EMU PLAINS RAILWAY STATION

METHODOLOGY

Providing a list of dates about anything in chronological order is not history. It is information gathering. Giving some form of explanation of the evidence is today called traditional history. This long-standing methodology has come under sustained criticism from scholars all over the World in recent times because it is impossible to provide any accuracy about what happened in the past as writers can only work with the evidence that survives. The popular view is that it is impossible to make rational any sense or conclusions based on the extant empirical evidence.

Today, the world-wide push is to add theory to the written and physical evidence as well as a consciousness of the frailties of traditional history. So what do we do for the history of Emu Plains station? Emu Plains station was built in the framework of a Western democracy that uses the NSW Parliament to write the rules for a capitalist economy. One of the key items that people of all political persuasions considered important to the operation of the capitalist economy was the provision of a railway system to facilitate transport of goods between point of production and market. An important part of the political/economic arrangement was the view by all political groups that the NSW Railways was not to excel financially but to return the financial benefits to the producers of goods. The NSW Railways, except the freight services after 1989, was always under the financial control of NSW governments, both in terms of capital and recurrent funding.

Railways are a derived demand and exist because people have a demand for transport. In this context, it would be silly to develop a theory that relates only to the NSW railways. A broad social theory of NSW society needs to explain how and why the society and polity function and it is interesting to examine whether the administration and operation of the NSW Railways are consistent with the broad theory. The examination of the relations between the working and capitalist classes does not explain consistently how Australian life works. Nor does an examination of the way in which individuals have pursued economic and other opportunities. Australian society has always and continues to be understood in terms of people in common interest groups. People have belonged to several groups simultaneously but, in the case of railways, these have included the official railway bureaucracy as a whole, the functional branches within the bureaucracy, the trade unions and groups of people with similar skills, religion and social outlook, such as an interest in football or first aid. People have worked and acted to give primary support to their groups before their class or themselves. The traditional history of the NSW Railways supports this view, amongst other views.

The extant evidence relating to the NSW Railways supports the group interpretation theory. Hardly any evidence survives about the quality of passenger or freight services or the dirty and dangerous work conditions. They do not exist because they would, to a large degree, be detrimental to the official bureaucracy, which was and is one of the largest groups in NSW society. The bulk of the surviving evidence relating to the NSW Railways refers to what the organisation and its employees did rather than how they did and whether they did it well or poorly.

The theory in this study argues that the social psychology of the Australian people has been a significant factor in the delivery of rail services in NSW in that the primary emphasis has been on the support for groups of people. The widespread attitudes of Australians has allowed a culture to develop whereby very few people in society take any interest in what was and is happening to the management of their rail service. The laconic, easy-going and relaxed nature of Australians has stimulated a dis-interest in the operation of government and has allowed the formation and development of group interests ahead of any idea of service quality to the travelling public. People have and do occupy the position of Minister for Transport who do not articulate any standards for train travellers in the areas relating to the construction of works, the delivery of service or the behaviour of staff. The result is that the NSW railway bureaucracy, as a large group, has been and is able to operate with impunity to do or not to do what and how it likes.

The theory in this study uses the testable hypothesis that examines the nature of the link between NSW Railways and its owner, the NSW Government. The theory is that the Government and the Railways have been and are different groups with different group goals. Therefore, there has been no interest, let alone need, for Governments to prescribe anything aimed at railway customers. People who used rail services in NSW have not belonged to either group and, in this way, have been required to use the rail services that exist or go without. A policy of placing customers before the group interests does not exist. Government generally has mostly relinquished its executive role to the NSW Railways in three important areas. These are:

1. That NSW Government relied on the NSW Railways to give meaning to political and economic notions, policies and requests
2. That the NSW Government controlled all financial aspects affecting the NSW Railways only at the macro level
3. That NSW Governments transferred social values, morals and ethics unconsciously to the NSW Railways

In other words, there were three important policy spheres that the NSW Railways was able to develop and implement in the absence of Government direction. There were

service quality and levels, all except top-level financial matters and standards of behavior for staff.

The collective impact of this relationship is that NSW Governments have very little idea on what the NSW Railways does, the manner in which it spends money, the method and manner of meeting transport demands and the way the organisation and its workforce acts. This has been possible because of the lack of expertise, knowledge and interest by its many political masters. In a book on the ICAC enquiry into the alleged corrupt conduct of the then Premier, Nick Greiner, Michael Gleeson et al wrote that "written rules by which politicians have to abide … are almost nonexistent, making justification for dismissal difficult."[1]

Fundamental change of the management of the NSW Railways has only occurred when either capital funds were in short supply or endless supply. The NSW Railways has been free to act when, where and how it pleased because, mostly, its political masters have very little or no idea of what is happening or do not want to know what is happening. Expressing a lack of knowledge to the public rather than confessing an inability to act on knowledge is viewed by politicians as a more honourable outcome.

The NSW Railway management and all the subordinate staff absorbed the values, ethics and morals from Government. The quality of the NSW Railways management and operations parallelled the quality of the NSW Government. When the quality of NSW Governments was good, the quality of railway management generally improved, and vice versa.

The NSW Railways' primary goal was not to meet the transport demands of the citizenry but to serve, firstly, the aspirations of its own bureaucracy. Railway leadership acted consciously and unconsciously to implement the owner's value system. For those who did not act in this manner, tenure of office for the bosses was often short.

All the values cascaded from the top in the NSW Railways to the bottom and it has been traditionally the bottom level that provided the face-to-face relationship with customers and the wider constituency. The policies that customers and others received had the affirmation of many levels of managers and supervisors who brooked little or no customer criticism as the departmental dogma was delivered in a belief that only senior Railway official knew what was best for the citizens of NSW, on the basis that they held the Government imprimatur. Ideas rarely flowed upwards in the railway institution, as such a process was in direct conflict with the flow of political philosophy and knowledge from the only stakeholder that countered, namely the NSW Government.

[1] M. Gleeson, T. Allan & W. Wilkins, *An Act of Corruption?,* Sydney, ABC Books, 1992, p. 226

The study of Emu Plains station is used to test the hypothesis. A review of the evidence is used to investigate whether the events involving Emu Plains station confirm or reject the theory. Writing about recorded past events is not a confirmation or denial that they existed. Rather, the documentation of evidence is used to examine the veracity of the theory. If the study validates the theory, then perhaps the hypothesis can be used to examine other locations and situations involving the NSW Railways.

LINE OPENING AND FIRST STATION SITE

The early history of the station at Emu Plains is void of comprehensive official, primary documentation. The line went through the present station area in 1867 and the station was opened 15 months later, in 1868. If the history of the Main South, the Main North from Newcastle and Main West were used as a basis for understanding the station facilities at Emu Plains, it is fairly easy to guess what would have been provided. The second period of station development, between1858 and 1875 is the one in which the newly-arrived Engineer-in-Chief, John Whitton, implemented his ideas about what a railway should look like. According to Whitton's vision, Emu Plains would either had a fairly big building, like Parramatta or Penrith, or a smaller version which combined a station office with an official residence, as he done at Lidcombe, Blacktown and St. Marys. The significant aspect of Whitton's station policy was that, on all main lines up to 1875, he always and only provided stations that were staffed.

Luckily, secondary sources are available to help work out what was at Emu Plains in the early years. Veteran railway historian, C. C. Singleton, wrote that "the first station was on the western side of the level crossing (at Old Bathurst Road), the gatehouse being set at the rear of a short passenger platform on the down side.[2] So, if we combine the intelligence generally with what Whitton did at other locations, and keep in mind what Singleton states, it is possible to generally agree that the first station at Emu Plains was a brick building, which acted as official residence, booking office and gatekeeper's accommodation. The platform would have had a timber sub-frame with a timber deck.

Interestingly, Singleton says that, initially, the name of the station was Emu but was renamed Emu Plains exactly one year after the station opening in August, 1869. This name change does not appear in John Forsyth's well-known tomes on station names.

It would appear that the gatehouse was provided at the time of the line opening and it would have been one of the earliest gatehouses on the NSW rail system, such building types not constructed until 1858, being one of John Whitton's fundamental changes in the railwayscape.

[2] C. C. Singleton, "Station Arrangements on the Blue Mountains", *Bulletin*, No. 130, August, 1948, p. 19

Railways have a habit of stimulating demands for facilities and services by adjoining landholders and this was the case at Emu Plains, where local residents requested access to the rail line for passenger and goods facilities. The local historian of Emu Plains is George Gyford. In his published history of the station, he indicates that, as soon as the line was opened, a public meeting was held to petition for a station and goods siding.[3] While the construction of the line and provision of the gatehouse were under Whitton's management in 1867, the provision of the station was not. James Henry Thomas was the Engineer for Existing Lines between 1867 and 1869.[4]

The first decision made was the location of the station. Thomas implemented the policy that had been in existence from 1855 of providing stations at the crossing of the line with major roads, if possible. This policy continued to be adopted for the next 100 years in relation to the provision of small railway stations. The local place at Emu Plains was the crossing of the railway with Old Bathurst Road, which was a major road thoroughfare to Bathurst.

At the time the railway line opened, it seems that about 110 people lived in the vicinity of the railway station.[5] Railway stations have usually, but not always, been provided in relation to the size of the centre served. Normally, public involvement in the decision process was limited to the exhibition of a station design, after the NSW Railways had approved of the facilities to be built. In the case of Emu Plains, the evidence tends to indicate that a low-cost solution was implemented to meet local passenger and freight demand. In reality, there was very little demand at Emu Plains, as indicated by the paucity of trains that operated daily. Thomas's decision to provide facilities was more correctly aligned with a need to placate the petitioners than provide a service.

The existing gatehouse was modified to sell tickets and a simple platform was provided for the two passenger trains a day that passed it. The emphasis on financial economy was also reflected in the goods siding. Unlike the then conventional practice of proving double-ended goods sidings, the siding had only a single entry/exit point facing up trains. This meant that goods loaded in the siding for Sydney had to be firstly hauled westward to a station which had a double-ended siding, where goods vehicle could be picked up by a Sydney-bound goods train. Similar access problems occurred for freight coming from stations west of Emu Plains. It would seem to be the case that the NSW

[3] George Gyford, quoted in Weir Phillips, *Heritage Impact Statement – Proposed Emu Plains Stabling Yard*, Chippendale, unpublished conservation report, 2010, p. 16

[4] He had been an Engineering Inspector on the NSW Railways from 1857 and later became Commissioner for Railways in Western Australia.

[5] Weir Phillips, op. cit., p. 18

Railways provided token passenger and freight facilities, which only partially met the transport demands of local rail users.

The use of single-ended goods sidings was not common practice in NSW in the 19th century. Moreover, it is unbelievable that the NSW Railways chose to implement such an arrangement at Emu Plains, which was located not far from the Little Zig Zag. The existence of the Little Zig Zag caused major bottlenecks to the passage of trains, due to the amount of time taken to ascend and descend the three levels. When the Zig Zag was eliminated in 1892, considerable delays continued to occur, the section of line being described by the NSW Railway Superintendent of Lines as "difficult". Even in 1910, Neville Pollard and Graham Harper described the section as a "single-line bottleneck".[6] It would seem that the use of a single-ended goods siding facing up trains unnecessarily added to the congestion of rail traffic over the Zig Zag.

