

CARLTON RAILWAY STATION

A PLACE OF ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE IN THE HISTORY OF N.S.W. RAILWAY STATION BUILDINGS



Veteran photographer, Chris Sim, writes the caption for the cover photograph. He says: "No replacement of trains by buses occurred in the mid-1960s. The overhead wiring between Sydenham and Hurstville needed replacement after 40 years of intensive use. The solution: diesel haul the trains in that section on weekends while the works were undertaken. I remember catching a spark (i.e., a suburban electric trains) from Como, for which a 45 class locomotive was attached at Hurstville and removed at Sydenham. This Ken Cranfield picture of 4402 was taken at Carlton in the 1960s hauling a set of suburban carriages entering the station from Kogarah. The station was distinguished by its garden borders of alternate red and white stones signifying the nearby St George rugby league ground. Two, fairly new double deck trailer cars are seen in the consist".

From 1922, the Carlton Station Master lived in a departmental residence in Willison Road, which is the street nearest to the camera on the left side. Gardens on platforms existed at many stations and gardens, shrubbery and potted plants were encouraged by the Railway Commissioner to increase the ambience of the platform environment. It was a strategy that worked.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CARLTON, THE SUBURB

There were four broad constituents that resulted in the emergence and growth of Carlton. These are expressed below seriatim:

FACTOR ONE – SYDNEY’S POPULATION BOOM

The first ingredient was a population surge that had been stimulated by the discovery of gold and other stimuli in the 1850s. Amongst that surge was the arrival of 500 migrants in 1853 from England to work specifically on the construction of the Sydney-Parramatta railway.¹ Those migrants had children which, by the end of the 1880s, resulted in what may be described as the 19th century version of the baby boom after World War 2.

The population growth of Sydney between 1851 and 1911 is shown in the table below.

TABLE: SYDNEY’S POPULATION GROWTH 1851-1911

YEAR	POPULATION (,000)	PERCENTAGE GROWTH
1851	54	–
1861	96	5.9
1871	138	3.7
1881	225	5.0
1891	400	5.9
1901	496	2.2
1911	648	2.7

SOURCE: J. W. McCarty, "Australian Capital Cities in the 19th Century" in J. W. McCarty and C. B. Schedvin (Eds.), *Australian Capital Cities*, Sydney University Press, 1978, p. 21.

FACTOR TWO – THE SWING FROM RURAL TO URBAN LAND INVESTMENT

The second constituent was the cessation of Crown land sales in rural areas, which eliminated investment opportunities for both genuine and speculative buyers. This was not all bad news. Historian, Hilary Golder, wrote that, after land revenue had dipped in 1878 and 1879, Henry Parkes and John Robertson "agreed to top up land revenue by promoting the auction of relatively town and suburban lots".² The increasing population in the 1880s, aided by the opening of new lines to Hurstville, Hornsby and St. Leonards, had presented a steady, new stream of revenue for the Government until the 1890s Depression. Interest in urban land development increased throughout the 1880s.

¹ D. Hagarty, *The Building of the Sydney Railway 1848-1857*, Redfern, ARHS, 2005, p. 296.

² H. Golder, *Politics, Patronage and Public Works – the Administration of New South Wales*, Vol. 1., University of New South Wales Press, 2005, p. 182.

FACTOR THREE – THE OPENING OF THE RAILWAY TO HURSTVILLE

The third factor was the opening of the Illawarra railway line to Hurstville in 1884. More specifically, it was the absence of a station at Carlton in 1884 which was the impetus for the opening of a new station after the opening of the line to Hurstville.

FACTOR FOUR – THE POOR QUALITY OF RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS IN THE INNER SYDNEY

The fourth and last component involved in the growth of the suburb, Carlton, was the existing poor quality housing in those parts of inner Sydney that accommodated low-paid, blue collar workmen and acted as a spur for younger and better paid workers to seek improved residential areas than the inner city.

Local historian, Ron Rathbone, wrote the history of Carlton.³ He mentions that a trial survey of the proposed Illawarra line was taken in 1873 and legislation passed Parliament on 23rd March 1881 to allow for the construction of a railway to Kiama. The delay was due to the inability of coal mine owners, which included some members of the Government, to convince the politicians who represented electorates in the urban areas of Sydney. The line opened as far as Hurstville on 15th October 1884 and that only occurred because of the proposal was seen as a measure to assist both suburban and country interests. It would be another three years before Carlton station opened.

