

WELCOME TO BULLI THE BEAUTIFUL¹



So, this is beautiful Bulli! One new arrival in the past commented that he was sure Bulli was indeed beautiful, if only he could see the landscape through the steam engine smoke. Locomotive 3252 sits in the southbound platform with a typical passenger train bound for Port Kembla or Bomaderry. Note the cracks in the platform surface. Photograph No.218097 ARHS Collection, circa 1962. No details.

¹ This was the heading in an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 19th January 1889 and reprinted in the *Illawarra Mercury*, 22nd January 1889, p. 4. It was a reference to the bushland around Bulli Pass.

STATION ARCHITECTURE AT THE OPENING OF THE ILLAWARRA LINE

The Illawarra line through Bulli was opened initially as an isolated section between South Clifton and Wollongong on 21st June 1887. The press reported that “from Clifton to Wollongong the station buildings preceded the completion of that part of the railway very considerably, but southward to Kiama the reverse is the case”.² The section between South Clifton and Waterfall was opened on 3rd October 1888 and passenger trains operated between Bulli and Sydney from that date.

Throughout the 19th century generally, there were only small numbers of people living in villages and towns of any size in New South Wales. The New South Wales Railways station policy provided for the provision of stations only at established locations and, at those locations, the Railway Department would allocate at least one staff member. One room, unattended waiting sheds were not provided at the time of line openings up to 1890. There is nothing like a Depression, as in the 1890s, to stimulate a staff review and to lower staffing levels. Even before 1890, what was the point of providing simple waiting sheds at small, rural locations for zero potential passengers? This occasionally did occur, but it was by far the exception. Politics was usually at play in those cases. Only after line openings occurred did the Railways provide unattended station facilities as policy.

The pattern of station buildings on the Illawarra line between Waterfall and Wollongong was consistent with the foregoing pattern. All stations were staffed at the time of line opening. A small timber waiting shed was provided at Austinmer not long after line opening and this provision of a very small shed was consistent with the overall pattern of station buildings at the time.

By the middle of the 1880s, the New South Wales Government realised that a financial crisis was looming and, in 1886, for the first time since the opening of the railway system in 1855, revenue from land sales did not cover the colonial budget, including the construction of new lines. It was the first time the budget was in deficit and it was against that financial background that the buildings for the Illawarra line were planned. The first decision made by the New South Wales Railways was to minimise the number of brick buildings and, south of Waterfall, the only brick buildings at the time of line opening were built at Helensburgh, Wollongong and Kiama. Brick buildings were provided for one of four reasons, these being:

- the importance of the centre to be served (as at Wollongong),
- the significance of local industry (as at Helensburgh),
- the influence of a prominent, local identity (as at Helensburgh), or

² *Illawarra Mercury*, 24th September 1887, p. 2.

- for the railway administration (as at Werris Creek and Junee).

Helensburgh received a second class brick building because of the local coal mine and the number of politicians who owned land in the area and held mining shares. Wollongong and Kiama were important sea ports.

All other stations on the Illawarra line received timber buildings of one of two standard designs and they are easily divided into either large buildings or small buildings. These are discussed separately.

1. LARGE BUILDINGS – THE STANDARD ROADSIDE STATION DESIGN



The timber building on the southbound platform on 26th December 1977. The brick privacy screen protects the entry to the male toilet. The steel mesh fencing was typical of the 1960s and 1970s.

The Engineer-in-Chief for Railway Construction, John Whitton, got his first opportunity to implement his notion of a railway station building when he planned for the provision of a building for Campbelltown in 1859. Although the quasi-Georgian design of that structure was different to that provided on the Illawarra line, he did introduce what would become standard design features used throughout his tenure over the next 30 years. In particular, he introduced:

- purity of design origins (not a mixture of, for instance, Gothic and Italianate styles),
- the concept of symmetrical presentation,
- the preference for single-storey construction positioned at ground level,
- posted platform awnings,
- floor plans based on a transverse arrangement utilising a centre pedestrian entry,
- expression of rigid application of room types with segregated waiting accommodation for women and the general public,
- restriction of the designation of rooms to waiting rooms, a booking office, lamp room and toilets,
- standard room dimensions,

- modest overall size,
- treatment of women as a special group in society, reflected by the protection of their toilets by an antechamber (i.e. the ladies' waiting room), the use of movable furniture in their waiting room, the provision of a wall mirror and a hand washbasins and feminine colours on the internal walls,
- restrained addition of decorations,
- enhanced identification of the pedestrian entry point, including extension of the building wall proud of the main structure; use of transverse gables; the insertion of symmetrically placed windows either side of the entry doors and the addition of porches,
- use of concealed downpipes to capture rainwater in an underground tank,
- the ability of enhancement and refinement of the design depending on the status of the urban centre served,
- use of the British style of narrow ticket window with a small, circular opening for oral communication, &
- position of the ticket window facing into the general waiting room.

Between 1874 and 1880, Whitton was experimenting with a number of options to provide cheaper platform buildings than what had he had been approving from 1859. In 1880, he struck out with what would later be known as the standard roadside station design. The major visual change was his abandonment of the quasi-Georgian style and his adoption of a Gothic-influenced style. This involved the abandonment of hipped roofs and the introduction of medium-pitched, gabled roofs. It is the view of some commentators that this Gothic-influenced style was the only design of station building which Whitton personally developed. In all other cases, it was Whitton's subordinates who undertook the design task. The Gothic-influenced style was consistent with his use of Gothic features for gatehouses. Once again, Whitton had chosen to use a single design school rather than mixing one style with another, though there was an occasional exception, as at Tenterfield. Other design features of the standard roadside station design included:

- application of suites of buildings, using one main building and one or two pavilions, rather than a single structure,
- employment of detached and semi-detached pavilions with gabled roofs transverse to the roof of the main structure,
- the ability of the design to be expressed in sandstone, brickwork or timber,
- decoration restricted to finials on gables and cast ironwork, which was restricted to brackets and awning valences,
- the capacity for design enhancement through the optional addition of transverse gables and/or porches at the pedestrian entry, and internal variations in the selection of materials surrounding fireplaces and ceiling fabric.

As well as the above characteristics, all the features listed for inclusion on the Campbelltown building of 1859 continued to be utilised in the standard roadside design, including Bulli.

A less important location would receive one pavilion and a more important location two pavilions. The more important a location, the more likely an example would feature a general waiting room wall on the roadside of the main building proud of the overall building wall, a porch entry and the application of a centre-located transverse gable on one or both sides of the roof. For example, the structure provided at Bulli was an example of the standard roadside design but incorporated both a porch entry and a transverse, centre gable on only the road side of the roof. Additionally, two pavilions were provided enhancing the appearance of the station by the expression of a symmetrical composition. An additional feature sometimes utilised to enhance the status of the location was the siting of the Station Master's residence at one side of the station forecourt. That was not done in the case of Bulli. Standard roadside designs were also provided at South Clifton, Corrimal, Wollongong and Dapto.

2. SMALL BUILDINGS – THE AWNINGLESS BUILDINGS

The small type of building was stripped of most of the features of its large cousin. To address the urgent financial crisis in the mid-1880s, the Railway Department accelerated the use of a relatively new design of timber structure that had been introduced in 1885 and continued to use it in 1886, 1887 and 1888. In accordance with the prevailing policy, the structure had a gabled roof, but the following features reflected the tightness of funds:

- absence of platform awning,
- absence of waiting accommodation exclusively for women,
- absence of finials on gables,
- elimination of brick chimneys for heating of ticket office,
- erection of above-ground rainwater tank (as opposed to an underground tank),
- absence of any cover over rainwater tank,
- replacement of picket fencing with three-rail fencing,
- removal of all decoration, except for an arched head using vertical boards above the entry to the open-fronted waiting area,
- elimination of female toilet in some examples – where female toilets were provided, the entry was from the general waiting room (i.e. there was no ante-chamber),
- use of corrugated iron sheeting for the female toilet, where provided, &
- location of the male toilet at one extreme end of the platform.

Such smaller, timber buildings without awnings were built at Thirroul, Corrimal, Unanderra, Albion Park and Bombo. It is unknown what was provided at Otford at the time of line opening. The same pattern of buildings also applied to the line extension

between Hornsby and Broadmeadow. On that section, not one brick station building was erected.



Bulli was going to receive one of two options for its station building at the time of line opening – large or small. It received the large version comprising a suite of three structures – a main, centre building which was flanked by a pavilion at each end set 20 feet from the main structure. In the above image, the original structure has been altered by the elimination of the pavilion at the southern (far) end and small additions to both ends. In 1916, the roof was extended from the main building to the north end (near) pavilion when the interlocking frame was replaced and covered. Note that the transverse gable located on the road side is not carried through to the rail side.



The above photograph of Bombo shows the small version of building erected between Waterfall and Kiama. The most obvious aspect is the omission of a platform awning. Moreover, construction of the female toilet with corrugated iron sheets for the wall reflects

cost-cutting significantly, as was the omission of an anti-chamber in front of the ladies' toilet. Photograph No. 026723c by G. Dornan on 22nd October 1984, ARHS collection.

THE ILLAWARRA LINE TODAY

Bulli is the only station on the Illawarra line which retains its building from the opening of the line and its duplication structure. It is also only one of two examples of the three-room, standard roadside station existing on the Illawarra line. The other being Dapto.³

Bulli is also one of five locations on the Illawarra line where the residence for the Station Master, dating from 1885, survives together with the original station building. The others are Dapto, Albion Park, Gerringong and Berry.

The Illawarra line contains the most surviving timber buildings of any line in New South Wales on a per kilometre basis. Timber platform structures survive at Penshurst, Oatley, Austinmer, Thirroul, Bulli, Dapto, Albion Park, the now-closed Shellharbour, Bombo and Berry. As well, timber overhead booking offices survive at Erskineville, Tempe, Arncliffe, Mortdale and Penshurst.

THE 1885 BULLI STATION BUILDING PLAN

There are two things to note about the plan for the Bulli station building. The first is the absence of the approval signature of the Engineer-in-Chief, John Whitton. From 1874, Whitton had been progressively regressing in his public profile and, from 1882, he decided never again to put his signature on a station plan. Why? It was not because of the conflict he endured in the Railway Bridges Commission because that occurred later in 1884 and 1885. Maybe he was just grumpy after losing his former mate, George Cowdrey, who had been appointed Engineer-in-Chief for Existing Lines on 14th March 1881. Thus, the only date on the Bulli plan is that of the successful contractor, Alex Scouller.