1878 STATION

The major event in the chronology of the railway at Emu Plains is the head-on collision between two goods train on 30th January, 1878. One could possibly conclude from the evidence of the official enquiry that there was a crossing loop installed at Emu Plains at the time of the "cornfield meet', as Singleton described the accident.[7] It is interesting to note that the staff who gave evidence referred to Emu Plains as "Emu".[8] Life member and past president, Graham Harper, explains that, on the night of the 30th January, two goods trains hit head on about a kilometre west of Emu Plains, killing three railwaymen. The cause of the accident, on the surface, was the early departure of an Up special goods train from Glenbrook because the guard thought he had sufficient time to reach Penrith before the opposing train had left that place. However, the accident exposed alarmingly slack operating practices and weak rules, and led almost immediately to the introduction of Train Staff and Ticket working over single lines and subsequently of absolute block working on double lines.

Weir and Phillips are incorrect when they wrote the station "was upgraded following a serious accident on 30th January, 1878".[9] The "upgrading", if that means the provision of a crossing loop, had occurred before the accident.

It is unclear whether improvements in 1878 occurred at the existing 1868 platform or whether a new platform was constructed on the site of the existing station on the opposite side of Old Bathurst Road. The evidence suggests that the 1868 station

[6] N. Pollard and G. Harper, " Conquering Lapstone Hill" *Australian Railway History*, Vol. 60 No. 866, December, 2009, pp. 396 and 403
[7] C.C. Singleton, "The Cornfield Meet at Emu Plains", *Bulletin*, Vol. 4 No. 88, June, 1953, p. 70
[8] ibid
[9] Op. cit., p. 19

continued to be used for three reasons. Firstly, there is no reference in official sources to the provision of a new platform on a new site. Secondly, the *Nepean Times* newspaper of 22nd November 1884, the day of the opening of the present building, referred to the second station as being complete in August 1884 but not in use. Thirdly, the 1868 station was not demolished until 1885, after the construction and opening of the present down platform building.[10]

Emu Plains had its first school opened in 1878 and it would seem that the provision of a railway station had stimulated some increase in local population. Nevertheless, the place was small, reflected by the provision of local post located at the station between 1873 and 1911. The majority of small stations have a common development in their expansion. As new functions are required, the NSW Railways added another room either to the existing structure or as a stand-alone building. This would have been the case at Emu Plains where in 1878 a Parcels Office, a Telegraph Office and a Waiting Room were added. Up to 1889, small, timber Waiting Sheds often had single-pitched or skillion roofs sloping to the rear of the platform. One was provided in 1878 at Lucasville and one was also positioned on the down platform adjacent to the present brick building at the down end. It was there until about 1980. It is very possible that this small Waiting shed had in fact been relocated from the first Emu Plains station or Lucasville, when it closed in 1892. As the structure is not shown on a 1925 plan, it is quite possible that the building may have been used elsewhere as a waiting shed, relocated to Emu Plains as a cover for the interlocking frame and remained after a new signal box was built in 1955 in use as a waiting shed. There is a photograph in M. Morahan, *Early Diesel and Electric locomotives of the NSWGR*, Burwood, RTM, 1997, p. 45 that shows the building, the corrugated fence, the entrance to the men's toilet and a concrete relay hut. Of special interest is an opening in the platform wall, which indicates that the open-fronted building in 1954 was a cover for the interlocking frame but not a fully enclosed signal box.

What use is history without details of what existed at Emu Plains when the additional office accommodation was built in 1878? Speculation is worthless unless other evidence can be brought to bear on the subject. At the end of 1875, possibly 1876, the use but not the design of platform buildings changed. Two events contributed to this change, which marks the start of the third period of platform architecture. Firstly, Engineer-in-Chief, John Whitton, had to provide railways with much lower levels of capital per mile. Robert Lee describes what Whitton had to do, namely "lower standards, with the thinnest ballast, the narrowest cuttings and embankments, the light timber bridges and stations, and the sharpest curves and steepest grades consistent

[10] Cited by J. Forsyth, *Station Information A to F,* unpublished internal document, State Rail, 1997, p. 289. The date of demolition of the first station was indicated in the 1885 *Annual Report* of the NSW Railways.

with safety."[11] In addition, he reduced timber, boundary fencing from three to two rail, reduced the quality and number of culverts and omitted the completion of platform structures before handling the lines over to the Railway Commissioner. In this way, Whitton had to implement and complete the three trunk routes at the lowest possible cost. He implemented that Government policy but never lived long enough to see the long-term problems of which he was a contributor.

The second event that changed the use of platform buildings was the appointment of William Mason as Engineer for Existing Lines in 1876. While Mason worked under Whitton's general supervision, Mason was given delegation to approve new and replacement building on lines already opened. The appointment of Mason was a direct consequence of the Government priority to open the trunk lines to Victoria, Queensland and the inland Nirvana, wherever that was located. The two men did not use different designs of buildings. In fact, at no time in the history of the NSW Railways were different designs used when the design approval for structures on new and existing lines was separated. The point is that the NSW Government was not overly interested in what was happening on existing lines and that included Emu Plains. The *Nepean Times* newspaper used words to describe the 1878 building which tend to indicate whatever was there was far more functional than aesthetic. It asked readers "on looking at the 'old shanty' one wonders how we put up with it for so long".[12]

DEVELOPMENTS LEADING UP TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SECOND STATION SITE

There was one saving grace that helped improve the presentation of stations on existing lines – a vastly increased amount of capital funds from Great Britain. Between 1855 and 1876, only four stations in the entire Colony had received replacement platform buildings. These were:

TABLE: REPLACEMENT PLATFORM BUILDINGS 1855 TO 1876

STATION	PLAN APPROVAL DATE
• Burwood	1862
• Sydney	1871
• High Street	1873
• Ashfield	1874
• Newcastle	1876

[11] R. Lee, *Colonial Engineer*, Redfern, ARHS, 2000, p. 218
[12] *Nepean Times*, 22/11/1884, quoted in Weir Phillips, op. cit., p. 20

In and after 1876, the amount of capital funds to improve stations accelerated. In the Sydney area, the following stations were upgraded, with the exception of Parramatta, all being replacement buildings.

TABLE: REPLACEMENT PLATFORM BUILDINGS – SYDNEY 1876-1887

STATION	PLAN APPROVAL DATE
Newtown	1876
Redfern	1878
Petersham	1878
Burwood	1878
Homebush	1879
Liverpool	1880
Granville	1880
Croydon	1880
Macdonaldtown	1881
Richmond	1881
Lidcombe	1882
Parramatta	1882
Windsor	1883
Redfern	1884
Petersham	1884
Blacktown	1884
Stanmore	1885
Macdonaldtown	1886
Summer Hill	1886
Strathfield	1886
Auburn	1886
St. Marys	1887

In additional to the replacement buildings above, high quality, expensive buildings were erected at all stations, except Tempe, when the Illawarra line was opened to Hurstville in 1884.

With the rebuilding programme under way between 1876 and 1886, it is not surprising that Emu Plains was also to receive a replacement structure. There was an additional factor that had to be considered. Emu Plains was located at the foot of the Blue Mountains. This region of NSW held special status with the NSW Railways, initially because many influential members of the Government had summer houses there. In 1884, the Carrington Hotel opened and from this time tourism boomed for the Railways.

In fact, tourism to the area pre-dated the Hotel opening as the Little and Great Zig Zags were tourist attractions. This was especially the case at Lithgow, where the Railways opened a special platform from 1875 until the closure of the Zig Zag for tourist to see the marvel of the structure.

Apart from Sydney, the major area in NSW to receive replacement buildings was the Blue Mountains. The table below indicates the dates for platform building replacement.

TABLE: REPLACEMENT OF PLATFORM BUILDINGS – BLUE MOUNTAINS 1876-1884

STATION	PLAN APPROVAL DATE
• Lawson	1878
• Wentworth Falls	1879
• Eskbank	1880
• Katoomba	1881
• Springwood	1883
• Blackheath	1884

Most texts written to date indicate that the reason for the erection of the present down platform building are unknown. There was no local, influential resident at the time of the opening. After all, influential and wealthy people did not and do not live on low levels of "Plains" when there is available, elevated land. For example, John Lucas, a Member of Parliament for 20 years between 1860 and 1880 selected elevated land on the Top Road of the Lapstone Zig Zag rather than on the Cumberland Plains to build his summer house. He even was influential enough to get the NSW Government to pay for the station, named Lucasviile.

Five different designs of platform buildings were being used in the 1880s. George Cowdery selected a combination office and residence and approved the design in 1882. The use of combination structures was restricted to the period 1855 to 1882. The Table below sets out the examples built. There were three variations. The first type was the single-storey, such as at Fairfield and Menangle, which both survive. The other two types were part two-storey. There were two sub-types. One had bedrooms on the first floor positioned transverse to the direction of the main roof, as at Emu Plains, and the other had the first floor bedrooms longitudinal to the main roof, as at Orange.

TABLE: COMBINATION OFFICES AND RESIDENCES 1855-1884

APPROVAL YEAR	LOCATION	TYPE & SUB-TYPE
1855	Ashfield	Single-storey

APPROVAL YEAR	LOCATION	TYPE & SUB-TYPE
1855	Newtown	Single-storey
1856	Fairfield	Single-storey
1856	Liverpool	Two-storey – longitudinal – a stand-alone type
1857	Waratah	Single-storey
1857	Hexham	Single-storey
1859	Lidcombe	Single-storey
1860	Blacktown	Single-storey
1861	St. Marys	Single-storey
1861	Branxton	Single-storey
1863	Menangle	Single-storey
1864	Mulgrave	Single-storey
1864	Windsor	Single-storey
1867	Bowral	Single-storey
1868	Emu Plains	Single-storey
1869	Greta	Single-storey
1869	Wallerawang	Two-storey – transverse
1869	Rydal	Single-storey
1872	Tarana	Single-storey
1873	High Street	Two-storey – transverse
1874	Ashfield	Two-storey – transverse
1875	Bowning	Two-storey – longitudinal
1875	Brewongle	Single-storey
1876	Blayney	Single-storey
1876	Binalong	Two-storey – longitudinal – not built
1876	Harden	Two-storey – longitudinal – not built
1876	Orange	Two-storey – longitudinal
1882	Emu Plains	Two-storey – transverse

The Table above shows 28 combination structures built between 1855 and 1884. They represent less than 1% of all platform buildings erected on the NSW Railways. All but one were built up to 1876, the exception is Emu Plains, which was approved by George Cowdery six years after the last example was approved at Orange. The way Whitton had to re-invent what he built in order to save money is reflected in the period 1873 to 1876, which is the only time all three variations were used. The decision not to build the examples at Binalong and harden adds evidence to the difficult financial position in which he was placed. In both of these instances, he adopted one of his new strategies – relocate temporary station facilities and leave permanent buildings to the Railway Commissioner after he handed over the line.