The development of real estate in Sydney and the construction of new railway lines and new stations went hand in hand. Author, John Casey, wrote:

“The first suburban railways could only get Parliamentary approval if they formed part of a line to the country”.⁴

That was certainly the case for the Illawarra line where the prime stimulus was to facilitate cheaper and more reliable transport to the coal mines on the near South Coast.

Historian, Dr. Lesley Muir, wrote that the passing of the legislation to build the Illawarra line was the signal for the subdivision of large land holdings along the railway corridor to Hurstville.⁵ The Carlton Estate was auctioned on 7th November 1885 but Ron Rathbone states that the lack of rail access was a “weighty deterrent” to purchasers. Historian, Joan Lawrence, states that 550 lots were sold in 1885 with buyers being offered a free railway ticket for a year. The station was named Carlton as it stood on the Carlton Estate. Although the area grew rapidly, it suffered during the Depression of the 1890s.⁶

³ R. W. Rathbone, *The Carlton Story*, Kogarah Historical Society, no date.

⁴ J. Casey, *The Eastern Suburbs Railway, Roundhouse*, Winter 2019, p. 10.

⁵ J. Hatton & L. Muir, *The Triumph of the Speculators - The Illawarra Railway to Hurstville*, Southern History Group, 1984, p. 54.

⁶ J. Lawrence, *Pictorial Memories – St George*, Alexandria, Kingsclear Books, 1996, p. 97

Rathbone describes the impact of the opening of the railway line as “electric” and writes that the event made many people “land mad”. In the decade of the 1880s, the farms of the locality were subdivided and, in the space of a few years, land that was formerly worth only a few hundred pounds became worth tens of thousands of pounds following the opening of the line.⁷

The reason why Carlton station was not opened in 1884 was probably related to the absence of influential land developers for that location. This absence of a local powerful entity was reflected in the much smaller size of the station buildings, compared to other stations on the line to Hurstville. In other words, the Railway Department agreed to provide a station but wanted to minimise the level of expenditure

In addition to the smaller size of buildings, other elements of the station architecture that reflected the need to save money on the (the present) Nos. 1 and 2 platforms were:

- the unadorned clean roofscape (absence of air vents and the use of undecorated gables)
- unembellished finials
- the restriction of cast iron ornamental brackets to one plane above the capitals on the posts supporting the awning
- the elimination of decorative spandrels at the ends of platform awnings, &
- the use of corrugated iron sheets for the fencing at the rear of both platforms.

THE FIRST STATION SITE AND BUILDING

Rathbone states that, in the 1880s, the locality was initially a popular residential area with tradesmen but, “in the closing years of the 1880s, building declined and the area was occupied by railway employees”. The especial feature was the decision by the most senior railway guard, James Fahy, to reside in High Street at Carlton. Fahy was well known as he was the guard for the operation of the Colonial Governor’s train as well as the Railway Commissioner’s train.

Land was given free to the Railway Commissioners for the construction of a station. In addition, local residents paid £400 as a guarantee that 66 first class rail tickets would be sold annually.⁸ On 15th February 1887, a sleeper platform was erected with £15 being spent for a ticket office. The station was built on the Carlton estate.⁹ Such a