Tenders closed on 3rd November 1885 for the construction of station buildings at Clifton and Bulli.⁴ It was announced in the last week of November 1885, that Alex Scouller from Marrickville was the successful contractor for the erection of the station buildings at Clifton and Bulli.⁵ Scouller dated the plan 2nd December 1885. He built a large number of station buildings in all areas of New South Wales in the 1880s.

The second aspect of the plan worthy of note is its preparation well before the opening of the line. The draughtsman had completed the plan in April 1885 and it was ready for construction issue in November 1885. The station opened on 21st June 1887, giving the contractor 18 months to complete the structure. That long time was unheard of. In many cases, contracts for station buildings would be signed only one month prior

³ Albion Park looks like a standard road design, but it originally did not have a platform awning and was an example of the small version. Wollongong was an example of a five-room version.

⁴ *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 13th October 1885, No. 474, p. 6698.

⁵ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 21st November 1885, p. 42.

to a line opening. This was intentional as, when a line was declared open for traffic, any further expenditure came out of the budget of the Railway Commissioner, not Whitton's budget.

In quite a number of cases, the floor plan of a structure was reversed to that shown in the plan. That was the case at Bulli where there was an expression on the plan itself that the "position of buildings to be reversed". The three building composition was indeed built to the reverse of the plan.

The plan provided for a symmetrical layout based on a centre pedestrian entry. A porch was built at the front of the general waiting room on the road side and the entry point was further identified by the location above the porch of a transverse gable. At the end of 1886, Bulli was described as a "place of note and a coal-mining township of some importance". Indeed, the Bulli Coal Company had commenced working in 1861.⁶ The provision of the porch and the transverse gable were correct identifiers of a more important location, but the transverse gable was not carried through to the rail side. Bulli was important but not as important as Wollongong where the transverse cable was carried across the roof ridge and placed on both the road and rail elevations. Moreover, it was not sufficiently important for John Whitton to place the residence adjacent to the station forecourt, which would have been as equally as handy to the level crossing as its present position.

In the main, centre building, which measured 52 feet long, the ticket office was located on the northern side of the general waiting room and the ladies' waiting room was positioned on the southern side of the general waiting room. At each end of the main building were 20 feet long sheds covered in corrugated iron. They connected the main building to the pavilions. At the northern end was a lamp room 13 feet long and at the southern end were the male and female toilets. Entry to the female toilet was concealed through the use of an ante-chamber in the form of the ladies' waiting room. The main building was 14 feet wide, except for the general waiting room which was 17 feet wide. This additional width of the general waiting room was another feature which the Railways utilised to express a more important place. As the first point of entry, the general waiting room usually had a higher ceiling level than the other rooms and this was the case at Bulli where it was 11 feet high compared to the height elsewhere of 10 feet.

The building received a new corrugated iron roof and building repairs in 2009 and in 2017 minor works were carried out, such as the installation of finials on the gables. The building was repainted internally and externally at that time.

THE STATION DESIGN AS AT BULLI

⁶ J. Eardley, *Transporting the Black Diamond*, Canberra City, Traction Publications, 1968, p. 5.

The design of the station building was consistent with that of about 75 similar examples approved between 1880 and 1889. They came in two sizes – mini and standard – and Bull was an example of the standard variety.⁷

The design characteristics of this group of structures were:

- gabled roof of medium pitch,
- use of one or two detached/semi-detached pavilions,
- symmetrically placed rooms in the main structure centred on a general waiting room,
- posted platform awning,
- underground rainwater tank,
- brick chimneys,
- 12 foot wide platforms, extending to 15 feet wide in front of platform buildings.

Although the structure was expressed in timber, there were several important features to make it attractive to the community to be served. These were:

- overall symmetry,
- ornamental, cast-iron valence on porch entry,
- elegant, four panel entry doors in the porch,
- finials on all gables, &
- cast iron brackets above awning capitals.

It was in the details that Railway engineers modified the standard design to reflect the relative importance of the centre served. Those added at Bulli were:

- the porched entry,
- the use of the centre, transverse gable on the road approach, &
- the extension of the width of the general waiting room by three feet.

There were four options which the Railway engineers decided not to provide. These were:

- the extension of the centre, transverse gable to the rail elevation,
- the use of timber rather than cast-iron for the vertical awning posts,
- the use of three rail timber fencing rather than pickets to protect the rear of the platform (though it seems the Railway Department had a change of heart at some time and provided pickets), &
- the decision not to place the Station Master's residence adjacent to the station forecourt.

⁷ The mini version possessed the same design features though the rooms were of smaller dimensions.



This image shows the road approach to the station with the porched entry and the cast-iron work above the doors. Although it is not easy to interpret, the image shows the additional three feet of width of the general waiting room leading from the porch compared to the width of the remainder of the building. Those were additional touches as part of the original design to reflect that the Railway Department recognised that Bulli was a bit more important than the ordinary rural location. At the right-hand end of the building is a skillion-roofed addition. In a former life, it had been a part of the parcels office. The vegetation in front of the building is unauthentic and detracts from the heritage values of the site. It should be removed. The choice of paint colours, including the roof, is questionable.



Spot the changes between this 1980 photograph of the road elevation with the colour image taken in 2020.

THE LOCATION

The location of Bulli station did not please everyone, with the press saying:

“If the person who fixed the site for the Bulli railway station had been choosing it for himself, he would have taken care that he would not have caused it to face the westerly winds, as he did for other people. In fact, the whole station for

public convenience requires turning 'right about face' across the line to the northern side, where it should be. A platform is much needed at North Bulli, just where the locomotive cools its inner man. It would be a great convenience to many travellers. Woonona folk don't think it right to have to walk a mile to the Bulli railway station".⁸

CONSTRUCTION

In February 1886, the press reported that the Bulli railway station buildings "are progressing satisfactorily, the walls, which are of wood, being now partly erected. It would appear that the station buildings will be finished long before they are required".⁹

In December 1886, one observer at that time said that "Bulli will have a fine railway station and, when the line is opened for traffic, the place should go ahead rapidly".¹⁰

The station building was ready on the day of the line opening in 1887 – something that happened only about one quarter of the time.

The press reported in 1888 that "several lamps have recently been erected at the railway station, which prove a valuable public convenience. In consequence of this and other flourishing works, an impetus to business is already observable".¹¹

THE PLATFORMS

1 THE SOUTHBOUND PLATFORM

How long was the original platform? Two plans were issued in 1885 with one dated in April showing the platform as being 330 feet long and the other issued in December displaying a platform 264 feet long. Both lengths were frequently used. Platforms of 330 feet were provided 15 times between 1882 and 1885 while those of 264 feet during the same period numbered eight.

One aspect on which the April and December plans agreed was the platform width, which was 12 feet, extending to 15 feet in front of the station buildings. At each end of the platform were 15 feet long ramps. There were two pairs of entry gates, six part feet wide, to the platform and these were located on the diagonal sections where the platform widened to accommodate the buildings.

The platform wall was constructed of timber. At the rear of the platform, the platform height was three feet above the rail head and the platform was graded towards the rail where, at the coping, the platform height was two feet nine inches. Nowadays, it is taboo to drain platforms onto the tracks because it is contrary to the practice of keeping the track ballast as dry as possible to ensure stability. The platform surface was

⁸ *Illawarra Mercury*, 28th July 1887,

⁹ *Illawarra Mercury*, 16th February 1886, p. 2.

¹⁰ *Illawarra Mercury*, 21st December 1886, p. 2.

¹¹ *Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, 28th July 1888, p. 203.

originally covered with crushed granite. The platform wall was replaced by brickwork in 1919.

Picket fencing at the rear of the platform replaced the three-rail fencing expressed in the plan either upon construction or at an early time after the station opening. By 1912, the southern section of the platform featured pickets and, by 1916, pickets existed at the northern end of the platform buildings. In the early 1960s, the timber fencing was replaced by galvanised, roll-top steel wire fencing. Next, CityRail installed white coloured, pool top fencing in the early 1990s followed by Sydney Trains' organisational obsession to eliminate anything associated with CityRail by installing new, yellow-coloured acorn top fencing in 2012. That makes a total of five different forms of platform fencing. The change of paint from white to cream was not so much that Sydney Trains did not like white coloured fencing but that the white colour had been introduced by the Labor Government, which lost office in 2011.

In September 1890, the Railway Department provided a natural formed footpath from the level crossing at the north of the station to the station entrance and also asphalted part of the platform.¹² Again, Wollongong was a much more important location and its platform was asphalted in 1889, being the first station on the South Coast to have this improvement. Once the platforms were asphalted, the Department of Railways never repaired the bitumen surface. A photograph exists taken in 1964 of Bulli showing the pitifully poor state of the platform surfaces.¹³



This 1980 shows that the cracked northbound platform, observed in 1964, still had not been repaired. The goods shed is in the middle distance.

¹² *Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, 11th October 1890, p. 835.

¹³ R. K. Booth and R. D. Love, "South Coast in Steam", in *Byways of Steam 4*, Matraville, Eveleigh Press, 1992, p. 51.

The Bulli southbound platform was extended in 1902.

The platform and the existing buildings were raised in 1923 at the time of track duplication to the new standard height of three feet two inches at the coping – a rise of five inches. The platform was lengthened to 520 feet, which was the standard that had commenced widespread introduction from 1913.

The 1919 brick wall was replaced in 2012 by large, precast concrete panels.



The above photograph, courtesy of [pinterest.com.au](https://www.pinterest.com.au), shows the southbound platform before 1912 when there was only one main line. The craftsmanship and pride of work is reflected in the beauty of the station name board. The plan for the platform indicated that three-rail horizontal timber fencing would be provided but that may not have been the case and pickets either replaced the original idea of using three rail fencing either at the time of construction or shortly after the station opening. The poor condition of the paintwork on the pickets suggests that they had been constructed earlier rather than later. The building reflected the social norms of the time with the entry to the male toilet at the end of the structure well away from the entry to the female toilet from the platform. Additional security for women was provided by the use of the ladies' waiting room as an ante-chamber to the toilet. Note that the coping at the top of the platform wall is the original timber, which remained so until 1919 when it was replaced with brickwork.