It is now clear from the Table above that the approved two-storey building at Emu Plains was well out of its time period. Why was so? The answer was found on a visit to Wallerawang by the ARHS members in 2010. Wallerawang was the first two-storey building on a railway platform in NSW, apart from the bizarre station house at Liverpool in the pre-John Whitton time of 1856.[13]

The building at Wallerawang measures 95 feet in length by 33 feet wide through the former parlour. Conservation Architect, David Sheedy, says that the building was designed to follow the Italian Villa style. Wallerawang marked the end of the Blue Mountains railway project and was the location of the last of the 17 stone gatehouses. The first of the 17 Gothic-styled gatehouses was at Emu Plains. Emu Plains station received its 1882 building because George Cowdery, the approving officer, knew the special status of the Blue Mountains. At the time, the Carrington Hotel at Katoomba was under construction and he acted to provide the visual gateway to the Blue Mountains.

The eastern start point for the Blue Mountains railway project was Emu Plains and the western end point was Wallerawang. By approving the present structure, Cowdery marked the eastern and western terminal points by partial two-storey platform buildings and the first and last stone gatehouses. He tied the Blue Mountains with uniform railway station architecture. He did not select the Gothic Revival style lightly. Between Sydney and Penrith, the architecture of stations was Georgian. Cowdery marked the line beyond Penrith with the Gothic influence as soon as the train left the station. At the end of the yard at Penrith, trains crossed the Castlereagh Road. The gatehouse at this crossing was not the usual, small structure used across the Blue Mountains. It was a much large example in the Gothic style with ornate bargeboards.[14] There was no question for Cowdery that a new building at Emu Plains had to be of the Gothic style.

Cowdery decided that he wanted a visual identifier to announce the start of the Blue Mountains. His objective was to have a very visible structure. That meant it had to be more than one storey in height. Cowdery knew two very significant items of information. At the time he was still friends with his long time work colleague and former boss, John Whitton. Cowdery knew that Whitton himself thought that the viaduct over Knapsack Gully, with its s-even, graceful sandstone arches, was Whitton's "masterpiece".[15] Cowdery also knew what the railway author, William Bayley, noted decades later. That Emu Plains station "commands a view of the First Zig Zag".[16] Emu Plains station was the first location where passengers in train could see the Lapstone Zig Zag. Such

[13] The Liverpool building was demolished in1880.

[14] A photograph of the gatehouse appears in M. Langdon, *Conquering the Blue Mountains*, Matraville, Eveleigh Press, 2006, p. 12

[15] Quoted in Department of Main Roads, *The Roadmakers*, Sydney, 1976, p. 42

[16] W. Bayley, *Lapstone Zig Zag*, Bulli, Austrail Publications, 1972, p. 26

understanding by the NSW Railways of the significant of the Blue Mountains would have been an affirmation to those in government circles who owned residences or visited there regularly that the region was indeed special.

1882 THE NEW BUILDING AND THE SECOND STATION SITE

Very few stations in NSW up to 1899 have not been subject of work by John Whitton, the Engineer-in-Chief. Emu Plains is one of the exceptions. The first and second stations were approved at times when Whitton had lost control, of works on existing lines.

George Cowdery, as Engineer-in-Chief for Existing Lines, approved the new platform building on the 20th January, 1882. The design features of the structure as shown on the 1882 plan are listed below:

- Dominant, vertical thrusting, through the use of three-storey construction, steeply-pitched, gabled roofs with transverse gable and tall chimneys
- Compact linear compression, the building measuring 87 feet long x 18 feet wide through the General Waiting Room
- Unbalanced and subordinate presentation of the building on the road approach, including the use of corrugated iron sheeting protecting a bathroom, the use of a paling fence in front of the residence part and the absence of strong visual focus on pedestrian entry at the rear
- The rare use of the rail elevation as the dominant architectural feature, expressed by the horizontal parapet at the base of the roof, the horizontal moulding around the external wall at the floor level of the first floor and the fascia at the edge of the awning
- Asymmetrical floor plan
- Face brickwork without tuck-pointed mortar, set in Flemish bond (a mixture of header and stretcher bricks in each course)
- Slate roof on main structure with No. 26 gauge corrugated iron on platform and balcony awnings
- Ornamental stone moulding around all doors and windows
- Parapets on all gables together with ornamental motifs on barges
- Ornamental vent in gable facing the platform
- Ornamental date plaque, showing “1883” on road elevation

- Faceted bay window at Sydney end only at basement and ground floor levels
- Ceiling heights of 13 feet on ground floor and 10 feet on first floor
- Absence of heating in the Booking Office and Telegraph Office
- Absence of detached and semi-detached pavilions
- Posted verandah over the platform using fluted, cast iron columns with ornate cast iron brackets
- Brick-walled cesspits under all three toilets to collect night soil
- Integration of male toilets into the building
- Contrasted fencing each side of the building, with picket fencing on the Sydney side and corrugated iron sheeting on the Bathurst side

The station was opened on 22nd November, 1884 on the new site on the Sydney side of Old Bathurst Road, where it remains today. In accordance with the policy of the NSW Government at the time, building was erected by contract, the builders being Michael Reed and Andrew Turnball, who signed the contract on 20th June, 1883. As far as is known, this was the only station building that these contractors erected. The delay of almost two years between approval and construction is a bit longer than usual but consistent with what was happening at other locations. This delay, as manifested by the date plaque on the road elevation of the up side building, is a measure of the disinterest in the project by the NSW Government and suggests that the NSW Railways was in control of the work for its own, tendentious purposes.

The most striking design feature of the building is its height. Only the 1873 High Street building was constructed using three levels, apart from Emu Plains. Usually, a platform building of similar standard would be designed with a ratio of one to four so far as the proportion of length and height is concerned. That is, for every four foot of length, there was one foot of height. In the case of the Emu Plains building, the ratio was about one to one and a half. In other words, the building is very compact. Whereas many NSW railway stations use a suite of two or three buildings to form a platform composition, Emu Plains had a single building. The status of towns served by a station was often reflected by increasing the distance between the main building and detached pavilions. They would be linked by walls sheeted with corrugated iron. This was not done at Emu Plains.

Another common NSW design feature in the 1880s was to express the entry access to the building by a visually strong architectural feature. This could take the form of a porched entry with its own gabled roof, a large transverse gable on the roof or the entry door standing proud of the rear building wall or all of these features. The Emu Plains building had none of these features and, while there was a rear stepway, without balustrade or handrail, to the General Waiting Room, it was the same access as used by the family of the Station Master. Moreover, the design of the stepway was subdued.

Why was so? The answer is that it was not the function of the structure to reflect anything to do with the village served by the building. This point is further demonstrated by the absence of the usual station forecourt, which was always void of unattractive features. At Emu Plains, local patrons were exposed to a paling fence on the Bathurst end hiding the family washing at ground level and a bathroom on the first floor level, again at the Bathurst end, sheeted with corrugated iron. Sometime after World War One, the appearance of the first floor balcony was further ruined by the decision to enclose the balcony with unpainted Fibro sheeting.

The Emu Plains building is asymmetrical which, in itself, is a design feature of the 1880s. Even more noteworthy is the architectural bias of the structure to the Sydney side of the structure. The window in the Ladies' Waiting Room was a very elegant faceted bay composition that was also extended downwards to the basement level. It was not repeated at the other end of the structure. Moreover, different fencing styles were intended to be used on each side of the building. On the Sydney side, white picket fencing was to be applied but this was not done. Instead, ugly corrugated on sheeting attached to a timber frame was used, as it was also built on the Bathurst side, which was consistent with the plan. The rear stepway was located on the Sydney side and the use of such a facility to reach a platform building is extremely rare at NSW stations. This use of different treatments on different ends of the buildings indicates one dominant explanation. The building was purposefully designed to be eye-catching to train passengers coming from Sydney.

To say that it was rare that the male toilet in a NSW platform building would be incorporated into the main structure under the same roof is an overstatement.[17] The traditional NSW arrangement in the 1880s was to locate the male toilet either as a detached or semi-detached pavilion or in an attached pavilion but with its own subordinate roof structure. This was not done at Emu Plains, where the male toilet was positioned at the Bathurst end of the building. The access to the toilet has now been removed. The idea behind the inclusion of the male toilet into the main building was to help form a bulky building where the eye was not distracted from other, subsidiary buildings on the platform.

Building height, the compact mass of the structure and the design details emphasised the role of the building not as an expression of the status of Emu Plains but as a monument marking the start of the Blue Mountains railway. In 1929, when the official

[17] There are two features of the toilets of interest. Firstly, the toilet for the family had two seats within the one closet – one for adults and one for children. Secondly, the toilets were described as "W. Cs.", meaning water closets. This does not mean that the toilets had flushing water but merely that the human bodily wastes were directly deposited into a watering "cess" directly below the closets.

Railway photographer came to the station, he naturally photographed the building showing the Sydney end.[18]

1885-1906

At the time of the opening of the station in November, 1884, the *Nepean Times* reported that a few minor tasks had not been completed prior to the opening. In just a few months, it became obvious that some aspects of the plan for the building needed some alteration. Both the remedial and outstanding works were completed in 1885. The NSW Railways had very little experience in building basements for stations. This lack of experience was demonstrated at Emu Plains. Inadequate ventilation in the sub-floor area encouraged the immediate presence of mould on walls. This was a problem for the structure for the next 100 years. An initial measure undertaken by the NSW Railways was to concrete the floor. This was a very early use of concrete for such a purpose. In fact, it appears that this was the first use of concrete for a floor, the product being used only at Newcastle and Maitland in the late 1870s for building foundations and in 1880 for a drain at Cootamundra.

While placing all the toilets within the one building was a very modern feature at the time, the use on enclosed cesspits created huge adverse odour problems. In 1885, the cesspits were filled in and a very new system of toilet hygiene was installed, namely dry-earth closets. This involved the use of changeable pans under the toilet seat. A bucket of dirt was placed within the cubicle and, after the necessary private activity had been completed, the person shoveled an amount of dirt into the pan from the dirt bucket. Additionally, three rooms in the basement were sealed off and remained sealed for the next century. These initiatives were a vast improvement on the elimination of adverse toilet odours and damp.

The fencing had not been undertaken along the rear of the platform at the time of opening. The fences were built according to the plan, namely picket fence on the Sydney side and corrugated iron on the Bathurst side. The corrugated iron fence remained in situ until at least 1977.

A goods shed is also recorded as being built in 1885 but its location is uncertain. Probably, there was no goods shed in the usual sense of the term but rather a small building at the down end of the down platform that was also used for “out ofs”.

The supply of fresh drinking water to railway stations in NSW is usually obtained from rainwater, which drains off the roof into an underground tank. However, for an unknown reason, a well was sunk towards the Sydney end and in 1894 a windmill was erected to pump the water from the well. This was a very rare measure at a railway station and its

[18] *The Staff*, 23/9/1929, p. 518

presence ruined the appearance of the platform building, though itself continued the role of the station as a vertical monument to indicate the start of the Blue Mountains railway.

Graham Harper writes that, in 1896, a crossing loop was laid in on the up side of the platform. The arrangements incorporated not only the crossing loop, but a gravel siding with the points in the main line facing to up trains and located at the western end of the yard. At the eastern end, there were three sidings laid in off the Sydney end of the crossing loop: the closest to the main line was a refuge siding while the other two were designated goods sidings. The original siding of 1870 had vanished by this time. Despite the introduction of the crossing loop, there was no interlocking at Emu Plains at this time. A single home and distant signal for each direction, and these were worked from pullover levers on the platform.

