single pair of back-to-back platform seats.

STATION 4 - TOP OF THE STAIRS

- The 1989 “Station Sparkle” platform canopy between the stairs and the building,
- The buttons in the lifts that call the deck of the footbridge a “concourse”
- Door No. 17 at the rear of the lift (note the numbers chosen for the doors – 1, 7, 9 & 17)
- Opal card readers poorly located at top of stairs, obstructing people using the handrails for stability

STATION 5 - BOTTON OF THE STAIRS – THE 1900 SUBWAY

- the narrowness of the subway,
- the shortness of the subway,
- the minimal vertical distance between the floor of the subway and the platform (25 steps),
- the use of arches for overhead support,
- the absence of the 1982 mural by Malcolm King, &
- the steep gradient on the eastern side.

STATION 6 - THE BACKLIT CORPORATE LOGO SIGN ON HAMPDEN ROAD

- The plaque in the pavement with details of the station – there are three errors in the text.
 1. the building from the first Artarmon station site in 1898 was not relocated to the second site in 1908. It is possible that some components of the first building were located to the second site but it would have occurred in 1900 when the second site opened,

2. electrification did not take five years to complete. Services were shared between 15th August, 1927, and 10th June, 1928, between steam and electric trains but the entire North Shore line was electrified at the one time, &
3. the station was not relocated because the present site is level. The first site was on a steeper gradient of 1 in 45 and the second (present) site is on gradient of 1 in 69. The present site presented easier conditions for starting and stopping trains.
 - The sandstone caps to the brick pillars at the subway entrance,
 - The distance from Central – 10.412 kilometres on the left-side brick pillar,
 - Steps to the garden built by Charles Wickham, &
 - Absence of 1938 bubbler commemorated to Charles Wickham,

STATION 7 - THE GARDENS, OPPOSITE BROUGHTON STREET

- the unattractive large “T” the framework of the lift bridge,
- the division of the Charles Wickham garden in two distinct areas – flowers and bushes in the front and lawn at the rear, &
- the extensive high-rise development.

STATION 8 - 1929 SYDNEY END SUBWAY, WESTERN SIDE

- The extensive application of “wall art” (subway maintained by Willoughby Council),
- The flat subway ceiling formed by mass concrete on timber boards, &
- a good interpretation of the construction of the railway line on the side of a ridge is facilitated by the height of the embankment and the lower levels of the natural ground on both sides of the subway

STATION 9 - LANDSCAPING AT EASTERN SIDE 1929 SUBWAY PORTAL

- The secluded location of the subway entrance, &
- The jungle of Artarmon Reserve

STATION 10 - SUBWAY ENTRANCE, EASTERN SIDE

- The steep gradient to reach the subway,
- Sandstone capping on wing walls, &
- Local map showing the streets naming after senior Railway officers including Eddy, Goodchap, Fehon and Oliver.

APPENDIX 1

ARTARMON STATION – CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF EVENTS

DATE OF CHANGE	NATURE OF PROPOSED CHANGE	PROPOSED CHANGE IMPLEMENTED – YES OR NO?
1881	First trial survey of the line	Yes
1882	Second trial survey of the line	Yes
September, 1884	Parliamentary approval for the plans and drawings	Yes
September, 1884-March, 1885	Both houses of Parliament pass legislation to allow construction	Yes
12 th October, 1885	Tenders called for the first time	No
24 th June, 1887	Tender of Edward Pritchard accepted	Yes
7 th June, 1887	Tenders closed for a second time	Yes
10 th August, 1887	Turning of the first sod	Yes
8 th July, 1888	Commissioner for Railways issues public notice for the intention to proceed with construction	Yes
24 th July, 1888	Royal Assent received for the allocation of funds	Yes
31 st December, 1888	Date for line to be completed	No
1 st December, 1889	First report of the Parliamentary Standing Works Committee for the extension of the line	No
1 st January, 1890	Opening of the North Shore railway between Hornsby & St. Leonards	Yes
21 st August, 1890	Second report of the Parliamentary Standing Works Committee for the extension of the line	Yes
26 th November, 1890	Royal Assent given to extend the line to Milsons Point	Yes
1.5.1893	Opening of the rail line between St. Leonards &	Yes

DATE OF CHANGE	NATURE OF PROPOSED CHANGE	PROPOSED CHANGE IMPLEMENTED – YES OR NO?
	Milsons Point	
29.10.1894	Locations identified for Artarmon station	Yes
6.7.1898	Opening of station	Yes
7.10.1900 (some sources say 17.10.1900)	New site to the west selected for station & conversion of station into an island platform upon duplication of the line – new platform building built & first subway constructed (not extended to eastern side) – Platform length 400' Waiting shed only on platform	Yes
17.10.1903	Proposed extension of subway to eastern side	Yes
9.1907	Proposed new platform building Quadruplication of rail lines proposed for 1 st time	No
1908	Opening of signal box to control local train movements	Yes
1909	One of only 29 suburban stations to receive a free public telephone	Unknown
1912	Whole of North Shore line duplicated providing most efficient train running for Artarmon	Yes
4.10.1912	Proposal approved to erect a new platform building	No
10.5.1913	Crown land 66' wide on eastern side nominated for acquisition for proposed quadruplication	Not acquired
10.2.1916	New platform building erected at the southern end of the then existing structure – new subway provided, using Fibro “slates” on roof	yes
8.2.1916	Plan drawn for the junction near Artarmon of a branch	No