2 THE NORTHBOUND PLATFORM

A plan was prepared in November 1916 for the provision of a new platform for northbound trains. The length was set at 520 feet; the height at three feet two inches and the width at 15 feet. The brick platform wall was vertical and it and the coping were formed by brickwork. There were standard ramps 15 feet long at each end. Both the five ton crane in the goods yard and the goods shed had to be relocated to

accommodate the new platform. They were moved a few hundred feet towards Wollongong.

Pedestrian access was provided to the northbound platform from two directions. Firstly, there was a ten feet wide footpath between the rear of the platform and the Station Master's house from Park Road and, secondly, from Railway Street at the rear of the platform. Access to the platform for parcels and out of s was provided by a cart stage between the proposed main building and the proposed out of shed to be built 20 feet from the southern end of the main building

Like the opposing platform, the brick wall was replaced in 2014 with large, precast concrete panels.



The above undated photograph shows the extensive use of picket fencing at the rear of the platforms. While its use on the southbound platform (on the right-hand side) was consistent with the 19th century, its application on the northbound platform in 1923 is not so characteristic of the time. Possibly, it was installed on the northbound platform to accord with the existing fencing on the opposite platform. By the 1920s, picket fencing was becoming fairly uncommon, though it did not stop the Railway Department issuing a new standard planned for picket fencing in 1930. As was often the case with standard plans, only one example was ever implemented after that time which accorded with the standard plan. Both platforms feature vertical brick walls, which no longer exist. On the southbound platform in approximately the middle of the photograph is the opening in the platform wall for the safeworking and signalling wires and rodding, which denote the location of the signal box. The building on the right-hand side with the arched roof was the lamp room. Very few buildings on the New South Wales railway system had such roofs and the primary period in which they were used, apart from toilets at Departmental residences, was between 1885 in 1890. Note that not many seats were provided on both platforms. By the white colour of the picket fencing, it appears that the timber building on the southbound platform is painted in the traditional, mid-stone colour. Photograph No.000420 ARHS, Collection Singleton Collection.



In 1923, the local community at Bulli got together and formed a group to beautify the area behind the northbound platform with shrubs and landscaping. From this undated image, it is clear that all the participants in that 1923 scheme have lost their interest in railway beautification or have died. The picket fencing has been replaced by cheaper, three-rail timber fencing and the gardens and vegetation, although on Railway property, are not maintained – another cost saving initiative. Although there is no date to this photograph, the evidence indicates that it was taken after 1950. What evidence? The station nameboard is not painted in the traditional colours of black and white. It is painted in less contrasting and more attractive hues, possibly with green or brown lettering, similar coloured borders and a cream background. The station nameboard at Corrimal had brown letters on a cream background with a green border. Black-and-white station name boards commenced to be abandoned in significant numbers in the second half of the 1950s. Photograph No.015033 ARHS, Skiller Collection.

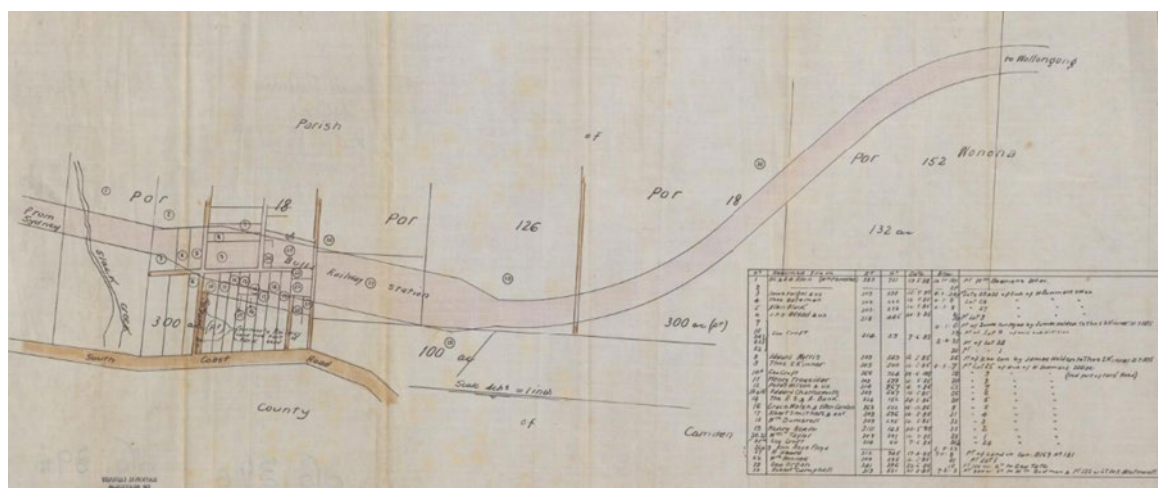
THE RAILWAY POST OFFICE

Alex Scouller, the contractor for the timber building on the southbound platform, also signed the plan for the post and telegraph office on 2nd December 1885. Four months after the line and station opened, the post and telegraph office opened at the station on 12th October 1887. It consisted of a single room, of timber construction measuring 14 feet by 14 feet. It was located at the immediate northern end of the lamp room. The odd thing is that the plan was prepared by the New South Wales Railways. While small, it was attractive with sunshades over two windows facing the road approach while finials were attached to the gables. Originally, it was intended to provide a brick chimney to serve the open hearth, but a note exists on the plan that that idea was “suspended”.



The above photograph in the single line days, probably before 1900, shows the expanded post office with the double-gabled roof and posted awning over the public entrance. The gabled section closer to the camera was relocated from Clifton in 1888 to Bulli. The original timber platform wall is visible, indicating that the photograph was taken before 1919 when it was replaced with brickwork. As constructed in 1885, the good shed was much closer to the platform but was relocated in a southerly direction as part of the project to provide a second platform for track duplication. There is no interlocking. Image No.023564 ARHS, N. J. Thorpe Collection. No date

The postal staff was transferred to the station from another existing post office in the township.¹⁴ The press wondered why the post office had been relocated to the station and hoped that it was not because the postmaster had recently built a new house adjacent to the station.¹⁵



This "working plan", courtesy of Trove, allegedly dated 1888 shows the proximity of the South Coast Road to the railway corridor at Bulli. Such plans were prepared usually in advance of

¹⁴ Sydney Morning Herald, 12th October 1887, p. 6. The Government Gazette of New South Wales, 11th October 1887, Issue 566, p. 6749 states that the post office was opened at the station on 5th October.

¹⁵ Illawarra Mercury, 16th July 1887, p. 2. P. 2.

the construction and it is probable that the plan is dated before 1885, when the station building plan was prepared. One wonders why it would be necessary to have one post office along the South Coast Road and another at the station, considering that the distance between the two was not excessive.

Towards the end of 1887, the Post-Master General received a deputation from Bulli residents who wanted another post office on the main road at the present Thirroul, despite there being two post offices in existence. The press reported:

“They (i.e. the residents) acknowledged the consideration shown by the Department (i.e. PMG) in opening an office at the railway station, as well as keeping on the old office in its present position; but (the residents) contend that the railway station was not an advantageous place, because it was dangerous for children to go there, and because the great bulk of postal and money order business is done in Bulli proper, near the site where the new building is asked for. This building (on the main road) would also serve a place called Robbinsville (now Thirroul), between Bulli and North Bulli. The postmaster is in favour of the office at the railway station because he lives near there”.¹⁶

The post and telegraph office on the railway platform was housed in a stand-alone timber building and, in 1888, it was “augmented by having the former railway post office at Clifton annexed thereto”.¹⁷ It had been built to the same design as the Bulli post office and was abutted to the existing structure, making it appear like a single building with a double-gabled roof.

In 1893, the local post offices were renamed. The one on the main road was changed from Bulli to North Bulli and the one on the platform was changed from Bulli Railway Post Office to Bulli.¹⁸ In 1896, the residents expressed the desire for a single post office to replace the then three post offices within a mile of each other. These were the ones on the main road, the one at the station and one at Woonona.¹⁹

It was not until 1911 that the railway post office was closed and a single post office provided in the main street of the town.²⁰

THE PROVISION OF THE SIGNAL BOX AND PARCELS OFFICE 1916

Dr Bob Taaffe wrote that, in 1916, the pullover levers at Bulli were replaced by a 20 lever interlocking frame located between the main building and the north end pavilion.²¹ In 1916, the Railway Department converted the 20 foot long yard between

¹⁶ *Illawarra Mercury*, 1st November 1887, p. 3.

¹⁷ *Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, 2nd June 1888, p. 1199.

¹⁸ *Illawarra Mercury*, 27th July 1893, p. 11.

¹⁹ *Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, 21st May 1896, p. 938.

²⁰ W. A. Bayley, *Black Diamonds – History of Bulli District*, New South Wales, Wollongong, Illawarra Historical Society, 2002, p. 64.

²¹ R. T. Taaffe, “Signal Boxes of the Illawarra Line”, *Byways of Steam 14*, Matraville, Eveleigh Press, 1998, p. 113.

the main building and the former lamp room at the northern end into a signal box by enclosing the interlocking frame with front and rear walls and a roof.



In the above image, ARHS Life Member, Gary Hughes, reveals different profiles on the weatherboards used on the modifications in 1916 to provide the signal box and the enlarged parcels office. Closer to the camera is the use of lapped boards while Gary's left-hand points to the application of rusticated weatherboards. The use of nonmatching materials is a feature of post-1890 Railway management where financial frugality was far more important than aesthetics. The safeworking and signalling interlocking frame was enclosed in 1916 during the First World War, which was a time of substantial funding shortages.

Dr Bob Taaffe indicates that the Railway Department initially intended to provide a stand-alone, timber signal box with a skillion roof but, some unknown genius realised expenditure could be avoided by merely providing to walls and a roof extension. Bob says that the proposed signal box that was to be allocated to Bulli was instead erected at Port Kembla North. The roof of the main section of the station building was extended northward to the north end pavilion. That work was undertaken by the Signals Branch. Dr Bob Taaffe, in his very extensive volumes on signal boxes, indicates that there was a possibility that a signal box was provided in about 1912 and closed in 1918 and then re-opened in 1923.²² His recent analysis indicates that the signal box was indeed built in 1916.²³ Bulli signal box closed on 19th October 1985 with the opening of the control centre at Wollongong.