Electric Train Staff working between Penrith and Glenbrook had been substituted for Ordinary Train Staff and Ticket prior to the opening of Emu Plains as a crossing station. The 1892 Local Appendix confirms that the sections either side of Emu Plains were worked by electric staff, while the 1906 LA tells us that the staffs for the sections were:

- Penrith West Box to Emu Plains French Grey
- Emu Plains to Glenbrook Red

Penrith West Box was opened with the interlocking of Penrith Yard on 3rd March 1890.

It should be noted that neither reversing station on the Lapstone Zig Zag (closed 1892) was ever a staff station. There was no provision for crossings at either.

Graham Harper writes that the refuge siding was almost certainly provided to allow staging of trains to reduce loads and possibly train lengths for Down goods trains about to proceed up the Lapstone Zig Zag. The 1913 Glenbrook deviation, with its easier grades and without any necessity to reverse, would have obviated the need for the refuge at Emu Plains.

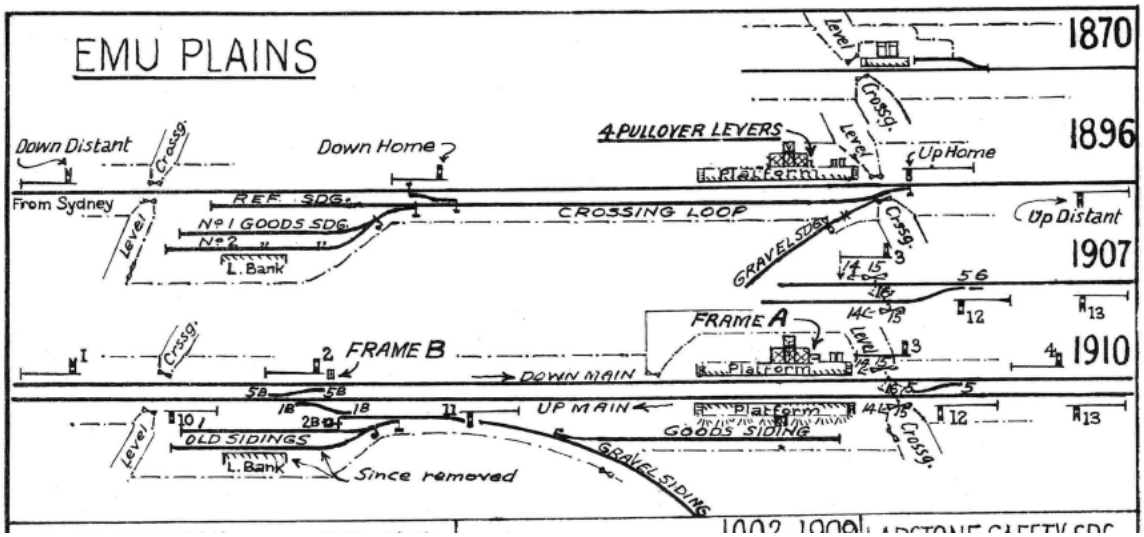
1907 – ADDITIONAL PLATFORM AND NEW BUILDING

On 2nd June 1907, duplication occurred between Penrith West Box and Emu Plains concurrent with the opening of the new bridge across the Nepean River. By this time, the line through most of the Blue Mountains had been duplicated and with the exception of the Emu Plains to Glenbrook section, there was continuous double line as far as Mount Victoria.

Graham Harper explains that the 1907 duplication brought with it the first interlocking for Emu Plains, and Preece's block working over the section to Penrith West. A 16 lever Frame 'A' was provided to operate the junction points and eight signals pertaining to the main line; it also released keys for the points at the Penrith end of the yard, while

provision was also made for the direct operation of the level crossing gates. This was an open air frame with all safeworking instruments located in the station building, a not uncommon practice at the time. The junction points were to the west of the level crossing, while the gravel siding points were in the Up Main to the east of the station. Access to the gravel siding was reversed, with the new points being trailing to Up trains. These points, a nearby trailing crossover between the main lines and, curiously, a shunt signal from the gravel siding connection, were operated from a six lever frame 'B'. Frame B was unlocked by two keys – one for the siding points and one for the crossover - from the main signal frame immediately to the west of the station building.

The old refuge siding was abolished, and while the two goods sidings were left in situ, a new goods siding was provided at the rear of the new Up platform. This was demolished about five years ago.



Source: C. C. Singleton in ARHS Bulletin

The level crossing gates and wickets were connected to the frame on 21st August 1907.

In 1907, a second platform was opened for public use as part of the duplication of the rail line from Penrith. When the line was duplicated, a 15 feet by 12 feet timber waiting shed was built on the platform. There is a photograph in M. Morahan, *Early Diesel and Electric locomotives of the NSWGR*, Burwood, RTM, 1997, p. 45 which shows the waiting shed. It was built to the conventional design for such sheds and had a low, single-pitched roof sloping to the platform wall. Below is a list of the seven possible reasons why the NSW Railways chose the design, material and size of the building on the platform.

1. The relationship to the design of the building on the opposite platform,
2. The extension of the symbolic role that the building on the opposite platform performed,
3. The connection to other components of the Penrith-Emu Plains duplication of the line,
4. The link to the materials used in the construction of the second platform,
5. The relationship to other buildings on the Blue Mountains,
6. Railway policies determining the position of buildings,
7. The association with the size and nature of the community of Emu Plains served by the station, &
8. The implementation of an existing design policy for duplication projects.

The above possible explanations are dealt with seriatim. In order to provide a knowledge of what was built at other locations, an Appendix to this document has been prepared to show all the buildings erected on platforms associated with track duplications in NSW from 1890 to 1920.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BUILDINGS ON THE EXISTING AND NEW PLATFORMS

Only 14 buildings or 15% of buildings on new platforms matched the structure on the opposite side platform. The choice of building materials for the new platform had nothing to do with the materials or design of the existing structure on the opposite platform. With the details of the Appendix in mind, it can be said that the waiting shed on the up platform at Emu Plains was consistent with departmental policy at the time.

THE EXTENSION OF THE SYMBOLIC ROLE OF THE BUILDING ON THE OPPOSITE PLATFORM

The lack of building height, the small size and the complete omission of any design feature combine to indicate that there was no symbolic role of the new structure in relation to supporting the role as the gateway to the Blue Mountains.

THE CONNECTION WITH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE PENRITH-EMU PLAINS LINE DUPLICATION

The first bridge at Penrith over the Nepean River was the subject of political action. In 1860, a flood destroyed the then existing road bridge across the River. As the railway construction moved closer to Penrith from Sydney in the early 1860s, the residents of Emu Plains joined with their fellow village dwellers at Penrith to lobby for the railway to

cross the River to provide essential transport.[19] The bridge was built for two tracks but John Rae, the Railway Commissioner, decided that the structure should have a joint use for road and rail. The decision making process was assisted by the fact that Rae was also the Commissioner for Roads. Joint use of bridges in NSW was extremely rare and the Victoria Bridge was one of only two road and rail bridges in the 19th century but the other example, at Tocumwal in 1895 was not used by the NSW Railways.[20] In a way, the bridge assisted the Emu Plains building to emphasise the symbolic role of the locality by the uniqueness of the bridge. Indeed, the Colonial Governor's train stopped on the bridge in 1872 "so that the splendid viaduct at Knapsack Gully could be viewed."[21]

The NSW Railways had been robbed of one track over the Nepean River by a direction of the NSW Government in order to subdue local, political unrest. By the end of the 19th century, the need to duplicate the line over the Blue Mountains was clear. In 1892, the Lapstone Zig Zag had been eliminated. Various parts of the line had been duplicated in 1880, 1898 and 1902. This was a project pursued by the railway administration rather than by government. In 1903/04, the Railways replaced the timber approach to the Nepean River bridge.[22] The high profile of the American technology used for the new bridge over the Nepean River did not stimulate any official desire to build a platform structure at Emu Plains that was above the norm. The preferred higher status of the Blue Mountains railway, nor the importance of the Nepean River bridge counted for nought when the NSW Railways selected a building for the up platform at Emu Plains.

It was a common practice for the NSW Railways to exclude duplication of a main line past the station, as it did happen at Emu Plains. By not extending duplication through a station, the need for a second platform was avoided. The fact that the second platform was built is an indication that the duplication was a part of the programme to duplicate the entire Blue Mountains railway. However, it did save money by converting the refuge loop into a part of the main up line and dispensing with the need for a refuge siding or loop.

THE LINK TO THE MATERIALS USED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SECOND PLATFORM

[19] D. J. Chamberlain, *Diary of a Challenge*, Bathurst, privately published, no date, p. 8
[20] Examples in the 20th century were on the Nepean River at Camden in 1901 (shared piers & separate spans), the Darling River at Menindee in 1927(shared roadway) and the Clarence River at Grafton in 1932 (vertical, modal separation)
[21] Ibid., p. 56
[22] D. Fraser, *Bridges Down Under*, Redfern, ARHS, 1995, p. 76

The wall of the 1907 platform differed in style to the 1884 wall. Both were brick but the 1884 wall was diagonal, sloping outwards towards the toe of the wall. The 1907 wall was vertical with the top one foot projected slightly in front of the lower part of the wall. The two walls were representative of pre and post 1890 platform wall design policy.

The Table below sets out details of platform walls constructed in 1907 and indicates the type of building erected on the platform.

TABLE: TYPE OF PLATFORM BUILDINGS ON PLATFORM WALLS BUILT IN 1907

LOCATION	TYPE OF PLATFORM WALL	TYPE OF BUILDING ON THE PLATFORM	MATERIAL USED IN PLATFORM BUILDING
Trundle	Brick	Skillion roof	Timber
Gulgong	Timber	Skillion roof	Timber
Guildford	Brick	Gabled roof	Timber
Emu Plains	Brick	Skillion roof	Timber
Grahams Hill	Second-hand sleepers in pig-sty fashion	No building	NA
Nemingha	Timber extension added to an existing brick wall	Skillion roof	timber
Dilkoon	Sleeper platform	No building	NA

The Table indicates that the provision of timber platform buildings were built on platforms with differing styles and materials of the platform walls. The brick wall at Emu Plains provides no information about the relationship between platform walls and buildings.

Both platform surfaces were covered with Locksley granite, which was the standard ground cover when asphalt was not applied. Both platforms were covered with bitumen in 1989 or earlier.

THE RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER BUILDINGS ON THE BLUE MOUNTAINS RAILWAY

The Appendix lists all other locations on the Blue Mountains that received new buildings upon track duplication. All new structures built in 1902 were large, brick structures. The only other station which had a building of the same design as at Emu Plains was the matching pair of buildings on the new site of Clarence station, as shown in W.A. Bayley, *Blue Mountains Railway*, Bulli, Austrail Publications, 1980, p. 43. Emu Plains, Mount Victoria and Emu Plains were the only use of parallel, side platforms on the blue Mountains railway, all other stations having island platforms.

RAILWAY POLICIES RELATING TO THE PLATFORM STYLE, THE LOCATION OF BUILDINGS AND THE WAY TRAINS WERE REFUGED

The dominant NSW practice is to have the major platform building on the platform which serves Sydney-bound trains. This is not the case at Emu Plains. As a result of duplication, Emu Plains station was in the uncommon position of having the major station building on the down platform. This required all train travellers to firstly purchase a ticket on the down platform and then proceed to the up platform. If the NSW Railways had any notion about serving the needs of local train travelers, it would have added a second room to the platform building for the provision of a Booking Office. This onerous arrangement may have prompted the NSW Railways to build a new Booking Office in 1955 at the extreme down end of the down platform in order to make it more convenient for customers.