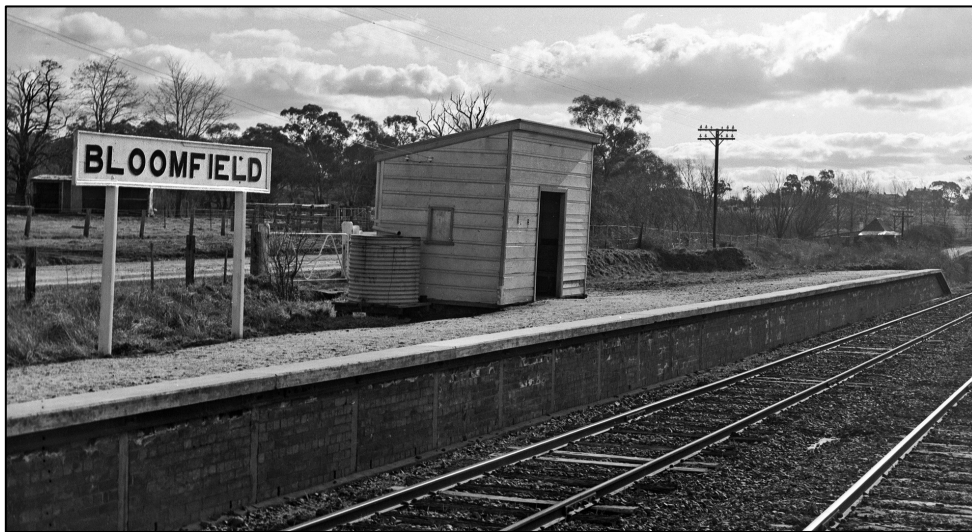
⁷ Rathbone, op. cit., pp. 7 & 8.

⁸ Ibid., p. 10.

⁹ As the line was duplicated, there must have been a second timber platform but there is no mention of such an additional facility in the history of the suburb.

minor station could not draw any minister of the Crown to open the facility and the task was undertaken by the Chief Inspector of Railway Audits. The ceremony was carried out in the waiting shed.¹⁰

Although no plans survive, the first station building was described (in the singular form despite the line being duplicated at the time of the opening) as a waiting shed measuring 8 feet by 10 feet. It must have been void of a platform awning as one inch of water regularly pooled on the floor of the shed when it rained. Moreover, it was claimed that the heat was “unbearable” in Summer and lacked protection from the cold, bleak southerly winds in Winter.¹¹



*Although plans do not survive of the first building or buildings at Carlton station, the above photograph of Bloomfield near Orange, which opened in 1891, is typical of the simple form of waiting shed provided universally at small stations throughout the network up until 1891. Carlton station no doubt received similar, low-cost facilities. **SOURCE:** Facebook.*

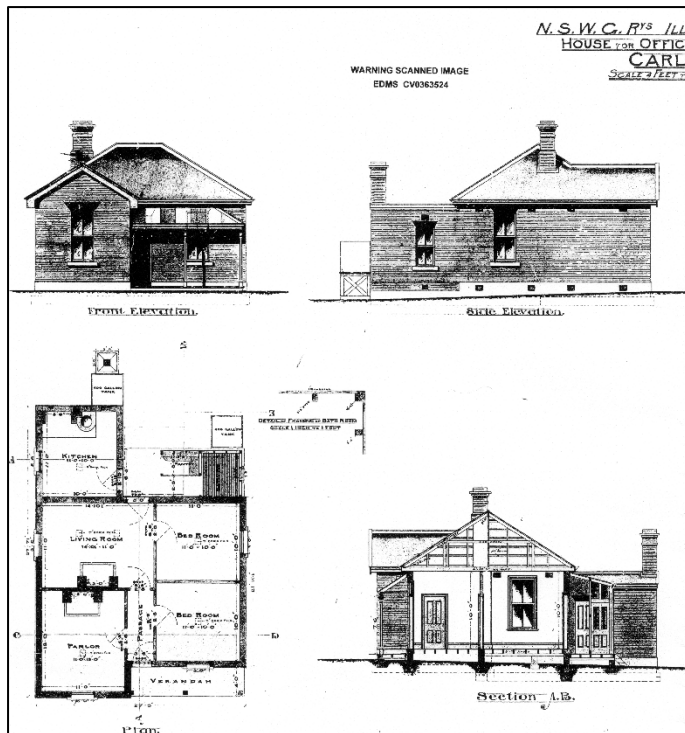
In 1889, a post office was opened at the station.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF A RESIDENCE FOR THE STATION OFFICER