²² R. T. Taaffe, *Signal Boxes of New South Wales Railways and Tramways*, Vol. 2, Taaffe Press, 2019, p.93.

²³ This corrects the stated opening year of 1923 stated in Vol. 2.



The above photograph is a charming composition of the southbound platform building after the provision of electrification in 1985. The then Chief Executive, David Hill, made a substantial effort to improve the appearance of many stations and one of his initiatives was the placement of shrubs in tubs on platforms. This involved minimal expenditure but diverted the gaze of idle eyes away from the lack of maintenance in many buildings. Plants had long been the option of choice to enhance the appearance of stations by the cash-strapped, Railway organisation. Plants were deemed to possess a certain portability. For example, plants were moved from station to station in 1954 for the visit by Queen Elizabeth II and again for the visit by Princess Alexandra in 1981. The red colour of the roof sheeting is more appropriate than the present colour. Two other authentic traits of New South Wales Railway practice are visible. The first is the colour green for the platform seats and the second is the fixed window awnings, which in this case denote the location of the signal box. In the days before mobile phones, a Telecom payphone is located on the platform. All the timber fencing has been replaced by rolltop, galvanised fencing. Photograph No.026690b ARHS Collection G. Dornan, 8th May 1992.



From this 1977 photograph, it is clear that the two windows in the north end, transverse pavilion were added by CityRail when it upgraded the structure.

At the same time as the infill construction occurred in 1916, the former lamp room at the north end was converted into a parcels and out of room. An extension nine feet long was constructed at the northern end to provide a public entry and public counter. It retained its brick floor. All old materials removed during the reconstruction were “to be reapplied”.

Bob Taaffe provides the following overall assessment of Bulli signal box

“Most of the signal boxes built in NSW were either stand-alone structures or in rooms within or attached to station buildings. In a few instances, the space between two buildings was filled to cover an existing interlocking machine. Normally, the available space was fairly narrow with no front wall. In at least three cases, a standard signal box front and back wall filled the space. In those three instances, Bulli did not look like a typical signal box whereas Nyngan and Narrabri, for example, did.

The only real signal box elements employed at Bulli were the sliding sash front window and the external door. Most likely, the Way and Works Branch constructed the structure as found at Bulli, with the Signal Branch supplying several elements. The signal box was probably placed out of use soon after it was opened and was then re-opened in 1923 at which time a new interlocking machine was installed.

With respect to the interlocking machines and layout, from 1923 it was typical of a double line block station. The machine was a standard New South Wales Railways tappet type”.²⁴

A photograph of the Bulli Coal Siding signal box in its original condition and showing the crossing of the private railway over the main line is in Bob Taaffe’s Volume 2, p. 92. A photograph of a coal train using the rail bridge over the main line linking Bulli Colliery is in *Steam on the Illawarra*.²⁵

²⁴ Email from Dr Bob Taaffe on 25th March 2020.

²⁵ F. Larkin, *Steam on the Illawarra*, Burwood, NSW RTM, 1979, no pag.



Bulli Coal Siding Box looks unwell, at least from its external appearance. Its bottom is dirty and it has lost its original top, having been replaced with Fibrolite. The concrete rainwater tank at left has seen many storms and appears to have a bad dribble. Little did Bulli Coal Siding Box know that its life would end four years after this photograph was taken. Photograph No.026691b ARHS Collection, G. Dornan, 1st October 1984.

A VERY BRIEF PERIOD OF FAME - THE FIRST TRAIN CONTROL CENTRE 1917

In almost every way, the infrastructure and operations at Bulli were of the normal everyday variety. Indeed, its conservation today is a reflection of the standard arrangements and workings of the New South Wales Railways. They are representative of what was normal and common throughout the entire railway system. There was one very important exception to that comment.

For a brief time, starting in April 1917 and continuing at least until the end of that year, Bulli leapt from the world of the typical to the sphere of the spectacularly important and completely abnormal and atypical. Why? Because it became the first place on the New South Wales railway system to operate a new method of train control known as “the Train Control System of Traffic Working”. It was the system whereby one officer controlled all train movements between Heathcote and Kiama rather than the then prevailing system where each Station Master would be responsible for the dispatch and arrival of trains between neighbouring stations. The train controller did not actually engage in the operation of signalling equipment to permit the running of trains but arranged paths, crossings etc to ensure the maximum track occupancy and efficiency and ensured that train crews did not exceed their hours on duty.

The in-house magazine, called the *New South Wales Railway and Tramway Magazine*, contained a three page article providing the following details in December 1917:

“Since the middle of April of this year a partial control scheme has been in operation. The control officers are located temporarily at Bulli, and the "control" business is being conducted on the existing circuits. These are crowded with ordinary business, and the system has had to be limited to the capacity of them, hence detail control is not possible at the present time”.²⁶

The evidence suggests that the train control centre was located in a stand-alone building occupied by a Traffic Inspector, which was located about 20 feet north of the north end pavilion.

This period of fame ended without fuss in the early months of 1918 and, once again, Bulli station returned to its humdrum existence of an everyday station.

The station lit was lit by electricity in May 1919, along with other stations as far north as Scarborough.²⁷ Maybe the electricity was connected as a recognition of its extraordinary fame in 1917? Maybe not.

TRACK DUPLICATION AND THE ADDITION OF A SECOND PLATFORM

In 1913, track duplication existed to the south of Bulli between Woonona and Bellambi and in 1916 to the north of Bulli between Thirroul and Bulli Coal Siding signal box. The Railway Department was planning to connect those two sections and a block plan was prepared on 8th November 1916 for the new northbound platform and building at Bulli.

Robert Kendall, the Chief Engineer for Existing Lines, approved the architectural plan for a new brick building for the northbound platform at Bulli on 2nd May 1917. This 1917 architectural plan accorded precisely with the 1916 block plan. In accordance with the dictum of the Existing Lines Branch, the alpha-numerical classification code used by the Railway Construction Branch was not applied to the Bulli building.

In May 1922, the press reported that a “big gang of men is now engaged on duplication and other railway works in the vicinity of Bulli Station”.²⁸

In early July, the press said:

“Extensive alterations, now in progress at Bulli railway station, are somewhat similar to those being carried out at Wollongong and, when both undertakings are completed, there should be a close similarity between these two railway centres. The outlay at both stations must mean an expenditure well over five figures”.²⁹

²⁶ *New South Wales Railway and Tramway Magazine*, December 1917, pp. 63-65. Thanks to Dr Bob Taaffe for bringing this article to attention.

²⁷ *South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus*, 2nd May 1919, p. 2. John Forsyth's notes state electricity was connected to the station on 28th April 1923.

²⁸ *South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus*, 12th May 1922, p. 14.

²⁹ *Illawarra Mercury*, 7th July 1922, p. 7.

In July 1922, the press stated:

“Good progress is being made with the extensive improvements at Bulli railway station”.³⁰

In August 1922, the press provided an update:

“The railway bridge at Bulli, which for years has carried the traffic to the station and Park Road, is being pulled down, and will be replaced by an iron bridge, large enough to permit of the double line underneath. Meanwhile, a temporary level crossing has been provided at the northern end of the platform. The erection of the new station is also being pushed on, while the goods shed has been removed to a site further south”.³¹



In 1980, the goods shed remained but was used for some other task than the inter modal transfer of freight. This photograph looks north towards the station.

In October 1922, the press reported that:

“The new railway station at Bulli is fast nearing completion, while good progress is being made with the construction of the new overhead bridge in Park Road”.³²

Track duplication had existed from Thirroul to Bulli Coal Siding Box since 1916 but the section between the coal siding Junction and Woonona was not open for duplication until 20th May 1923, at which time the northbound platform at Bulli was commissioned into service.³³ The delay in opening the duplication was caused in part by World War One.

³⁰ *South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus*, 28th July 1922, p. 9.

³¹ *South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus*, 18th August 1922, p. 13.

³² *South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus*, 6th October 1922, p. 9.

³³ *Illawarra Mercury*, 18th May 1923, p. 7.

What was the local reaction to the new building? One commentator, and the only surviving comment in the press, wrote that “the.....building is a very fine one, and all the appointments are satisfactory.”³⁴

THE 1917 ARCHITECTURAL PLAN OF THE DUPLICATION BUILDING

There is no name or classification that describes the design of the building. However, it was influenced by the Federation designs of the early 20th century. Hence, in these notes, it is referred to as a Federation-influenced building.

Almost everything was typical about the building proposed for and built at Bulli. The overall design, the shape of the roof and the floor plan were typical. From the Wollongong end, the rooms were:

- male toilet,
- Cleaner’s passage,
- female toilet,
- ladies’ waiting room,
- general waiting room, &
- booking office.

There was one atypical aspect of the building. It had been a long tradition of the New South Wales Railways to locate ticket windows facing into general waiting rooms. It followed British railway convention. This practice was not adopted at Bulli and two ticket windows were located at the northern end of the building facing into what was called the “booking lobby”, which was simply the covered area outside the ticket windows. There is no doubt this was a sensible location, but good sense rarely dominated traditional Railway policy.

The brickwork was set in Flemish bond, which was far less common than English bond for that style of building. The building was 74 feet one and a half inches long. The awning width was 11 feet. The ceiling height was 11 feet but that was reduced to 10 feet in the detached out of shed, which measured 14 feet by 12 feet internal. New South Wales railway buildings were traditionally narrow and the example at Bulli accorded to that norm, being 11 feet wide internal and 12 feet wide external.

At the northern end, the roof was carried an additional 11 feet to provide weather covering for people purchasing tickets at the ticket windows. On the rear and northern wall of the enclosed area, “curtain boarding” using vertically-set weatherboards formed the walls. Interestingly, at the very southern end of the building, the same use of vertically placed weatherboards formed the privacy screen outside the entrance to the male toilet. It was highly unusual for the New South Wales Railways to lay weatherboards in any other way than horizontal but, it did consistently use vertically-set boards in a number of restricted applications, these being:

³⁴ *South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus*, 25th May 1923, p. 16.

- male toilet privacy screens,
- internal closet and wall screens in the female and male toilets,
- ends of platform awnings, &
- weather protection for ticket windows.

These features were applied to the Bulli building.