The summary position is that the choice of single or double-ended refuge loops was, firstly, a factor related to the pattern of the platforms and, secondly, related to time. Generally speaking, the later a refuge for a train had to be provided, it was more likely to be double-ended. This would have made the refuge loop at Emu Plains what earlier for its time. Unlike all the other examples Graham mentions on the Main West, the NSW Railways converted the then existing refuge loop into a continuation of the up main line and abandoned any train storage facility at Emu Plains. There were so many inconsistencies that the use of side platforms provides no explanation of why a small timber building was erected.

One interesting feature of the track plan was the location of trailing crossovers between the main lines. Trains proceeding to the gravel siding would have had to reverse from the down to the up main before moving into the siding of the Emu gravel Company.

There is one point about the decision making process as it applied to the 1907 platform at Emu Plains. The NSW Railways never designed a single-pitched roof building for an island platform on the basis that such a roof design looked unbalanced and unsymmetrical.[23] With that in mind, it can be safely noted that the platform building and the platform type were designed for each other at Emu Plains.

THE ASSOCIATION WITH THE SIZE AND NATURE OF THE COMMUNITY SERVED BY THE EMU PLAINS STATION

The small size of the waiting shed would possibly suggest that very, very few people travelled to Sydney. Was this the case? An Appendix is attached that sets out the

[23] A few stations did have skillion-roofed structures on island platforms but this was a result of additional tracks being laid subsequent to construction behind the building. Dungog was an example.

details on buildings erected at those stations where the track was duplicated between 1890 and 1920. Of the 94 stations in the study, 36 or nearly 40% had only a one room structure like Emu Plains. At not one large station was a single room building erected, but a few large stations, one or two room timber versions were erected, as at Mittagong, Wallerawang, Picton, Bowning and Gunning. Generally, the pattern that emerges from the Appendix is that, the more important a station was to the NSW Railways, the more likely was it that a brick or larger timber building was erected but there are quite a few exceptions to the point that there was substantial degree of unexplainable links between size and materials of the duplication building and the locality it served.

The 1907 building, just like the 1882 building, had nothing to do with the locality served by the station. Put another way, there would be several other towns ahead of Emu Plains that had a greater claim on which to protest about the small size of the building they received upon track duplication.

It would be easy to say that the building on the new platform seems to have reflected the small size and low patronage of the station at the time but other, similar examples at larger centres suggest that the dominant explanation is that the NSW Railways made a choice based on how much money was available for building construction.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EXISTING DESIGN POLICY FOR DUPLICATION PROJECTS

C.C. Singleton commented that the surviving brick platform building erected at Epping in 1900 "was of a standard then recently introduced for duplication work."[24] Emu Plains did not receive this "standard' type of brick building. Either Singleton was correct and Emu Plains simply missed out on getting the departmental "standard" building or Singleton was incorrect. The reality is that the use of the Epping style of brick structure, being the same design utilised on the Blue Mountains duplication, was applied only to some, not all, duplication works. Singleton was correct for duplication works for the years between 1899 and 1902 but, by the time Emu Plains was duplicated, the brick structures like those used on the Blue Mountains in 1902 were not solely used. They were used only for more important locations. For less important locations plus some anomalies, timber was used for the same design or simpler, cheaper, timber building designs. Emu Plains fell into the latter category of either less important or anomaly locations.

What stands out in the Appendix is the year, 1907, as in that year the only track to be duplicated on the trunk lines in NSW was the section between Penrith and Emu Plains. Emu Plains was the only station to receive a duplicated platform in 1907. It is

[24] C. C. Singleton, "The Short North", *Bulletin* No. 332, June, 1965, p. 106

interesting to observe the periods of track duplications. From the Appendix, they are easily observable. They are summarised below.

TABLE: PERIODS OF TRACK DUPLICATION 1890-1920

NUMBER OF THE PERIOD	PERIOD OF DUPLICATION, IDENTIFIED BY STATION BUILDING CONSTRUCTION	LINES DUPLICATED
1	1890-1892	Main North in Newcastle area and Main South between Granville and Picton and the Main West at Lapstone and Bowenfels
2	1898	Blackheath (exclusive) to Main Victoria (exclusive) – no platform buildings affected
3	1902	Main West – over Blue Mountains
4	1907	Main West – Penrith to Emu Plains
5	1908 to 1910	Main South and Lithgow Zig Zag
6	1910 to 1911	Main West – over the Blue Mountains
7	1912 to 1919	Illawarra line, Main South, Main North and Main West

From the above Table, the NSW Railways implemented a policy which targeted specific line at specific times before 1912. The line that received consideration before the other trunk routes was the Main West, because of the problems associated with the two Zig Zags. After 1892, there was a general lull in duplication projects. Chief Commissioner Eddy lost a lot of personal momentum at this time when his initial contract expired and the NSW government declined to pay him his promised salary increase for a second term. His disappointment is mirrored in the little infrastructure added to the existing rail system between 1892 until his death in 1897. The next period, number 3, involving substantial building works was in 1902 and, again, this was on the Blue Mountains. Both the fourth and fifth periods were focused on the Main West line.

Below is a Table that establishes how many other examples of the same style that existed at Emu Plains were built at other locations between 1890 and 1920.

YEAR OF BUILDING CONSTRUCTION	NUMBER OF BUILDINGS OF THE SAME DESIGN AS AT EMU PLAINS	NUMBER OF BUILDINGS OF DIFFERENT DESIGNS TO THE BUILDING AT EMU PLAINS
1890	3	1
1891	2	3
1892	4	2
1902	0	8
1907	1	0
1908	0	1
1909	1	1
1910	4	3
1911	1	4
1912	0	3
1913	3	1
1914	4	7
1915	3	16
1916	3	2
1917	O	1
1918	0	1
1919	0	1

The above Table shows that skillion-roofed structures were more widely used from 1890 to 1913. After 1913, the dominant roof design was the gabled form, even for one room examples. The structure at Emu Plains in 107 was consistent with the dominant design policy for duplicated structures but the reason why there were many other locations where another design was applied. It seems that a certain degree of randomness was applied to the building design to be used at a particular station.

The Appendix shows that only 27 of the 94 examples were built in brick, representing 28% of the total number. The majority of these were on the Blue Mountains railway and in 1902. Usually, when a station was moved to a new site were the buildings on both side platforms of matching design or an island platform was selected. Strangely, two examples, at Galong and Greta, were one room and built in brick. The use of timber was consistent with the majority of new duplication buildings but it would seem that the dice could also have rolled the other way. The NSW Railways knew about the high maintenance requirements of timber, as indicated in 1903/04 with the removed the timber viaduct approaching the Nepean River bridge but did not apply the same consideration to the Emu Plains platform building.

1908-1955 – THE TIME OF ALMOST NOTHINGNESS

This was a period in which virtually nothing happened to improve the quality of railway buildings throughout NSW. This was certainly the position at Emu Plains station. Governments preferred to focus on the needs of motor vehicles after World War One. Suburban electrification was the one major exception but this did not extend beyond Parramatta until after 1955.

While very little occurred that affected the platform buildings at Emu Plains, there was a series of changes to the signalling and safeworking arrangements. Graham Harper tells us that the opening of the Lithgow Zig Zag deviation on 16th October 1910 allowed resources to be allotted to the removal of the Emu Plains to Glenbrook bottleneck. Although the Lapstone Zig Zag had been abolished in 1892, the long uphill section with its infamous Glenbrook Tunnel was a real restriction on line capacity and its duplication was seen as high priority.

The first stage of the work occurred around the beginning of 1910, with the opening of a crossing station at Knapsack. This was no normal crossing station, as only dead end sidings were provided, and the whole thing operated on the same principles as the much later Dombarton on the Unanderra to Moss Vale line, although the Knapsack arrangement did not offer a grade separation for shunting moves. Full details of the operation of Knapsack can be found in that most excellent article *Conquering Lapstone Hill* by Messrs Pollard and Harper which appeared in the December 2009 issue of *Australian Railway History.*

To add a little further capacity to this overcrowded section, on 10th December 1910, a short duplication was opened to Nepean Junction, the point at which the deviation would commence, about a mile to the west of Emu Plains. This duplication would no doubt have greatly facilitated the operation of ballast trains operating in conjunction with the deviation works. This section was operated by Tyer's One Wire Three Position block instruments. The junction points at Emu Plains were replaced by a trailing crossover.

The new double line was opened in 1913, and with the easier grades as well as a block signal box at Lapstone Hill, the operating significance of Emu Plains slumped somewhat. Consequently, in 1918, the decision was taken to provide closing facilities at Emu Plains to obviate the necessity for a signaller to be in attendance for each and every train. Firstly, on 1st May that year, the level crossing gates were disconnected from Frame 'A' and replaced by a single, outward swinging gate on each side, hand operated and no longer interlocked with the signals.

Then, on 27th June the Preece's Block working to Penrith West was replaced by Tyer's One Wire Three Positon block. This meant that the block working between Emu Plains, Penrith West and Lapstone Hill / Glenbrook was all of the same type, and it was now possible for Emu Plains to be switched out of section. At the same time a closing lever

(No.9) and lock were provided at the signal frame to enable the signals to be secured in the ‘clear’ position.

On 23rd February 1923, starting signal control was provided on the Up and Down Starting signals. This electrically linked the starting signal with the block instruments, to ensure that the signal could not be cleared unless the applicable block instrument was set at ‘Line Clear’.

On 4th November 1924, modified Tyer’s Block instruments were introduced in both directions. Instructions issued in November 1924 refer to Ordinary Train Staff (shape: round, colour red) working on the Gravel Siding to allow Departmental engines to proceed part way down the siding. Tickets (for following moves) were not permitted. As written assurances from the gravel company were required to the effect that its locomotive was secured clear of the main siding prior to any Departmental movement took place, the purpose of the staff working seems a little obscure. It is not known whether or not the company locomotive was required to travel with the staff. It is also not known when the staff working was abolished. Also in 1924, the Down Distant signal was placed under the Penrith West Down Starting signal.

On 20th November 1924, the Up Home and Up Distant signals were relocated some 180 feet to the west and the distant signal was fitted with a fixed upper green light. A week later the Up Home signal was fitted with a reverser and was thereafter controlled jointly by track circuit and the lever in Frame A.

On 31st July 1935, automatic signalling was introduced between Emu Plains and Valley Heights, allowing closure of Lapstone Hill and Blaxland Junction block signal boxes. At Emu Plains the Down Starting and Up Distant signals were replaced by upper quadrant signals. The automatic signalling on one side and the block working on the other meant that Emu Plains signal box once again had to be attended for the passage of each train, and closing facilities were removed. At this point in time, Ordinary Train Staff working still existed on the gravel branch.