DATE OF CHANGE	NATURE OF PROPOSED CHANGE	PROPOSED CHANGE IMPLEMENTED – YES OR NO?
	railway to the Field-of-Mars Cemetery	
8.9.1916	Proposed provision of a booking office in existing subway	No
19.9.1916	Replacement subway planned between existing subway and platform building incorporating new booking office and “booking hall” – closure of subway at northern end of platform (“to be filled in”)	No
12.10.1923	1 st proposal for a subway at the southern end of the platform - Provision made for 2 nd platform at Artarmon and quadruplication of rail lines for 2 nd time	No
24.1.1924	2 nd proposal for a subway at the southern end of the platform - Provision made for 2 nd platform at Artarmon and quadruplication of rail lines for 2 nd time	No
16.12.1926	Proposed 2 nd platform at Artarmon - Proposed relocation of booking office to northern subway between new 3 rd & 4 th rail lines	No
1926	3 rd proposal for quadruplication of rail lines	No
1926	Land acquired on eastern side for quadruplication	Yes
15.8.1927	Electrification of train services – stanchions built on platform	Yes
1927	Erection of Fibrolite troughing along railway to accommodate cables for automatic signalling	Yes
21.12.1928	Closure of signal box and introduction of automatic	Yes

DATE OF CHANGE	NATURE OF PROPOSED CHANGE	PROPOSED CHANGE IMPLEMENTED – YES OR NO?
	signalling	
18.10.1928	Extension of platform from 430' to 520' to hold eight car electric trains – Lamp Room moved from ramp at southern end to northern side of northern subway Platform face on western side made of timber & on eastern side made of “standard concrete units”	Yes
9.5.1928	Land nominated for acquisition to” avoid building retaining wall” paralleling Elizabeth Street	No
1929	3 rd proposal for a subway at southern end of station	Yes
1.7.1929	Steps proposed from new subway at southern end to platform – Allowance made for track quadruplication	No
6.6.1930	Willoughby Municipal Council agrees to clean and light the subway at the southern end of the station	Yes
21.3.1938	Laneway access provided on eastern side behind shops in a southerly direction	Yes
16.12.1940	Willoughby Municipal Council given a right of way over railway property for entry on eastern side	Yes
1940	Willoughby Municipal Council granted permission to place a seat on railway property on western side	Yes
1946	Asphalting of platform surface	Yes
1950	Provision of a shelter shed for porter adjacent to ticket barrier (plan approved on 20.12.1946)	Yes
31.7.1952	4 th plan for quadruplication	No

DATE OF CHANGE	NATURE OF PROPOSED CHANGE	PROPOSED CHANGE IMPLEMENTED – YES OR NO?
	of rail lines	
10.1965	Regarding of rail line through station to ease gradient from 1 in 70 to 1 in 60 – subway lowered 4.8”	Yes
1974	Chief Commissioner, Phillip Shirley, advocates quadruplication of rail lines (5 th time)	No
1980	New telephone installed – one of 25 approved	Yes
1982	Signal box removed and building shortened by 7’4” – two ticket windows placed in the northern end of the building	Yes
1982	Artist, Malcolm King, paints mural on walls of subway entrance	Yes
1987	Closure of Parcels Office & end of parcels service	Yes
September, 1989	Application of the “Station Sparkle” programme – most visible by use of red paint on all surfaces, other than face brickwork Platform canopy built between subway and platform building Store in ceiling cavity built	Yes
1989	Elimination of all public toilets & waiting rooms New ticket collection barrier placed at top of stairs	Yes
1990	Light-box signs provided at entrances to subway	Yes
1991	Provision of separate male and female public toilets	Yes
1993	Automatic ticket vending machines provided on platform	Yes
1994	Standard work-stations and bullet-proof glass fitted in ticket office & arrangement of ticket windows altered to provide one in the northern	Yes

DATE OF CHANGE	NATURE OF PROPOSED CHANGE	PROPOSED CHANGE IMPLEMENTED – YES OR NO?
	end of the building & one on the eastern side of the structure	
1995	“Help Point” provided	Yes
24.1.1996	Platform offices air-conditioned and staff toilet relocated	Yes
1998	Expressions of interest for air-right development over Artarmon station	No (Responses received worth pursuing)
1998	Red paint replaced by blue and green colours – replacement of station nameboards	Yes
2000	Provision of a help Point	Yes
2001	17 CCTV cameras installed in subway and on platform	Yes
11.2.2004	Track drainage through station upgraded	Yes
1.5.2004	Platform canopy on down side reduced in width by 245mm & platform cut back 150mm to comply with new structure gauge for rollingstock (up side canopy also cut back to maintain overall symmetrical appearance)	Yes
2004	Red paint from “Station Sparkle” programme replaced by green, except for train indicator boards	Yes
17.11.2005	Quadruplication of rail lines announced for 5 th time (between Chatswood & St. Leonards only)	To be implemented
2006	New store & unisex toilet added to southern end of building, replacing separate male & female public toilets – store in ceiling cavity removed & new store at platform level provided	To be implemented
2006	Removal of asbestos from building fabric	Yes

DATE OF CHANGE	NATURE OF PROPOSED CHANGE	PROPOSED CHANGE IMPLEMENTED – YES OR NO?
2010	Blue and white nameplates affixed to rear of platform seats	Yes
2012	Public timetables removed from external walls of platform building	Yes
2013	Position of Station Manager eliminated; “T” signs replaced “L7” logo at subway entrances	Yes
2015	Provision of lifts between street and platform	Yes
1 st February, 2016	Sale of tickets at the ticket office window ceased	Yes

Stuart Sharp

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