There was also a detached out of room not far from the southern end of the building. Such small buildings were often provided for parcels that travelled on goods trains. Such items were called *out ofs*, which was a New South Wales Railway shorthand term for *out of the guard's van*. These attracted a lower freight rate than first class parcels, which were retained in either the parcels office, the booking office or the Station Master's office. To reflect the lower rate and, hence, the consequential lower level of security, out ofs, or second-class parcels, were kept in a detached building. In many cases, out of sheds were constructed of the cheapest and flimsiest of materials and only in a relatively few instances were brick out of sheds constructed at the same time as a main platform building was being erected. The dice rolled in favour of Bulli for its brick out of shed.



The above image, courtesy of the New South Wales Department of Environment, shows the out of shed. Originally, the panel above the double door was glazed. Overall, the structure matched a number of aspects of the main station building including the crappy-looking colour of the bricks, the bond of the brickwork and the use of corrugated iron sheets on the roof. Two other things are of interest in the image. Firstly, note the condition of the platform surface with its multiple cracks and uneven surface. Behind the steel fencing is one of the precast concrete units used to replace the brickwork for the platform walls in 2012. Perhaps the SRA decision not to paint the overhead wiring stanchions but to leave them in their unattractive, galvanised state was taken on the basis that there had been little objections to the Department's poor

taste shown in the selection of brick colour.³⁵ Such terrible looking bricks were used in a wide range of State Government buildings, including schools, in the 1910s and 1920s.³⁶

The roof of the out of shed was covered with the standard material of the time, being No. 26 gauge galvanised corrugated iron, as was the roof of the main building. The toilets were ventilated with nine inch diameter “Breech’s Cows” piercing the roof ridge. The walls were constructed of nine inch wide solid brickwork without a cavity. Water penetration had been a long-term problem with solid nine-inch brickwork. Awnings protected the brickwork from water exposure, but this was not the case for unprotected walls such as the rear wall and the southern end wall at Bulli. The standard treatment for those exposed areas was a coating of silicate paint.



This photograph shows the northbound platform building provided in 1923. It was unusual at the time of construction with the ticket office windows facing not into the traditional general waiting room but at the north end of the structure. The ticket window design was typical New South Wales practice, being tall and narrow with a single opening in the glass for oral communications. Underneath the ticket windows, rendered aprons were provided which matched the design of those on other elevations of the structure. The brick platform walls are in place and there is a timber walkway between the two platforms for staff. As a safety measure or, more correctly, as the only safety measure, the area around the foothold on the northbound platform has been painted to enable it to be visible at night. Such inter platform pedestrian activity was the norm for many decades. Note the Breech’s Cows on the roof ridge at the southern end, which identify the location of the toilets. The paintwork on the structure is not original but represents the decision by the Department of Railways to abandon the three-

³⁵ Dr Bob Taaffe disagrees about the reference to “unattractive galvanised” stanchions. He comments: “Originally, they were coated with red lead and then some form of zinc paint. This was nasty, but I suppose you really have to lick it. For some time, the railways repainted them or in most cases the painted blistered and they looked worse. The galvanised finish was a much better solution that needed little maintenance particularly being that close to the coast. Also painting has little benefit”. Email from Bob Taaffe on 31st March 2020.

³⁶ Bob Taaffe suggests that “all the bricks came from the State Brickworks which the Holman Labor government set up. You take what they supply. There was also a State Building Works near Rhodes, but I suppose the railways may have made their own”. Email from Bob Taaffe on 31st March 2020.

colour stone range in the mid-1950s. The platform seats and the stand for the noticeboard are painted orange, which colour was used widely on platform furniture during the 1970s and 1980s to replace the long-used green paint. Photograph No.026691a ARHS Collection, G. Dornan, 8th May 1992.

The Bulli structure was erected in what could be called the peak period for the construction of Federation-influenced platform structures.

It was an attractive style with a modest amount of decoration reflected in the following elements:

- platform awning supported by steel brackets positioned at approximately ten feet intervals,
- cement mortar tuckpointed,
- platform awning brackets braced by stone corbels atop engaged brick piers,
- cement architraves on the window heads and doors,
- cement rendered aprons under window sills, with a different pattern of moulding for those windows serving the female toilet,
- the expression of the station name in the bottom of the larger windows on the platform side with etched white letters on a blue background,
- attractive window glazing with the bottom half being ripple glass and the top half formed by 12, small panes of varying colours,
- unpainted, sandstone corbels supporting the “standard awning brackets”,
- moulded string courses around the external walls but without render between the courses,
- fretted, vertical boarding at ends of the platform awning in a decorative pattern,
- zinc terminals on the gables,
- terracotta pots on chimney tops,
- roughcast concrete finish applied to gables,
- detached out of shed in matching brickwork,
- decorative cement rendering on chimneys,
- use of splayed, red-coloured bricks on top of four courses of brickwork forming the plinth at the external base of the walls,
- one and a quarter inch thick slate threshold at base of doorways, &
- extension of exposed roof rafters on street side to form a narrow awning.

Strangely, despite the nice little touches to make the building look attractive, a few elements detracted from the overall appearance, these being:

- repulsive colour of brickwork,
- omission of render between the two string courses on the rail elevation and the two ends,
- the exclusion of the string courses on the rear wall between the windows (though they appear on the window mouldings),

- the inconsistent use of vertical boarding to partially protect the ticket windows at the northern end and also to protect the entrance to the male toilet at the southern end.

The major exposure to public view is of the rear of the building and the omission of the string courses, and the absence of render connecting them, between the windows looked silly in 1923 and still looks silly today. The omission of both string courses and render would have been appropriate had there been a retaining wall, trees or other vegetation hiding the rear wall, but that was not the case at Bulli where the rear wall was fully exposed to customer observation and interpretation. Also, the decision not to insert the render between the two string courses on the rail elevation and at the building ends detracts from the overall presentation, though it was not the only example of that style of building to have the moulding omitted.³⁷



The above image shows the rigidity and silliness of Railway architectural practice. It was a popular practice with this style of Federation-influenced building to provide a band of cement render around the external walls approximately at the height of the middle of the windows. The rendered band was positioned between two lines of moulding, called string courses. In some instances, the string courses were provided but the moulding was omitted and this was the case at Bulli. Unfortunately, some unthinking person in later years has authorised the application of paint between the two string courses which now misleads the not-so-observant member of the public to thinking that the area has been rendered. In those instances where the rear wall was located adjacent to a retaining wall or otherwise hidden, as at platform No. 2 at both Marrickville and Hurlstone Park, the rendered band was omitted from the rear wall. The same strategy was adopted for the 1923 building at Bulli, but why? The rear wall of the structure was the most visible component of the building from the adjacent streetscape. Moreover, those parts of the rendered band were provided on the sides of each window. It was only those parts between the windows that was omitted. How stupid! With the application of paint in recent years between the two string courses at the building ends and on the rail elevation, the 1923 Departmental stupidity has been topped by a dollop of Departmental

³⁷ For instance, Beecroft in 1912 and Valley Heights in 1901 had the string courses without the connecting render.

ignorance in the 21st century. The CityRail white fencing of the Labor Government at the rear of platform dating from the 1990s has been replaced by post-2011 cream-coloured, powder coated steel fencing of the Liberal/National Parties Government.

Physical and sociological details of the male urinal are always of interest and those provided in the 1917 plan were based on the post 1900 abandonment of full height stall dividers. Clearly, men of the early 20th century did not require or expect the same high level of privacy and horizontal space provided in the 19th century. Indeed, the reduction in the size of urinal stalls no doubt prompted a considerable increase in intra-urinal, oral communication between users. The urinal at Bulli contained six stalls, giving each occupant 22 inches of lateral space for the conduct of business. All parts of the urinal was still made from one inch thick slate with rubbed, exposed joints set in cement, though the urinal back wall did not commence at floor level but rather at a height of proximally two feet above the floor and extended for a height of four feet six and a half inches. The petitions between the stalls extended outward 18 inches from the wall.



The rendered brick privacy screen in front of the entrance to the male toilet is unusual. Originally, a timber screen had been provided.

There were two earth closets in each of the male and female toilet but, while those in the male toilet accorded to the standard length of five feet six inches, those in the female toilet were, unusually, an extra foot longer. Moreover, the ladies enjoyed the benefit of a hand wash basin, something that did not appear in male toilets until the 1960s. The pans in the female toilet were exchanged from the rear by a five feet wide passage, with entry from the male toilet. It seems that the average weight of toilet users at Bulli was high as the concrete floors in both toilets were five inches thick. This compared to the concrete floor in the out of shed, which often had to hold many heavy parcels and containers, where the concrete floor slab was only four inches thick. To facilitate cleaning in both toilets, there was a three inch gap between the closet doors

and the floors. The top half of closet doors was glazed and the bottom half featured a single, recessed panel. Like the urinal partitions, the toilet doors were not full length, being five feet six inches in height and two feet three inches wide.

The northbound platform structure was brought into use in 1923 at the same time as track duplication occurred.

THE DESIGN FAMILY OF BUILDINGS TO WHICH THE 1917 BULLI STRUCTURE BELONGS

When the line was duplicated between Wollongong and Waterfall, 17 stations required the provision of a second platform. Ten of the 17 stations received the same style of building as was applied to Bulli. Five stations received brick buildings either in the form of one island or two side platforms and another five stations received timber buildings. The remaining stations were piddling affairs and were given the most primitive of structures. In the case of the Illawarra line, brick buildings were probably provided at those stations associated with nearby coal mines and timber used for those locations that were void of influential people, big freight users or large populations. That analysis remains to be undertaken.

The 1917 Bulli station building was one of 267 examples of the same type, called in this paper the Federation-influenced style.³⁸ Of all the different types of designs applied to station buildings between 1855 and the present, it is the Federation-influenced style that comes closest to what may be regarded as an Australian railway station design. This class of building represented 16% of all structures erected on platforms between 1855 and 1980. A total of 143 or 53% were of brick construction and these were mainly in urban areas. Now that says something about the location of power! The remainder were built of timber and tended to be located in rural or less important locations. For example, every platform building on the North Coast line the planned between 1909 and 1919 was of timber construction, as was most duplication structures on the Main Southern line between 1912 and 1917.