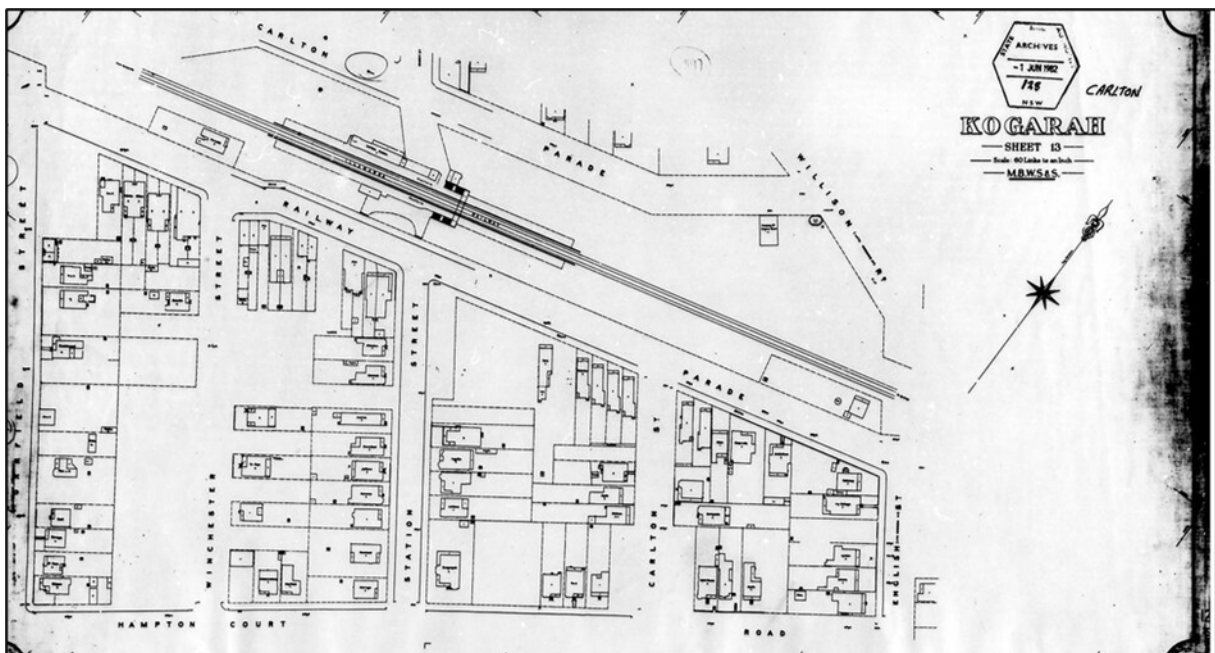
George Cowdery approved a house for the station officer on 9th July 1888. It was extremely modest in size having a depth of 37 feet and a width of 27 feet and contained five rooms. The Engineer for Existing Lines had commenced providing staff houses with asymmetrical front elevations from 1880 on existing lines. The design was completely different to the symmetrical expression that the Engineer-in-Chief, John Whitton, was using on new lines.

¹⁰ Rathbone, op. cit., p. 13.

¹¹ Rathbone, op. cit., p. 13.



This is part of the plan is of the house for the Carlton Station Officer The Government Gazette in August 1888 call for tenders for the construction of a house for the Carlton Station Officer.¹² Tenders closed on 29th August for the erection of a residence for the officer-in-charge. Although the Government Gazette did not indicate the successful contractor, Lawrence Langdon and John Hopkins signed the plan, though they did not date the instrument.



The above plan shows the location of the Station Master's residence towards the top left side and a gatehouse at the Willison Road/English Street level crossing on the right-hand side. The level crossing was closed in 1911 after the opening of an underbridge at Prospect Street. Station Street, located at a right angle to Railway Parade, was later renamed Jubilee Avenue. **SOURCE:** Scan No E1050747, ARHS Railway Archives.

¹² NSW Government Gazette, 10th August 1888, Issue No. 524, p. 9231.

With the knowledge that track quadruplication would affect the station, the Railway Department proposed in August 1921 to relocate the Station Master's residence from the eastern side to the western side of the tracks. However, it appears that the Department had a change of mind. It demolished the 1888 house and purchased land from a Mr Hudson in Willison Road/Webbers Road beyond the northern end of the station.



These are images of a similarly designed residence provided in 1902 for the Station Master at Mortdale.