In May 1946, a new 16 lever frame was provided at the same spot as the earlier frame had been located – adjacent to the western end of the station building. The 4th June then saw a somewhat bizarre signalling scheme introduced at Emu Plains. Firstly, the six lever ground frame at the eastern end of the station was abolished and replaced by a single lever, Lever ‘B’ which operated the main lines crossover adjacent. Releasing of Lever B was by a key from an adjacent releasing switch, which in turn was released by pulling No.8 lever in Frame A. However the most bizarre aspect of this sequence of alterations was the connection of the points leading to the goods and gravel siding to the signal box frame, and the provision of two new shunt signals – Up Main to Goods Siding and Set Back on Up Main - in addition to the aforementioned shunt signal, Goods

Siding to Up Main, which was converted to a dwarf shunting signal in lieu of the disc signal in use until then.

Finally, a dwarf shunt signal was provided at the western end of the Up platform for Up Main to Down Main moves through the western crossover, which was still available and still connected directly to the main lever frame ‘A’.

Graham Harper says that the purpose of these changes is not clear. They would allow most station work to be performed from the signal box and reduce the amount of walking up and down with keys to release the points at the eastern end – a return hike of a little under half a mile, during which the signal box would be unattended. The points at that end controlled directly from the signal frame were fully signalled, while the eastern end main lines crossover was electrically released without the need to take an Annet key for a stroll, and the person operating the crossover would be at hand to hand signal movements through it.

The arrangements would also have proved handy in the days of *The Heron*, a daily loco-hauled commuter train which started from and terminated at Emu Plains. The train could arrive in the Down platform, the engine could cut off and draw forward of the western crossover, be hand signalled through that crossover to the Up Main. The engine could then run around its train stopping on the Up Main clear of the eastern main lines crossover. One of the train crew, or a shunter, could take the release for this crossover, reverse Lever B points and hand signal or pilot the engine back onto its train.

The train could then be hauled through B crossover, and then, with Lever B and the releasing key restored to their normal positions, could set back into the Goods Siding, detach engine and despatch to Penrith Loco. This part could be controlled directly from the signal box.

The next morning, operations would have been simpler. Engine arrives from Loco in the Down Platform, draws forward, is hand signalled from the box to set back through the western crossover, goes through the Up platform, draws ahead of the siding points and under direct control of the signalman sets back into the Goods Siding, couples up to the train, comes out of the siding and sets back into the Up platform. This scenario is one possible explanation for the alterations at Emu Plains in 1946. We may never know the real reason.

Heavy goods trains required a good run up Kingswood Bank, and instructions were in force that such trains were to be held at Emu Plains Up Starting signal until a clear run was available to Kingswood. This was later changed to the Emu Plains Up Home signal to allow a slightly longer run up to the Bank.

On 14th April 1955, the Up Starting signal was relocated forty feet closer in to Emu Plains signal box. This must have been a mistake, because later that year, on the 8th September, the same signal was relocated some 135 feet further out.

So far as the 1907 up platform is concerned, there is no certainty in arguing that one room waiting shed on the up platform showed that the number of people using trains at Emu Plains was small. It probably was but the NSW Railways did so many unexplainable things that there cannot be argued that there was a specific causal link between size of a locality and the size of its duplication platform facilities. There was one indicator of small size that provides a clear idea. That is the length of the platforms. It was proposed in 1911 to lengthen the down platform from 400 feet to 506 feet and the up platform also from 400 feet to 560 feet.[25] This required the relocation of an access gate at the up end of the down platform and of a "tool house" on the up side. At the time of track duplication in 1907, Emu Plains station could hold an eight car train in either platform, based on the use of "dog boxes" of about 50 feet in length. A platform length of 400 feet would accommodate virtually every local train in use and would suggest that patronage levels at Emu Plains were healthy because many stations were much shorter in length. Working out any local connection with such a plan to increase the platform lengths seemed futile. From other evidence, it is known that the NSW Railways was trying to introduce a new standard for platform lengths at 520 feet. The first known instance was at high Street in 1913 but other, earlier examples may have existed.

Very few NSW platform buildings have been substantially enlarged, let alone replaced. What is standard NSW Railway policy is to re-arrange the room designations and provide the busiest functions in the largest available spaces. This is what happened at Emu Plains. By 1925, the Ladies' Waiting Room had been eliminated and converted into the General Waiting Room, which it remained in that location until 1974. The former General Waiting Room then became the Booking Office. A Cloak Room assumed the space of the first booking Office. Two new buildings appeared on the down platform, both on the down side of the building. The first was a signal box measuring 12 feet two and a half inches long and eight feet two inches wide, which was located not far from the end of the main building. The second building was a Lamp Room measuring six feet eight and a half inches square. It is noteworthy that these and all additional structures built at the station were located on the down side of the main building, thereby not devaluing the visual interpretation of the 1882 by train passengers

[25] There is a possibility that "506" is an error and should have been 560 feet on the plan.

from Sydney. Member, Nev. Pollard advises that, in 1929, the kitchen was relocated from the ground to the first floor but it was relocated back to the ground floor in 1982.

In this period, interesting developments occurred that started to change the land use of the area around the Nepean River. The Department of Railways proposed the construction of a station on the immediate western bank of the River in 1937. It consisted of two parallel platforms each to the standard length of 520 feet. The only structures on the platforms where ticket collector's cabins. The station was aimed to provide access to the west side of the Nepean River for the annual rowing regatta. In 1940, the Department opened a short, timber platform on the eastern side to facilitate access to the nearby Log Cabin Hotel. Emu Plains station was involved in this new function recreational function because it provided easier access to the River than did Penrith station, especially for people coming from the Blue Mountains.

Of all the projects the Department of Railways promised to start and started in world War Two, not one was finished by the end of the War in 1945. One of those projects that was approved but not carried out was a plan in 1944 to extend both platforms to 600 feet long and raised to a height of three feet two inches, the then standard height. The down platform was to be cut back and rebuilt in brick with a small cantilevered coping. The distance between the coping and the track centre was to be increased from five feet three and a quarter inches to five feet seven inches. The up platform was to be raised five inches and the distance to track centre was to be increased from five feet one inch to five feet seven inches. On the down platform, it would seem that the original timber picket fence was to be replaced at this time by a two-rail timber fence. This work was not done.

In 1955 at the down end of the down platform there was a combined new Booking Office and signal box as well as an equipment, which was possibly planned to house the electrical equipment for the. There was some unknown building, possibly the goods shed as it had a rear platform, in this position since at least 1911. This was the third location for the station Booking Office. The Signals and Telegraph Branch was fond of providing terracotta tiles for the roofs of some of its structures, no matter how functional and pedestrian these sheds were. However, something extremely unusual was done at Emu Plains. The roof of the new building had tiles but they were concrete rather than terracotta. This was the only known instance of the application of concrete tiles on a platform building. Unlike terracotta tiles, the concrete tiles were flat. The building walls were formed by two products. Up to the window sill level, horizontal weatherboards were applied. Above that height Fibro sheeting was used. This combination had been very popular from 1955 but mainly for yard offices, meal rooms and other functional structures. The example at Emu Plains was the third last built, the last examples being approved in 1956 for utilitarian structures at Enfield and Cooks River. After that time, the Department of Railways reverted to the use of weatherboards and omitted Fibro

sheeting for external walls. A photograph of the combined Booking Office/signal box is in D.R. Keenan and H. R. Clark, *First Stop Central*, Sydney, AETA, 1963, p. 43. A photograph of the extended platforms at the up end is in S. E. Doran and R. G. Henderson, *The Electric Railways of NSW*, Sydney, AETA, 1976, p. 55. It also shows the white, two-rail timber fences built at the rear of the platforms.

Local resident, Nev Pollard, recalls using the down platform in 1955. He writes: "catching the train before the coming of electrification in 1956 was something special. To reach the platform, passengers had to climb an elegant, cantilevered, sandstone staircase, now covered with green moss and enclosed by a steel fence, to reach the waiting room and booking office".[26] There is a photograph in M. Morahan, *Early Diesel and Electric locomotives of the NSWGR*, Burwood, RTM, 1997, p. 28 on the down platform in the early 1950s. It shows the faceted bay window of the Sydney end of the down platform building, the 1944 replacement, two-rail fencing, shrubbery on the platform and a water tank taking rainwater from the roof. The platforms are surfaced with Locksley granite on the platforms and p. 45 shows the other end of the down platform building and the reverse skillion roofed waiting shed on the down platform in 1954 and skillion roofed waiting shed on the up platform

1956-1971 - ELECTRIFICATION

Overhead wiring for the Goods Siding was declared 'live' on 19th May 1955 as part of the ongoing installation of the overhead to Bowenfels, while on the 1st February 1956 the lines through the platforms were slewed for the impending electrification. On 5th July the same year, an isolating switch was provided for the Goods Siding, to be utilised whenever any loading or unloading was taking place thereon. This switch was unlocked by a key obtained from No.16 lever in the signal box.

On 18th October 1956, Penrith was resignalled and controlled from a relay interlocking panel which is still in use today. As part of this work, Penrith West Box was abolished and the block section Penrith West to Emu Plains was converted to Track Block (on the Down Main) and Automatic Signalling (on the Up Main). Double light colour light signals were in use, and the Emu Plains Down Accept (this was also Penrith's Down Starting) and Down Home signals as well as its Up Starting signal were of this format for a short time. The remaining mechanical signals at Emu Plains were retained.

This block section had, since 1935, been the only such section between Sydney and Valley Heights, and in the following two years the remaining block working across the mountains was also abolished. Following completion of this work, the first block section encountered on the West was Wallerawang West to Rydal.

[26] N. Pollard, *Exploring the Castle*, unpublished paper, 18/1/2011

Because it was anticipated that wide suburban electric rolling stock would operate to Emu Plains, if only on Regatta days, a 'Wide Electric Rolling Stock Must Not Pass This Point' sign was provided a couple of train lengths west of Emu Plains station. Train stops were also provided at the Down Home and Up Starting signals, but these were removed on 19th November 1957.

In 1958, both platforms were extended from 400 to 600 feet in length, while on 10th September 1958, the fixed train stop at the Down Starting signal was removed. This was undoubtedly provided to deter wayward suburban trains from making a run for Glenbrook, but would have also deterred the single deck interurban trains that were by then being introduced.

On 7th February 1959, automatic upper quadrant signals in the Emu Plains to Glenbrook section were converted to single light indication. This conversion included the Emu Plains Down Starting and Up Home signals.

Finally, on the 17th March, 1959, Emu Plains was closed as a signal box, having served as such for some 63 years, 52 of which were as an interlocked station. At the same time, the double light colour light signals between Penrith and Emu Plains were converted to single light indication, the western end main lines crossing was removed, and automatic Type 'F' booms and bells were provided at Old Bathurst Road level crossing. The eastern end main crossing and the siding points were connected to single levers 'B' and 'C' respectively and were released from Penrith Box.

Because Emu Plains station was the terminus of the first section of electrification beyond Penrith, it became a very popular location at which to photograph the special regatta electric trains in the Emu Plains down platform as they operated only on the one day of the year. These trains demonstrated the recreational role the station played at this time. Both platforms were extended to 600 feet as a part of the electrification project. There is a photograph in J. Sargent (Ed.), *Memories*, Studfield, Train Hobby Publications, 2003, p. 15 which shows the sloping 1884 platform wall on the down platform. It also shows the recently completed extension of the down platform at the up end using an old rail frame and similar work at the up end of the up platform. Of interest, is the painting of some but not all of the externals of the 1882 building using the traditional NSW palette of stone hues. Sometime in the 1950s or 1960s, the 1882 building was painted entirely white including all joinery and face brickwork. This was done as part of a system-wide policy to modernise platform buildings. It was initiated to improve the appearance of platform structures for the tour by Queen Elizabeth II in 1954. The white paint was removed in the 1990s and the original face bricks were left exposed.