The very first prototype of the Federation-influenced design was provided at Kiama in 1892 and survives today. The design as used initially at Kiama applied to a further 21 examples until 1906 in various locations. In that year, a new, comparatively less-ornate but still very attractive standard was approved at Wahrenonga and this in turn became the new standard until 1912. From 1912 to 1924, the design of the rendered aprons under the window sills changed but 1912 was a transition with examples appearing of the former and new style of aprons. Larger windows (the standard being two feet ten inches wide) had one design apron and smaller windows (the standard being two feet wide) possessed a different design. The Bulli building dates from this

³⁸ Sharp, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 266

third period. After 1924, all examples until 1935 were stripped of much of the external decorations, including window aprons and moulded string courses around external walls. The present platform buildings at Petersham, Sydenham platform No. 6 and at Redfern platform No. 10 are examples of the post 1924 period.

As indicated, the family to which the Bulli building belongs has no formal label, but it belongs to a group of buildings that was influenced by trends in architecture in the general community and, in particular, what is known as the Federation style. It would be incorrect to describe these buildings as examples of Federation architecture, but it is reasonable to describe them as being influenced by the Federation style. It is also reasonable to describe the structures as the initial island platform building design as these were the very first structures designed and used specifically for island platforms. The Federation-influenced style was used by the New South Wales Railways between 1892 and 1935 in all parts of the State but the 43-year period can be divided into four distinct sub-periods based on the level of decoration, namely:

- 1892 – 1899
- 1901 – 1912
- 1912 – 1924
- 1925 – 1935

It was more likely to see brick examples in the Sydney-Newcastle-Wollongong-Blue Mountains rail corridors and timber examples in rural locations, but there were quite a few exceptions to this generalisation. Federation-influenced platform buildings were either moderately sized or middle sized for more important country towns and featured slightly larger, attractive masonry buildings, such as at Yass Junction and Binalong. The explanation of the level of ornamentation on Federation-influenced buildings was related to the year in which the structure was approved. The continual slide in the amount of decoration applied to buildings between 1892 and 1935 was solely related to the ever smaller amounts of money allocated by New South Wales Governments to the railway system.



The location of the ticket windows at the end of a Federation-influenced structure was rare, as was the employment of twin ticket windows. Note the picket gate controlling entry/exit to the platform. Those were the days (in 1977) when tickets were collected.

The widespread use of the Federation-influenced style of building, as used at Bulli station, is reflected in the existence of other, similar examples near the Central Business District of Sydney. For example, within a ten kilometre radius from Central can be found Redfern station with four similar examples and Petersham on the Main Western line and Erskineville with three examples on the Illawarra line. It is also found on the North Shore line where all the buildings between Artarmon and Hornsby once had the same style of building. All examples on the North Shore line, except that on no. 1 platform at Lindfield date from the duplication of the line between St. Leonards and Hornsby in the 1900-1909 period.³⁹ In a distance of 17 kilometres (11 miles), there were 11 stations with a similar styled building. There are slight stylistic and other changes amongst the various examples that denote slightly different construction dates.

THE STATION MASTER'S RESIDENCE 1885

John Whitton abandoned the use of combination offices/residences in the early 1870s and introduced in 1876 his new standard design of residence. A total of 80 examples were erected between then and 1889, the last being at Cooma. Most were of brick construction, but a few were erected in timber. The defining features were:

- the overall symmetry of the front elevation based on the centre entry point,
- floor plan formed in a "L" shape,

³⁹ SRA, *Opening Dates of Track Sections, including Duplications, Deviations etc.*, Unpublished Reference Manuscript, Former SRA Archives, 1985, p. 5

- stepped entry onto the front verandah,
- central corridor from front door to rear of structure,
- fireplaces in the kitchen and each bedroom,
- front verandah across the entire residence with a posted awning,
- hipped roof with symmetrically placed chimneys, &
- detached toilet usually with a contrasting roof style.



This photograph shows the Up Second Home signal for Bulli and the Up Inner Distant signal for Bulli Coal Siding . The 1885 approved residence for the Station Master is located to the right. It will be noted that the goods yard is much further to the south than it was in the single line days. Photograph No.466669 ARHS Collection, N. Munro, 24th April 1984.

On 2nd December 1885, Alex Scouller signed the plan for the Station Master's structure which is located at 41 Park Road, Bulli. It was an example of the type that was built with only one window on each side of the centre doorway on the road elevation. A few examples of wider structures with two windows on each side of the door were erected, including one at Wollongong. Other similar examples on the Illawarra line were built at Sutherland, the original Stanwell Park and South Clifton. All examples date from the line openings. None were provided following the opening of lines.



This 1994 photograph shows the side of the residence, which was painted white.

In a few cases, Whitton used a residence as a part of an overall station composition and located the house at one side of the station forecourt. Surviving examples at Picton, Goulburn and Wagga Wagga demonstrate the layout. Not one residence on the Illawarra line was placed in the station forecourt to enhance the overall composition. The example at Bulli was erected adjacent to a level crossing and no doubt the idea was that the wife of the Station Master would be in charge of the level crossing gates.



This image, taken in 2020, of the 1885-approved Station Master's residence mirrors another Departmental cultural practice. It was located adjacent to the former level crossing and it was the usual expectation that the wife of the Station Master would open and close the gates as required while her husband worked on the platform. In so doing, this practice eliminated the need to provide a separate residence for the gatekeeper. The cast aluminium under the valence on the front verandah is not original. The design was introduced by John Whitton, the

Engineer-in-Chief, in 1876 and became his standard residence for Station Masters until his departure in 1889. While neat-looking, they were restrained in size and void of any architectural decoration, apart from the overall symmetry of the structure. The residence at Bulli has been substantially enlarged since its construction, but it is most pleasing to see it survives in such good condition. Originally, the building would have been unpainted face bricks.

STATION BEAUTIFICATION 1923

The community at Bulli seemed fairly well pleased by its latest station building but the Bulli Progress Association thought it would be a nice thing if the area behind the new building on the western side of the corridor were beautified. In May 1923, the Association wrote to the Chief Commissioner requesting assistance to beautify the area.⁴⁰ One month later, he replied saying that plants were available from the Railway for planting, indirectly suggesting that it would be up to the local community to plant the shrubs and bushes.⁴¹ The Association agreed to the condition that it would plant and maintain the beautified area.⁴² The Commissioner replied saying he would send his Head Gardener to prepare the land prior to planting and would provide the post and wires for guard fences around the shrubs and bushes. It was up to the Association to erect the protective fencing.⁴³ By the end of October 1923, everything was ready for planting.⁴⁴ The plants and shrubs quickly grew and it only took a few weeks before the Association resolved to spend ten shillings to engage someone to weed the garden area.⁴⁵ The work of the local Progress Association continued once the beautification had been completed. On the agenda of the Association in future years was a request for improved roads to the station, followed by improved lighting, which was followed by a request for a footbridge at the southern end of the platforms.

THE TIME OF NOTHINGNESS

With the onset of The Depression in 1929, Governments of all persuasions in New South Wales went into long-term hibernation so far as funding the railway system was concerned. The only increase was provided by the Commonwealth Government during World War Two. After 1945, the Labor Government continued in office until 1965 and lost interest in improving railway buildings and services. The same lethargy applied to the Liberal-Country Parties Government between 1965 and 1976. It was only after the Labor Party gained office under Neville Wran that essential funding for the rail system accelerated to make up for the previous six decades of neglect.

⁴⁰ *Illawarra Mercury*, 15th May 1925, p. 3.

⁴¹ *Illawarra Mercury*, 21st August 1925, p. 4.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 2nd October 1925, p. 7.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 16th October 1925, p. 10.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 30th October 1925, p. 1.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 27th November 1925, p. 9.



Locomotive 48104 comes to a stop with a southbound passenger train on 26th December 1977.

During the period of nothingness between 1929 and 1976, little happened at Bulli of significance. That was the same negative narrative at every one of the 800 or so stations throughout New South Wales.

The only highlight for Bulli station for 40 years occurred on 9th February 1954 when Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, boarded her special train to return to Sydney. The only other stations during her tour of New South Wales on which she set foot were Sydney Terminal, Newcastle and Bathurst.

NEW PUBLIC TOILETS - 1972

It was in 1972 that the toilet pavilion at the southern end of the main structure on the southbound platform was removed. It had probably decayed so much with termites that the structure was crumbling on its own foundations. In order to save money, the Department converted the then existing ladies' waiting room into a set of toilets. As result, women lost their own waiting room. The change divided the space into two sections with entry to a male toilet from the end of the structure and the entry to the female toilet directly from the platform. The entry to the male toilet was covered by a brick screen. This work was carried out. This change in toilet arrangements in 1972 demonstrates the paucity of funding available to the railway administration.

At an unknown time, a timber addition with a skillion roof was added to the southern end of the building. The only toilet on the southbound platform is now a uni-sex affair gained internally from the former ticket office and is controlled by the tenant. Public toilets are available on the northbound platform for commuters.



This photograph shows the aftermath of the removal of the toilet pavilion at the southern end of the platform in 1972. A new doorway has been inserted into the far southern end of the structure facing the platform. That provided the entrance to the female toilet while the entrance to the male toilet is located at the end of the building behind the large advertisement. The platform seats on the southbound platform have retained their green colour, possibly as an acknowledgement to the nature of the occupancy of the building from 1989 by a heritage-minded tenant. The station mainboard is a replica of the original enamelled sign. Photograph No.026690a ARHS Collection G. Dornan, 8th May 1992.



This image shows an addition to the southern end that has occurred after 1992, possibly for the tenant of the structure. The acorn-topped fencing is quite a recent addition and no doubt the colour was chosen to match that of the platform building. The colours of the timber platform structure are not authentic, though they are attractive. They are possibly what the tenant desired or supported because the traditional stone colours do not necessarily make for happy visitors to the station. All the timber detailing is not original.



CPH Nos. 31, 19 and 13 arrive at Bulli in the rain on a northbound passenger service on 19th February 1984.

MAIN LINE ELECTRIFICATION 1985

No work was necessary to alter the platforms to accommodate the electric rollingstock when it was introduced in 1985. The only work conducted at that station was the provision of ceramic tiles on the floor of the general waiting room as well as the provision of new seats in the general waiting room of the northbound platform building.



In this photograph, the overhead stanchions are in place, but the wires are not yet been hung. The vegetation on both sides of the rail corridor looks out of control. The platform surfaces appear in reasonable condition. Image No.026691c ARHS Collection, G. Dornan, 1st October 1984.