THE SECOND STATION SITE AND BUILDING

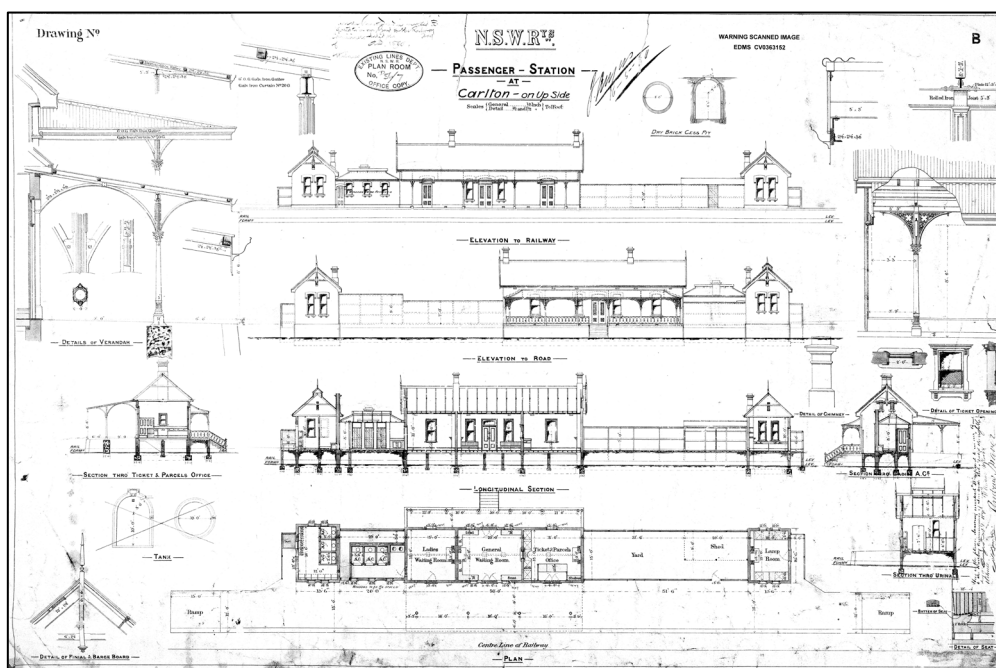
Shirley Fitzgerald, historian, reminds the reader that the intensification of land use in the area was not solely for the construction of houses but also for the development of orchards, poultry farms and other small rural industries. She makes the point that development was not nearly as extensive as on the inner western railway line and that land prices on the Illawarra line “did not go so high”. Luckily, she stated that the opening of the Illawarra line to Hurstville in 1884 “coincided with the height of the suburban (i.e., land) boom.”¹³

The New South Wales Government in the early 1890s continued a lower but still substantial level of capital expenditure even though interest rates were markedly higher compared with the 1880s. Notwithstanding the financial stringencies of the 1890s Depression, Carlton grew and, by 1890, it was one of the largest communities

¹³ S. Fitzgerald, *Rising Damp – Sydney 1870-90*, Melbourne University press, 1987, p. 38.

on the Illawarra railway line. In that year, it was estimated that there were 300 residents living along Webbers Road.¹⁴

APPROVAL FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SECOND STATION



This is a copy of the plan James Angus approved for the northbound platform. Angus replaced George Cowdery as the Engineer for Existing Lines. What is especially obvious is the linear imbalance amongst the three structures that form the overall composition.

As capital funds had been approved by the New South Wales Parliament and provided by the English moneylenders, the New South Wales Railway civil engineers kept spending the allocations. One fortunate beneficiary was Carlton where James Angus, the Engineer for Existing Lines, continued the process of supplementing and renewing existing platform buildings – a policy that had commenced in 1876 when the position of Engineer for Existing Lines was established. He approved replacement structures for Carlton on 16th May 1890. The new station was located at the northern end of the first station, which was marginally closer to Kogarah.

In the case of duplicated lines, it was the custom in the 19th century to place the main building on the Sydney-bound platform while the opposing platform usually received a smaller structure with fewer features and a reduced level of ornamentation. That policy arrangement generally was implemented at Carlton.