Apart from the extension of the platforms in 1958, the original, timber waiting shed on the up platform was demolished. In its stead, a pre-cast, open-fronted concrete bus shelter was delivered and erected on the platform. There was no increase in the amount of shelter or seating provided by the new structure when compared to the 1907 building. It had angular sides and reverse skillion roof and was exactly the same style as bus shelters along the Great Western Highway, some of which survive today. This concrete shelter was removed in 1980 by crane as a single unit.

In 1962, a new station was opened at Lapstone. The Department of Railways desired to have an island platform but, since a property development company was paying for the capital cost of the facility, two side platforms were built. They were half the cost of an island platform. Lapstone station was built to serve the emerging role of the area as a residential rather than recreational. With the opening of Lapstone station, Emu Plains became the only station in NSW in the 20th century to have new stations opened on each side of it. Moreover, the roles of the two new stations were different, Log cabin being a recreational facility and Lapstone being a residential station. With Emu Plains initial role as a symbol of the Blue Mountains railway, the three stations represented a composition found nowhere else on the NSW rail system. There were three consecutive stations with three different functions.

In 1964, the very small loading stage located in the goods siding was demolished.

1972-1988 – THE P.T.C. AND S.R.A. PERIOD

In the 1970s, land prices in the greater Sydney area sky-rocketed. Between 1971 and 1974, the average price of building allotments rose by 80%.[27] This stimulated interest in Emu Plains as a place to build a new house and home. Interest in Western Sydney was further stimulated in 1976 when the newly-elected Wran Government established a Land Commission and started releasing allotments in the St. Marys and Penrith areas. This new development brought Emu Plains to the start of a new, primary role as a commuter station. More people equaled more demands for improved station facilities.

Graham Harper notes that, during the 1970s and 1980s, more and more suburban trains started terminating at Emu Plains. In one timetable, more than 25 trains a day were turned around at Emu Plains through the crossover controlled from Lever 'B', generally with the assistance of a safeworking station assistant who spent basically the entire shift at the points. The SWASAs were not flamboyant in their use of point clips.

He adds that, during the 1980s an emergency facing crossover was installed at Emu Plains to facilitate single line working in conjunction with Blue Mountains track

[27] P. Spearitt, *Sydney Since the Twenties*, Neutral Bay, Hale and Iremonger, 1978, p. 107

upgrading. This was operated from a three lever ground frame ‘D’ and unlocked by key from a nearby releasing switch.

In 1972, a ramp was built to reach the down platform at the up end of the building on the up platform. Was this was a sign of more customers parking their road vehicles behind the down platform? It was hard to see what advantage this produced for customers at the time. It was more likely done to assist either staff or for work that was in the wind. However, today, with the provision of the commuter car park, it now provides a second egress from the down platform for tired commuters wanting to terminate their homeward train experience as quickly as possible. The area was landscaped in 1990 and retains its 1990 CityRail signage.

In 1974, the Public Transport Commission started to remove the original fireplaces and other original, internal features in the 1882 building.[28] New male and female toilets were built in the spaces formerly occupied by the General and Ladies’ Waiting Rooms under the policy of toilet “modernisation”. The station and residence were connected to the local sewerage system. New products began to be used. Hardiflex 19 mm thick sheets were used over timber stud s for the walls. Ceramic floor tiles were laid. A steel wall plate was installed for the stability of the structure. Pedestal pans with “Fibrolite concealed cisterns” were installed. One of the most interesting additions was the installation of a 500 mm by 400 mm Clarke stainless steel hand basin in the male toilet. The concept of men washing their hands on departure from the toilet was unthinkable before 1970. In that year, a policy was implemented that dictated hand basins in all male toilets which were being upgraded. Cumnock and Greta stations were the first to be fitted. The new toilets at Emu Plains had a very short life and had been replaced by 1978. Clearly, the toilets, although modern by 1974 standards, were not sufficiently modern by 1978.

Further improvements were planned in 1977. The major initiative that reflected the growing role of the station as a commuter facility was the approval of a much larger waiting shed on the up platform. It was double the size of the previous two structures. It was the third waiting shed on the platform and was the third, different building material. The 1907 shed had been timber, the 1857 shed was mass concrete and the 1977 building was face brick. The design features of the building were:

- 8100 mm x 3000 mm single skin of bricks with engaged piers at intervals of 1436mm
- Two openings at front each 1570 mm wide

[28] Nev. Pollard reports that two original fireplaces survive.

- Near-flat roof sloping to the rear with awnings on all side - roof is “Brownbuilt 505” roofing iron and Brownbuilt gutter
- 2400 mm ceiling at rear and 2550 at front
- patterned concrete blocks for windows at sides
- Hardiflex or Panelrib sheeting for the fascia
- positioned on a re-inforced concrete slab on 0.75mm Bondek – floor level 150mm above platform level
- built in 1979

Interestingly, the structure was not built to the approved plan. It was intended to have a brick wall between two, wide openings. This brick wall on the rail elevation was omitted so that the structure was completely open at the front.

By 1978, the Public Transport Commission decided to alter all the work it had done in 1974. The General Waiting Room on the down platform occupied the space of the former Ladies’ Waiting Room and single occupancy separate male and female toilets were located next to it, making the third location for both male and female toilets. In that year, the combined Station Master’s office and the Booking Office in the 1955 building were air-conditioned at the down end of the down platform. This was part of a system wide policy introduced in 1975 by the Public Transport Commission to provide improved working conditions for staff.

In 1982, the Station Master vacated the residential part of the building and it was never again used by the NSW Railways. Almost immediately, Marist Brothers signed a lease for that part of the building as a refuge for boys. At that time, the basement had only three usable rooms – a kitchen, a dining room and laundry. The area under the original General and Ladies’ Waiting Rooms was still vacant with rough walls and a rough floor. The floor above was supported by a brick archway, as indicated on the 1882 plan. The rooms that had been sealed since 1885 were opened up and provided with further cement floors. Fibro sheets had to be added to the walls because of the dampness that was seeping through the walls, especially on the track side. The Marist Brothers named the refuge as “The Siding”. It is unknown when the Marist Brothers vacated the premises.

In 1985, a new awning was approved at down end of down platform at top of the ramp. It was 24000 mm long x 3380 mm wide and made of “Spandek Hi-ten (Zincalum)” roof covering. In that year, there were three open-fronted waiting sheds on the up platform. Two new concrete shelters had been added, one each side of the 1980 brick waiting shed. They were similar to the 1957 bus shed that was removed in 1980. These measures were showing a growing commuter function for the station.

1989 TO DATE - THE CITYRAIL PERIOD

Shortly after the establishment of CityRail, Geoff Wannan, the then General Manager North/West, acted to relocate the Booking Office from its 1955 building back into the 1882 building. At that time, the 1955 building was demolished. Two new ticket windows were inserted in the wall facing the track and the Office was air-conditioned. The ticket windows were the then standard 900mm wide and there were new ticket racks and steel security “doors” over ticket windows. It is thought that the original Ajax safe is still in use in the Booking Office. A sink unit and drinking fountain were provided for staff. A new store room occupied the space of the original Porters’ Room. All rooms had vinyl floor covering.

Graham Harper describes the most recent changes to signalling at Emu Plains. He indicates that, on 3rd July 1995, the final changes to Emu Plains signalling were made. On that date, the facing and trailing crossovers were connected to the signal box at Penrith, and provision was made for Down trains to terminate at and start from either platform. The abolition of the level crossing some years earlier had already dispensed with the problem of getting the gates to rise while a train was standing a few yards from the crossing and potential problems with trains arriving in the Down direction on the Up road. At this time, the signals were converted, for the second time, to double light colour light, replacing the 1956 signal light indication.

Additional signals were provided and the controls were integrated into the panel at Penrith signal box. For the first time since closure of Emu Plains signal box, a Down Starting signal with train stop was reinstituted and could be held at ‘stop’ to remind a driver that he was actually terminating and not going on. Fixed red lights facing Down trains at the western end of the Up platform together with a train stop made it impossible for a forgetful driver to head west on the wrong running line.

A four lever ground frame was supposed to operate the points leading to the gravel and goods sidings, together with appropriate shunt signals, but it is doubtful whether installation of the signals in particular was ever completed; the gravel trains ceased operation around the time of resignalling. As an afterword, the last traces of the northern extending goods sidings of 1896 were disenfranchised at the same time.

Internal access between the station offices and the residence was bricked up at this time. There was a new station entrance at up end of the down platform. For the first time in decades, the NSW Railways used gardens to enhance the appearance of stations but, later in the 1990s, CityRail policy moved away from gardens on platforms as they provided hidi-holes for miscreants. While plants on platforms was a no-no, landscaping off platforms was a popular initiative of the first half of the 1990s. there is evidence of this on the up side of the station where three instances remain of logs used

to display the name and then logo of CityRail and the new concept of decentralised line management, with Emu Plains having the identity of being on the “North/West line”.

At the same time, the platform canopy frames, the shelters on the up platform and seats were painted red, in accordance with the policy of the then Chief Executive, Ross Sayers. Planning was also under way for a pedestrian bridge at the Bathurst end of the station and a pre-stressed, concrete beam bridge was erected in 1990. Extensive and visually confusing ramping was necessary on the up side to reach the platform. Was the footbridge necessary since a road underpass had been previously in use to provide platform access? Not only was its construction questionable, it created discrimination against people in wheelchairs who had to continue using the subway. In 1996, the then standard “work station” was fitted into the down platform Booking Office. In 2000, CCTV was installed for the first time. At some unknown time in the 1990s, a fake, brick shelter was erected at the down end of the up platform to protect the ticket vending machine.

CityRail now had to solve a problem it had created that discriminated between able-bodied commuters and those not so fortunate. In 2009, CityRail announced the opening of Easy Access lifts, as well as a new family-accessible toilet, platform extensions with textured, tactile indicators on the edges of the platforms, new canopies, anti-throw shields on the deck of the footbridge, new lighting, the extension of the CCTV and the refurbishment of the Booking Office. The most visually dominant feature of the work is the addition of lifts to the existing footbridge. Unfortunately, yellow paint was used to provide some ocular stimulation but, as is evident on the front of “M” car sets, yellow is a pigment that does not sustain its appeal the medium term. The other point of note is that the arrangement of the lifts suggest a low-cost initiative. Both platforms are elevated when compared to their adjoining streets and required ramps when the footbridge was constructed. The ramping on the up side is particularly “busy”, meaning that the ramps present an unpleasant array of galvanized steelwork that complicate the visual interpretation of the station at that point. A more thorough and better looking application of the Easy Access Programme would have been to remove the existing ramping and extend the lifts to also street level.

The three detached waiting sheds on the up platform were demolished. By this time (2009) in the history of the station, three buildings on each platform had been erected and demolished. 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 96 stations, or 31% of all CityRail stations, have been demolished and replaced by simple platform canopies. At many of the 96 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 up platform at Emu Plains. Of note is the

absence of an accessible toilet for disabled commuters. Instead, both the separate male and female toilets have been modified for handicapped use.