Prior to the extension of the electrification to Port Kembla, 70,560 passenger journeys were recorded in the 1983-84 financial year at Bulli. In an average 24-hour period on a Monday to Friday, 293 people got on or off trains at the station. As would be expected, Wollongong generated the most passenger traffic, followed by the Thirroul, Corrimal, Helensburgh, Fairy Meadow and then Bulli. There were 19 stations between

Helensburgh and Port Kembla inclusive and Bulli ranked sixth in order of traffic generated.

In 1984, ten stations had commuter car parks on railway land and Bulli had the fifth highest number of spaces with 30. The station with the highest number was Helensburgh with 63 spaces.



CityRail was established in 1989 and, by 1994, had made a number of physical changes to the station. The first sign of the new regime was the light boxes, which were placed on the approaches to the property. This one on the northbound side reflects the colour palette of the early CityRail period featuring the lazy seven logo and the station name on a white, illuminated background.

EASY ACCESS 2006

The then Minister for Transport, John Watkins, announced in May 2006 installation of lifts at the station as well as a family accessible toilet, improved lighting and additional CCTV installations. A plaque is attached to one of the walls in the general waiting room on the northbound platform that states the lifts and other improvements were officially opened on 26th February 2007.

Most people who visit the station would quickly come to the view that the lifts are a waste of money in view of the adjacent public footpath access on each side of the tracks. One local rumour maintains that a local politician had a mother in a wheelchair who used the station and the lifts were provided for her. There has been quite a bit of chatter on social media asking why lifts were provided at Bulli not at Unanderra where the island platforms are totally isolated from the street network. One respondent correctly answered the question – political influence.

Both brick platform walls were replaced in 2012 and 2014 by precast concrete units. At the same time, the building on platform No. 2 was repaired and painted in its present colours.



The above image, courtesy of the Illawarra Mercury, 18th June 2014, shows repair and reconstruction works on platform No. 2. The project, costing \$3 million, included the installation of new lighting, the provision of tactile indicators on the platform surface for the visually impaired and the planting new garden beds and landscaping. The work involved equipment supplied by DPW Plant Hire from Silverwater.

SIGNALLING AND SAFEWORKING – by Graham Harper

THE SINGLE LINE PERIOD

Bulli was opened with the line on 21st June 1887. It comprised a station area and a flat crossing with the pre-existing Bulli Colliery Line about one kilometre to the north.

On 3rd October 1888 the colliery crossing was interlocked with catchpoints in the Colliery Line on either side of the Main Line and signals were installed for both directions on the Main and Colliery lines. At that stage, there was no interchange connection between the two lines, meaning that trains could not proceed between the main and colliery lines.

Although there is an absence of evidence, the initial safeworking system in use would have been Ordinary Train Staff and Ticket, with the sections probably being Clifton [later renamed to Scarborough] – Bulli – Corrimal. This is implied by the official notification that Staff and Ticket working was replaced by Electric Train Tablet in April 1890.

The 1897 *Local Appendix* confirms that Bulli was an Electric Tablet and Crossing Station. It had a 400 yard long crossing loop and was not interlocked in any way. The tablet sections were Clifton to Bulli and Bulli to Corrimal.

By the time of the issue of the same *Appendix*, there was a connection in use between the colliery and main lines, thus allowing trains between the two lines. This trailed in on the eastern side of the main line, between the crossing and Bulli Station, and was operated by a two lever ground frame released by the Tablet for the section Clifton – Bulli.

On 13th December 1905, Coledale was opened as an Electric Train Tablet station to allow access to the local colliery sidings. It was generally not available for the crossing of main line trains but could be used for a main line train to pass one shunting the colliery with the entire shunting train in the sidings, clear of the main line. The tablet section became Coledale to Bulli.

On 20th September 1911 the tablet working on this section was replaced by Electric Train Staff. This was followed on 14th July 1911 by a similar installation to Bellambi which was opened on the same date as a follow-on staff station. The new sections were thus: Coledale – Bulli – Bellambi – Corrimal.

At this point in time, Bulli was operating as a busy crossing station, albeit with no interlocking. Contemporary timetables indicate that it was not unusual for three trains to cross at the same time, especially if there were extra trains involved.

The 1911 *Local Appendix* gives details of a shunting key associated with the staff instrument on the Coledale side. Possession of this key entitled a driver of a northbound train to follow another into the section as far as Bulli Coal Siding, shunt there as required and then return to Bulli. The fact that the shunting key had been withdrawn made it impossible to obtain a staff from the instrument at either end of the section, even when the first train to have left Bulli had surrendered its staff at Coledale. By this time, traffic must have been fairly busy, as instructions were given to allow the train shunting the coal siding to propel between there and Bulli on the return run.

Also, in the 1911 *Local Appendix*, there is a reference to a disc signal for shunting. This signal, which was mounted on the back of the Up Home signal post, when cleared, gave authority for a southbound train which was standing outside the Up Home signal to set back into the sidings.

On 22nd March 1912 major changes occurred. For the first time, Thirroul found its place in the annals of safeworking when it was opened as an Electric Staff and crossing station, concurrently with the provision of staff instruments at Bulli Coal Siding. Until then, Thirroul was just a signal-less wayside station, and not what it has become today. Bulli was much busier and much more important than Thirroul at the time. The staff sections were now Coledale – Thirroul – Bulli Coal Siding – Bulli – Bellambi. The shunting key arrangement for shunting Bulli Coal Siding was abolished at the same time, as Coal Siding Box now had its own staff instruments.

The intensity of the traffic was enhanced by the operation of private coal trains hauled by private locomotives between Bulli Coal Siding and Corrimal, Coledale, Mount Kembla, Mount Keira and Port Kembla.

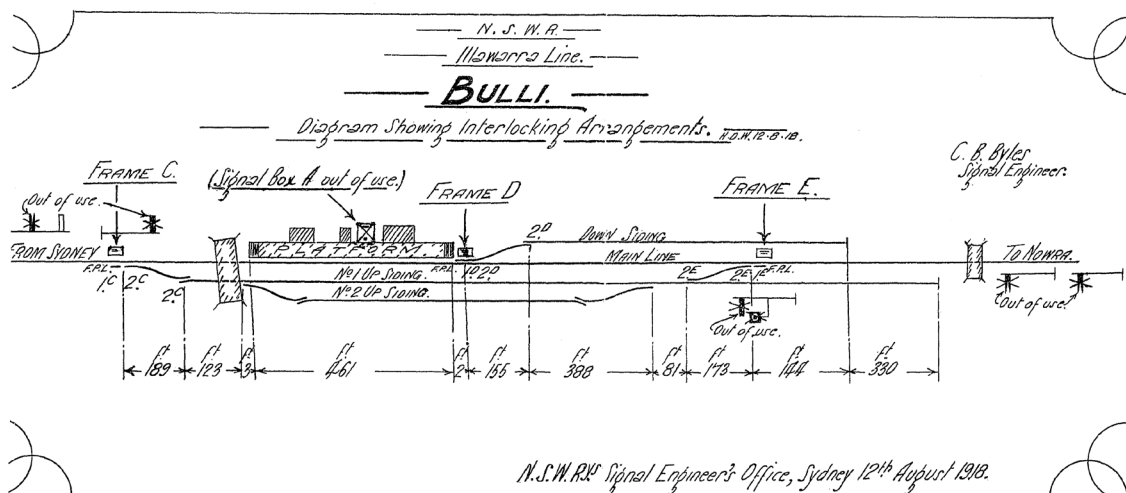
On 25th September 1912 a short section of double line was opened between Woonona and Bellambi. This meant that the Bulli – Bellambi staff section became Bulli – Woonona.

INTERLOCKING OF POINTS AND SIGNALS ARRIVES AT BULLI

Duplication was extended from Thirroul to Bulli Coal Siding on 25th October 1916. At this stage, there was still no interlocking at Bulli station. However, on 7th December of the same year, the signals were all disconnected from the pullover levers on the platform and connected to a frame in a new signal box located at the Sydney end of the platform building. This frame also released keys to unlock the various new ground frames that had been provided to operate the points. It had taken 28 years for Bulli to achieve the same level of safe working practices, brought about by interlocking, that had been applied to Bulli Coal Siding, approximately one kilometre to the north. Once again, a shortage of money explains the delay.

Following this, a new Up Outer distant signal was provided, some 1,246 feet towards Bellambi while the existing Up Distant signal was renamed Up Inner Distant signal and relocated closer to the station.

Unfortunately, all this activity was to prove short lived as less than twelve months later, on 23rd August 1917, Bulli was closed as a staff and crossing station. Its signals were all fitted with cross-boards and the ground frames converted to being released by the electric staff for the section Bulli Coal Siding – Woonona. The existence of a crossing loop so close to the double line was considered unnecessary. An indication of the [now decreasing] importance of Bulli was that for some time it had housed a District [Traffic] Inspector and a train control function. These were transferred to the control office at the up-and-coming Thirroul on 8th July 1917.

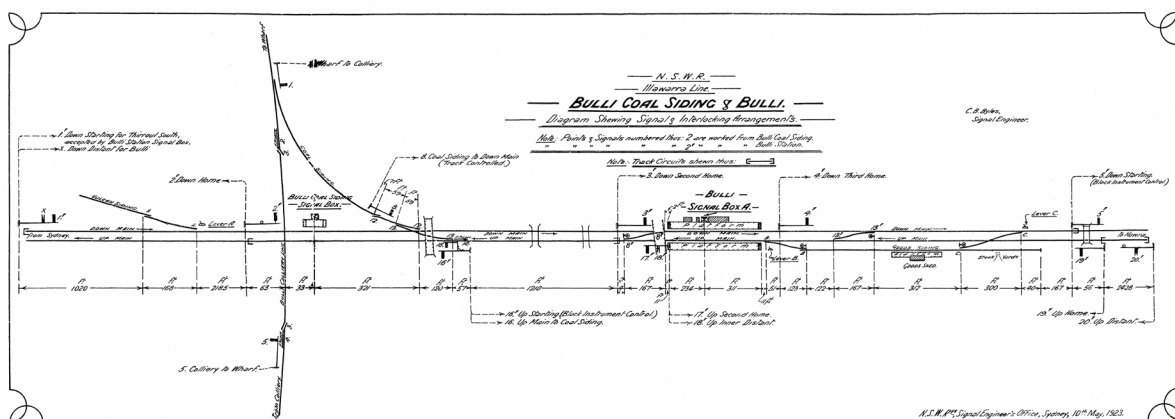


Note on the 1918 above diagram that the signals operated by Bulli signal box are crossed.