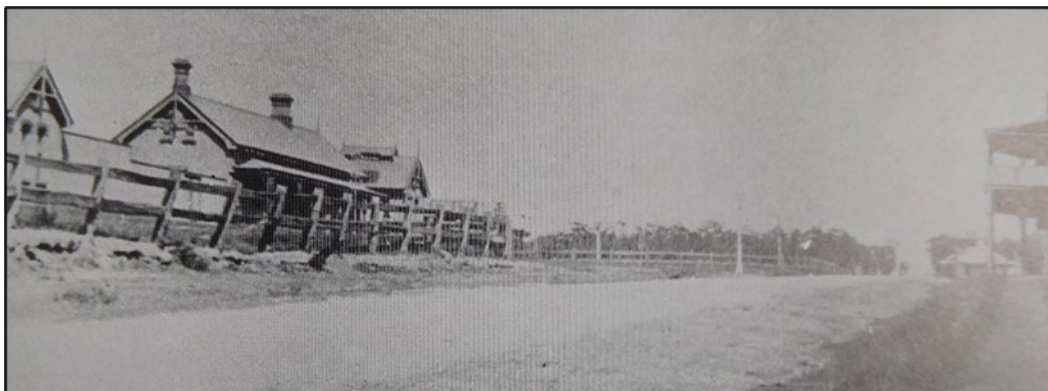
¹⁴ In the 1880s, the main road was called Webbers Road, which was later changed to Willison Road. It was located just to the north of the station.



*This photograph looks south and shows the first footbridge built in 1896. It was erected at the southern end of the platforms. On the left or southbound platform is the smaller waiting shed with its narrow platform awning. What is obvious is the absence of vertical posts supporting the awning, which was propped up by small brackets cantilevered from the building wall. Nearest the camera on the right side is the lamp room, which was demolished in 1945. The corrugated iron fencing at the rear of both platforms detracted significantly from the pleasure of watching trains swish by. **SOURCE:** Photograph No. 510063, ARHS Railway Archives.*

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE 1890 BUILDINGS ON THE NORTHBOUND PLATFORM

The main station structure, which consisted of a suite of three brick buildings, was located on the northbound platform. At the northern end was a free-standing brick lamp room. There was a space of 51 feet 6 inches between the lamp room and the main building, which was a three room structure of the standard roadside design that John Whitton introduced in 1880 and kept approving until his retirement in 1889. The main, centre structure contained a ticket office at the northern end, a general waiting room in the middle and a ladies' waiting room at the southern end. It was flanked on the southern side by an attached male toilet pavilion.



*The photographer is looking south. This is the only known photograph of the road elevation of the 1890 building on the northbound platform. On the road elevation, there was no porch to mark the pedestrian entry/exit but that point was expressed by a stepway. A narrow verandah stretched the full length of the centre component. The fencing marking the boundary of railway property is very cheap, two rail timber fence. **SOURCE:** J. Lawrence, *Pictorial Memories – St George, Alexandria, Kingsclear Books, 1996, p. 97**

The three building composition at Carlton accorded generally with the standard roadside design arrangement with all structures having gabled roofs. The roofs of the two end pavilions – the lamp room at the northern end and the male toilet at the southern end – were transverse to the roof of the centre structure between them. That rotation of the roof pitch for pavilions was consistent with Whitton's design policy. The building suite on the northbound platform featured the female toilets in the physical connection between the main, three room building and the male toilet pavilion, this arrangement of the women's toilets being a feature of the standard roadside buildings approved after John Whitton's retirement. The usual pedestrian access to the platform was through the middle of the structure and, on the roadside, there was a six feet wide, full-length verandah once again supported by iron columns with fancy cast iron brackets which incorporated circular motifs. There were seven steps from ground level to the verandah.

In accordance with Whitton's standard roadside design, the platform awning was supported by vertical cast iron columns with cast iron capitals and a very ornate design applied to the columns above the capitals. Such use of awning posts would cease in 1892 and, in their stead, large brackets cantilevered off the building wall would become the new *de rigueur* in 1893. After 1893, Whitton's standard roadside design would never again be used, though the notion of cantilevered awning brackets would be applied from 1894 to a new design reflecting Federation influences.