At the rear of both platforms, standard loop-top swimming pool style fencing was erected. The fence had has two features. Firstly, it is two metres in height. While CityRail has been using loop-top fencing since 1989, the height for the first five years was 1.8 metres. In the years since 1995, the height has been two metres. In this way, the present fencing shows that it is a product of the late CityRail period. The second feature of the fence is that it is painted green and not the standard white. CityRail uses green colour exclusively in sensitive areas, the word ”sensitive” applying not only to the landscape but also local residents. By choosing green, CityRail is acknowledging that it is aware of local factors, such pristine vegetation, an active local commuter lobby or both. CityRail would have been well aware that most of the stations and boundary fencing on the Blue Mountains had green coloured fencing. Yes, even the colour of fencing is a marker of the status of local political influence. Contrast Emu Plains with the ugliness of the fencing at Werrington and Kingswood, where both stations have a mixture of white, black and cream coloured fencing – but no green. By choosing green at Emu Plains, CityRail was acknowledging the link to the Blue Mountains, just as George Cowdery had done in 1882 or was it merely a case of pleasing the local rail users? No matter what, the green colour indicates the special status of Emu Plains station.

In 2011, RailCorp was planning to build a new train stabling yard at Emu Plains but not planning to do so in 2012. Now, it is proposed to add a terminal road on the up side of emu Plains station, converting the up side platform into an island platform. Why now when trains have been standing on the main lines for decades? Perhaps because Gladys Berejiklian, the Minister for Transport, has identified Emu Plains station the western terminus for her new bureaucracy, Sydney Trains.[29] Then again, perhaps not. The history of railway management in NSW is one in which there is a high degree of whim and organisational self interest.

These notes could not have been prepared without the enormous help of Graham Harper. Dr. Bob Taaffe and Nev Pollard have also provided valuable input. Their assistance is greatly appreciated and acknowledged.

Stuart Sharp

28th June, 2012

[29] Minister for Transport, Press Release “*Fixing the Trains*”, 15th May, 2012

APPENDIX

BUILDINGS ERECTED ON DUPLICATION OF TRUNK, SINGLE LINES 1890-1920

YEAR OF LINE DUPLICATION	LOCATION	BUILDING MATERIAL	ROOF DESIGN	SIZE & WHETHER THE STRUCTURE MATCHES OR NOT MATCHES THE OPPOSITE PLATFORM BUILDING
1890	Loftus	Timber	Skillion roof	One room 15’ x 12’ – non matching
1890	Engadine	Timber	Skillion roof, pitched away from track	One room – non matching
1890	Heathcote	Timber	Skillon roof	One room – non matching
1890	Waterfall	Timber	Design unknown	NA
1891	Glenfield	Timber	Skillon roof	One room – non matching
1891	Menangle	Timber	Skillion roof, pitched away from track	One room – non matching
1891	Lithgow	Timber	Gabled roof without awning	One room – non matching
1891	Bowenfels	Timber	Curved roof	One room – non matching
1891	Cockle Creek	Timber	Gabled roof	Three rooms – standard roadside design – non matching
	Broadmeadow			
1891	Adamstown	Timber	Extended roof rafters	One room – non matching
1892	Macquarie Fields	Timber	Skillion roof	One room – original building design unknown
1892	Minto	Timber	Skillion roof	One room – original building design unknown
1892	Leumeah	Timber	Skillion roof	One room - original building design

YEAR OF LINE DUPLICATION	LOCATION	BUILDING MATERIAL	ROOF DESIGN	SIZE & WHETHER THE STRUCTURE MATCHES OR NOT MATCHES THE OPPOSITE PLATFORM BUILDING
				unknown
1892	Campbelltown	Brick	Gabled roof	Three rooms – standard roadside design – non matching
1892	Douglas Park	Timber	Skillion roof	One room –matching
1892	Picton	Timber	Gabled roof	two rooms 21’ x 12’ – non matching
1902	Glenbrook New site	Brick	Gabled roof	New 75’ long building on an island platform
1902	Springwood	Brick	Complex roofscape	Existing building converted for use on an island platform
1902	Linden	Brick	Gabled roof	New 75’ long building on an island platform
1902	Woodford	Brick	Gabled roof	New 75’ long building on an island platform
1902	Lawson	Brick	Gabled roof	New 75’ long building on an island platform
1902	Wentworth Falls	Brick	Gabled roof	Existing building converted for use on an island platform
1902	Medlow Bath	Brick	Gabled roof	New building on island platform
1902	Blackheath	NA	NA	Conversion of existing building into island platforms structure
1907	Emu Plains	timber	Timber, skillion roof	16’ x 12’ – non matching
1908	Mount Ku-ring-gai	Brick	Gabled roof	New building on island platform
1909	Cowan	timber	skillion roof	16’ x 12’ – matching
1909	Hawkesbury River	Brick	Gabled roof	New building on island platform
1910	Woy Woy	Brick	Gabled roof	New building on island platform
1910	Morisset	Timber	Skillion roff	One room – non matching
1910	Dora Creek	Timber	Gabled roof	Three rooms- non-matching

YEAR OF LINE DUPLICATION	LOCATION	BUILDING MATERIAL	ROOF DESIGN	SIZE & WHETHER THE STRUCTURE MATCHES OR NOT MATCHES THE OPPOSITE PLATFORM BUILDING
1910	Awaba	Timber	Skillion roof	One room – non matching
1910	Fassifern	Timber	Skillion roof	One room - Non matching – new brick building on opposite platform
1910	Teralba	Timber	Gabled roof with rafters extended for awning	Two rooms – non matching
1910	Mount Victoria	Brick	Gabled roof	Large RRR building
1910	Hartley Vale	NA	NA	Existing timber building converted into an island platform structure
1910	Clarence New site	Timber	Skillion roof	Matching buildings
1910	Zig Zag	No building	NA	Work starts in April, 1908 to replace Zig Zag
1911	Bell	Brick	Gabled	New building on island platform
1911	Newness Junction New site	Timber	Skillion roof	Two rooms – both platform buildings of the same design
1911	Niagara Park	Timber	Gabled roof with extended rafters forming the awnings	Island platform – design of previous building unknown
1911	Ourimbah	Brick	Gabled roof	60’ long – non-matching timber building on opposite platform
1911	Wyee	Timber	Gabled roof	New building on an island platform
1912	Wyong	Brick	Gabled roof	New buildings on both platforms – matching
1912	Yarra	Timber	Gabled roof	Design of original building unknown
1912	Breadalbane	Timber	Gabled roof,	One room – non

YEAR OF LINE DUPLICATION	LOCATION	BUILDING MATERIAL	ROOF DESIGN	SIZE & WHETHER THE STRUCTURE MATCHES OR NOT MATCHES THE OPPOSITE PLATFORM BUILDING
			narrow awning style	matching
1912	Harden	NA	NA	Existing brick building converted into an island platform structure
1913	Towrang	Timber	Skillion roof	New buildings on both platforms – matching
1913	Cullerin	Timber	Skillion roof	One room – design of building on opposite platform unknown
1913	Goondah	Timber	Skillion roof	One room – non matching – relocated from Greta
1913	Bowning	Timber	Gabled roof	Two rooms 25’ x 12’ – non matching
1914	Carrick	Unknown	Unknown	NA
1914	Goulburn	Brick	Gabled roof	120’ brick building – non matching
1914	Fish River	Timber	Skillion roof	One room 15’ x 12’ – non matching building
1914	Oolong	Timber	Skillion roof	One room – design of original building unknown
1914	Jerrawa	Timber	Gabled roof	Existing building converted for use on island platform
1914	Coolalie New site	Timber	Gabled roof	One room - new, matching buildings erected
1914	Yass Junction	Brick	Gabled roof	150’ long RRR – non matching
1914	Farley	Timber	Skillion roof	One room – non matching
1914	Greta	Brick	Gabled roof	One room 15’ x 12’ – non matching
1914	Lochinvar	Brick	Gabled roof	Matching buildings on both platforms – one four rooms 83’

YEAR OF LINE DUPLICATION	LOCATION	BUILDING MATERIAL	ROOF DESIGN	SIZE & WHETHER THE STRUCTURE MATCHES OR NOT MATCHES THE OPPOSITE PLATFORM BUILDING
				long – the other one room 15' long
1914	Allandale – new site	Timber	Gable roof	One room - matches new building on opposite platform
1914	Lilyvale	Timber	Skillion roof	One room – no building on opposite side platform
1915	Branxton	Brick	Gabled roof	Three rooms – non matching
1915	Helensburgh	Brick	Gabled roof	New building on an island platform
1915	Otford	Timber	Gabled roof	One room – non matching
1915	Coal cliff	Unknown	Unknown	NA
1915	Scarborough	Brick	Gabled roof	New, matching buildings on both side platforms
1915	Coledale	Brick	Gabled roof	New building on an island platform
1915	Austinmer	Timber	Gabled roof	New, matching buildings on both platforms, one relocated from Clifton
1915	Thirroul	Timber	Gabled roof	Three rooms – non matching – building relocated from Scarborough
1915	Werai	Timber	Skillion roof	One room – unknown design of building on opposite platform
1915	Exeter	Timber	Skillion roof	One room 16' x 12' – matching
1915	Bundanoon	Timber	Gabled	One room – opposite platform altered to match duplication structure
1915	Tallong	Timber	Skillion roof	One room – non matching
1915	Marulan	Unknown	NA	NA
1915	Gunning	Timber	Gable roof	One room – non matching

YEAR OF LINE DUPLICATION	LOCATION	BUILDING MATERIAL	ROOF DESIGN	SIZE & WHETHER THE STRUCTURE MATCHES OR NOT MATCHES THE OPPOSITE PLATFORM BUILDING
1915	Illalong Creek New site	Timber	Gabled roof	Matching one room structures on both platforms
1915	Binalong New site	brick	Gabled roof	New building on an island platform
1915	Galong new site	brick	Gabled roof	One room - Matches opposite platform building
1915	Cunningar	Timber	Gabled roof	New island platform – 60’ long
1915	Nubba	Timber	Gabled roof	Existing structure converted into use on island platform
1915	Wallendbeen New site	Timber	Gabled roof	Matching four room buildings on each platform
1915	Wallerawang	Timber	Gabled roof	Two rooms 20’ x 12’ – non matching
1915	Rydal	Unknown	NA	NA
1916	Tarana	Timber	Gabled roof	One room 21’ x `2’ – non matching
1916	Gemalla	Timber	Skillion roof	One room – non matching
1916	Spring Hill	Timber	Skillion roof	Two rooms 30’ x 12’ – non matching
1916	Rocky Ponds New site	Timber	Skillion roof	One room – matching buildings on both platforms
1916	Corrimal	Timber	Gabled roof	Three rooms – 54’ long – non matching
1917	Bulli	Brick	Gabled roof	Four rooms – non matching
1918	Murrumburrah	Timber	Gabled roof	Three rooms – non matching
1919	Mittagong	Timber	Skillion roof	Two rooms – non matching
1919	Bowral	Brick	Gabled roof	Four rooms – non matching
1919	Stanwell Park	Timber	Gabled roof	New, matching buildings on both side platforms