TRACK DUPLICATION OF MAIN LINE

During May and June 1922, a number of minor alterations were made to the Bulli layout in preparation for the forthcoming track duplication.

Finally, in May 1923, the remaining sections of line were duplicated giving a double line between Sydney and Wollongong, except for the Coal Cliff Tunnel. On 20th May, Bulli Coal Siding to Woonona was duplicated, with an intermediate box at Bulli station, while on 27th May, Bellambi to Mount Pleasant was similarly treated. Intermediate signal boxes were provided at Corrimal and Fairy Meadow.



The 1923 signal diagram above shows the arrangements at the time of track duplication through Bulli station.

The working between stations was by New South Wales Standard Block, which remained in operation until the pre-electrification resignalling – a period of 62 years between 1923 and 1985 top.



Graham Harper writes the caption for the above 1980 photograph. He says: "The scene looking north from Bulli platform had changed little over the 50 years prior to the taking of this

photograph in 1980. The signals in the foreground were brought into use in 1923 with the duplication between Bulli Coal Siding Box and Woonona.

The white-painted section of the overbridge immediately behind this signal is to allow better sighting of this signal, white being preferable to the motley of reddish colours in the brickwork itself. The same white signal sighting background can be discerned on the next overbridge for the next signals, as can [just] the signals in question.

The distant signal provides protection for the junction at Bulli Coal Sidings. The provision of a distant signal underneath the Up Second Home Signal was an unusual practice although not unique. In the case at hand, it would appear to have been due to the Up Main Distant being well over a mile from the second home. A train passing the first distant at caution, because the section ahead to Thirroul South Box was occupied by the train ahead, could be given a full clear at the second home signal if the preceding train had cleared the section during the time by transit of the following train over that mile.

The other signal, applying to the opposite section is the Down Second Home signal. The Down Home was placed well away from the station and protected the connections at Bulli Colliery Box (out of sight from the photograph). Thus, another signal was necessary to protect the trailing crosser between the main lines seen in the photograph. Hence, the existence of the Down Second Home in the photograph. The point rodding seen operated the crossover in the foreground from 1964 operated the only points directly operated from the Bulli signal box on the platform. Prior to 1964, a second crossover like this one, but at the south end of the station, was also operated from the box”.

Bulli signal box at this stage was always attended Mondays to Saturdays, and unattended on Sundays. Coal Siding Box was electrically released from Bulli and was attended as required.

The hours of Bulli Box were subject to frequent adjustments, and the ‘always’ soon became designated timeslots totalling 18-20 hours a day. Sunday attendance also found its way back in, starting with a single stint of half an hour, and gradually expanding over the years. These minor changes no doubt reflected alterations to the timetables as much as anything.

On 3rd April 1933, separate northbound and southbound closing levers were provided at Bulli, and, coincidentally, at Woonona on the same day.

Woonona box closed on 14th January 1941 making the block section Bulli to Bellambi. Bellambi was unable to switch out because of the need to operate the road level crossing gates.

ELIMINATION OF THE AT-GRADE CROSSING WITH THE BULLI COLLIERY LINE

The Bulli Colliery flat crossing with the main line was abolished on 7th January 1952. It was replaced with an overbridge three days later, when a loop connecting the exchange sidings on the southbound side with the overbridge was commissioned. The

junction remained in situ, while the overbridge crossed the main lines to the south of the site of the flat crossing; it also actually went over the first bit of the colliery line very close to the junction points. See the diagram below.

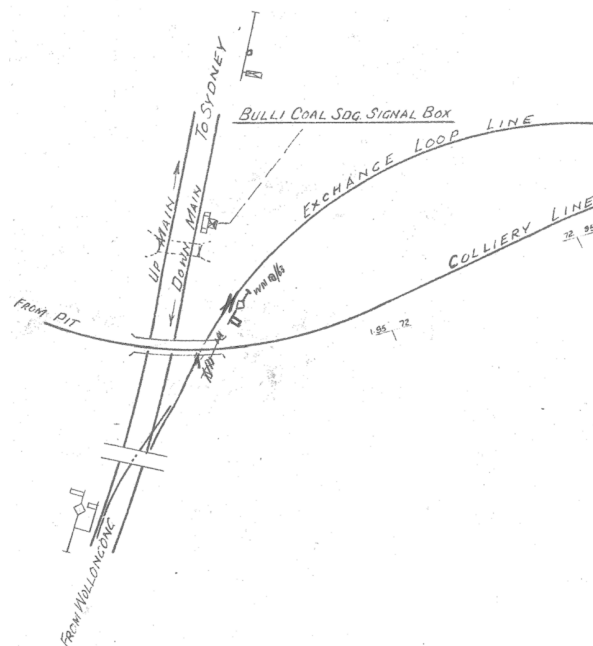


Diagram of 1952 arrangement to take the Bulli Colliery over the Main South line.

The point indicators were removed from the two main line crossovers at Bulli station on 4th January 4, 1961. There was obviously a local purge on point indicators because similar equipment was removed from other stations south of Bulli on the same day.

The next change came on 29th September 1964. The southern main crossing and the diamond connection between the Down Main and the goods siding were replaced by tandem crossovers – Main Crossing and Up Main to Goods Siding. The new crossovers were operated from a new ground Frame 'C', released by key from the signal box, and located near the points. Because the new arrangement of the points extended further south than the old, on 6th October, 1964, a shunt ahead signal was affixed to the Down Starting signal post to allow a shunting train to pass the Starting signal when necessary to clear the siding access points.

On 15th December 1964, an electric releasing switch was provided at Frame C to replace the need to walk down with the Annet key. The releasing switch was released by the same lever in the signal box as the key had been.

The new releasing arrangements for Frame C lasted a little over 13 years, until on 15th February 1978 when the frame and its connections, together with the releasing switch and shunt ahead signal, were all removed, the associated levers in the signal box becoming spare.

On 19th November 1981, the remaining crossover controlled directly from the signal box at Bulli, No.8 Main Crossing North, was placed out of use and a new crossover

was laid in some distance further north. The latter crossover was spiked and out of use for several months before being brought into use, worked from Lever C nearby, after the Down Home Signal had been located some 48 metres towards Sydney to protect it.

Around 1984, the single slip connection to Bulli Coal Siding was replaced with a facing crossover operating in tandem with the siding points.

THIRROUL AND LATER WOLLONGONG TAKE OVER SAFEWORKING AND SIGNALLING CONTROL OPERATIONS AT BULLI

On 10th August 1985, control of the facing and trailing crossovers at Bulli passed to a new NX panel at Thirroul.⁴⁶ The mechanical lever frames at Bulli Coal Siding and at Bulli itself were decommissioned, and Standard Block working between Thirroul and Bulli was replaced by track control.

In an odd little twist, despite having no frame or signals, Bulli remained open as a block station working Standard lock to Bellambi. This was done under the supervision of the Thirroul signalman, who operated all the signals. This most peculiar arrangement lasted for just over two months until on 19th October 1985, when automatic signalling was installed to Bellambi and block working ceased. The signal box officially closed on that date.

In 1986, control of all signalling south of Waterfall, as far as Port Kembla, Unanderra (later Kiama and Calwalla) was taken over by the panel at Wollongong. As part of this takeover, all sections of double line north of Wollongong were bidirectionally signalled.

Bulli Coal Siding only lasted another three years; it was removed on 17th September 1988.

On 22nd January 1992, following a period of heavy rain and unstable cuttings and embankment, slip detectors were commissioned between Bulli and Woonona, as well as at many other places in the area. These detectors were connected to the two southbound automatic signals (one for each line as bidirectional working was available) just beyond Bulli platform and the two northbound automatic signals just after Woonona. When a slip is detected, these four signals will be placed/maintained at Stop.

For over the last 30 years, Bulli station is a place where any sleeping pussycats are no longer disturbed by the clunk and bangs and bells of signalling and safeworking equipment. Except for the quick swoosh of trains, all is quiet.

⁴⁶ An NX panel is a route setting way of controlling electrically operated points and signals. Basically, you push buttons on a diagram of the layout you control. The NX means eNtrance eXit; you push the button where the route you are setting up commences, then the button at the end of said route. If the route is unobstructed, the points required for that route will then automatically set and the signals will clear. Once the train has passed through the route, it can either be cancelled by the same buttons, or reset in the same way for another train.

HOW DID BULLI FARE SO FAR AS SAFEWORKING WAS CONCERNED, COMPARED TO OTHER LOCATIONS?

The technological developments at Bulli were typical with similar developments throughout New South Wales. The equipment provided was state of the art at the time and was upgraded in accordance with Departmental supplies, money and priorities.

The Bulli train services were pretty much equivalent to those offered to smaller stations although, in earlier days, race and picnic special services stopped specially at Bulli for ticket collection, the staff for which were organised by the Bulli Inspector. This disappeared in the first part of the 20th century, with Thirroul becoming the preferred stop for the few fast services.

Basically, after the opening and advancement of Thirroul, Bulli became just another insignificant station, no more important and no better served than any other between Thirroul and Wollongong. Its need for most of its staff went when the signal box closed in 1985.

AS THE TRAIN PULLS AWAY FROM BULLI, IT IS GOODBYE

It has been a good visit. We have learnt a lot.

Although the title of this article, Bulli the Beautiful, relates to the natural beauty of the landform, those with an interest in railway history share in the attraction of the location. One could only concur with the opinion that railways enhance even the most idyllic of locations. The only comfort upon leaving is knowing that there is another railway station not too far away to visit.

The photograph overleaf shows 3215 on a passenger train bound for Port Kembla. The vegetation is booming; the platforms tidy and, following the departure of the train, peace will return to this physically attractive place. While we wait for a train to leave, we note the three-rail fencing at the rear of each platform. We also spot the vertical platform wall with four courses of extended brickwork to form the coping – a product of the 1919 replacement of the original timber wall and the raising of the platform height in 1923. We make a notation in our field book that we need to investigate the origin of the small building with the arched roof adjacent to the station nameboard on the south bound platform. That small structure was very atypical design for the NSW Railways. It was located to that position in 1916 as a lamp room. Photograph No.854846 ARHS Collection, No details.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Stuart Sharp

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