The arrangement of the building suite in 1890 from the southern end was:

- a male toilet block 13 feet 6 inches long by 16 feet wide internal
- a 20 feet long in-fill section containing three female closets
- the main structure 56 feet long by 15 feet internal contain the ladies' waiting room, general waiting room and entry/exit and the ticket office
- a fenced yard of 51 feet 6 inches in which a shed 20 feet long was located at the northern end of the yard &
- a lamp room 13 feet 6 inches long by 16 feet wide internal

MODIFICATIONS TO THE 1880 STANDARD ROADSIDE DESIGN APPLIED TO THE 1890 BUILDING ON THE NORTHBOUND PLATFORM

John Whitton had retired in 1889 but his standard roadside design lingered on in limited use until 1893, though in a modified form. James Angus introduced 18 significant design changes to Whitton's 1880 design with most applied at Carlton. These were:

- abandonment of the concept of overall, design symmetry
- disuse of a porched entry
- discontinuation of the use of transverse roof gables on the centre of the main building to identify the pedestrian entry/exit point
- introduction of gentlemen's waiting rooms at some stations (though not at Carlton)
- provision of a six feet wide verandah on the road elevation using a combination of single and paired cast iron columns to support the awning
- utilisation of a concave shape roof for the road elevation in contrasting, striped painting
- extensive expression of cast iron lacework on the valance on the road elevation verandah,
- cessation of the use of the male toilet block to provide a female closet, entry to which could not be seen by the public standing on the platform
- elimination of the narrow passageway from the ladies' waiting room to the toilet pavilion
- the allocation of three female toilet closets, which was a significant increase in the number of closets (usually one) for such sized buildings in past exemplars
- the introduction of "air closets" to ventilate the female toilet facilities these being externally expressed in the form of three brick/terracotta chimneys (not applied at Carlton)
- the visible exposure of three female closets in the section between the main building and the male toilet block
- installation of two hand washbasins in the female toilet, which contrasted with the supply of a single basin for such sized buildings previously
- use of undecorated, curved iron braces to support the platform awning in place of cast iron brackets
- the excessive distance – 51 feet 6 inches – between the main building and the lamp room, compared with the distance of 14 feet in previous examples
- extension of the engagement of the circular motif to embrace not only awning brackets but the balustrade on the verandah facing the road approach
- constant width of the centre building through the elimination of the tradition of widening slightly the general waiting room/entry and exit

- the provision of two vents in the gables of the main structure, as opposed to a single vent in Whitton's time (though the lamp room only had a single vent)

On the other hand, some of the elements from John Whitton's standard roadside design continued to be embraced in the Carlton building, including:

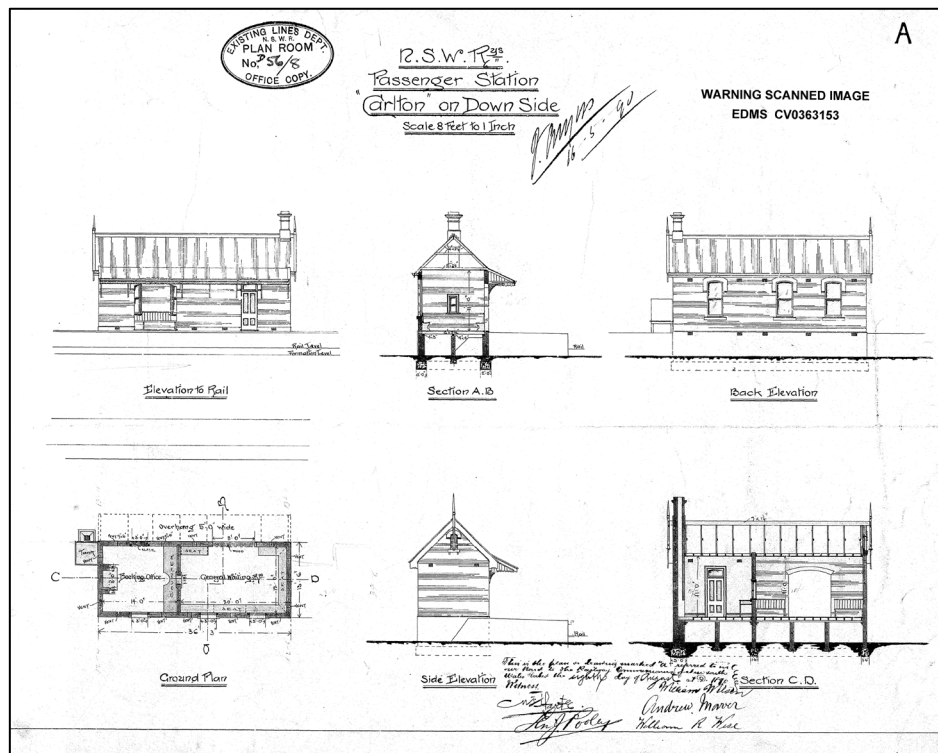
- the use of ridge ventilators for both the male and female toilets
- the vertical movement of the cover of the ticket window utilising the standard height of three feet though with an additional width of six inches making the total width two feet
- the use of decorative bases and heads of awning columns
- cement moulding around the heads of windows and doors
- restrained, cement moulded window sills and related aprons
- the design of the strapwork at the top of the brick chimneys
- engagement of simple but elegant, tall finials on all gables
- use of corrugated iron sheets to connect the space between the main building and the lamp room
- the use of ledged doors for all toilet closets
- timber floors in all rooms apart from toilet areas
- 11 foot ceiling height in all rooms in main building, reducing to 10 feet high in lamp room and male toilet and 8 feet 6 inches in the female toilet area
- four feet height for the wall of the urinal with privacy screens 7 feet 6 inches for all 10 urinal stalls &
- utilisation of a 12 foot wide platform extending to 15 feet wide for a length of 141 feet in front of the suite of three buildings

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE 1890 BUILDING ON THE SOUTHBOUND PLATFORM

On the southbound platform was a two room brick structure, containing a general waiting room and a ticket office with overall measurements of 36 feet 3 inches by 13 feet 6 inches external. The general waiting room was open-fronted. The building contained two important architectural features that identified the structure as a transition from 19th century to 20th century platform structure design. These were:

- the narrow width of the platform awning &
- the use of the circle in the design of the awning brackets

Both features were related to each other. Because of the small size of the awning brackets, it was impossible to provide an awning wider than five feet. Nevertheless, these elements marked a shift away from the use of posted awnings which were unpopular with both staff and passengers as they interfered with the free flow of people boarding and leaving trains. The use of brackets cantilevered from the external building walls eliminated such obstructions.



Above is the 1890 plan for the small structure on the southbound platform at Carlton. It contained two rooms – a ticket office and a general waiting room. The most obvious feature is the very narrow platform awning which was held in position by cantilevered metal brackets. It was that feature that marked the structure as a transition away from 19th century railway station design towards a 20th century architecture. The general waiting room was open-fronted at the time. The structure was largely void of external decorations.

THE DESIGN OF CARLTON STATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE HISTORY N.S.W. RAILWAY STATION BUILDINGS

1. THE NORTHBOUND PLATFORM BUILDINGS

John Whitton, the Engineer-in-Chief and the head of the Railway Construction Branch in the Department of Public Works, had introduced a series of standard designs utilising similar floor plans in 1880 and continued to use these plans extensively until his retirement in 1889. While Whitton was in the top job in the Railway Construction

Branch, the men that headed the Existing Lines Branch, namely William Mason from 1876 to 1880 and George Cowdery from 1880 to 1889, never used Whitton's standard roadside design. That all changed when both Whitton and Cowdery departed the scene in 1889. James Angus was the new Engineer for Existing Lines and he was not entangled in the personality fights of the 1880s. He could do what he wished to do in relation to buildings.

Angus decided to continue the use the broad concept of Whitton's standard roadside design but with a significant number of modifications and, in 1890, he approved replacement buildings for the two side platforms at Carlton – a large brick building on the northbound platform and small brick structure on the southbound platform. Very much was Carlton in 1890 a station of design transition. Very much did the two platform structures manifest the change from 19th to 20th century railway architecture.

The larger building on the northbound platform was virtually a copy of the buildings at the following stations:

- 1890 – Campbelltown, Wentworth Falls, Adamstown and Lithgow
- 1891 – Fairfield and Yass Town



These two pictures show the extent of decorations on the awning posts on the present platform No. 2. For a start, the columns are not fluted – a feature applied to many stations in the 1880s. One nice touch was the Corinthian influenced capitals provided on the awning posts. However, the cast ironwork for the awning brackets was approved only for one plane, namely that which could be observed from trains. The same decoration has been omitted from the braces extended across the platform springing from the capitals. It was the omission of the transverse decorative brackets that was adopted for the very first building on an island platform that totally dismissed the need for awning posts. That major event occurred at Raglan in 1891. Hence,

the design installation at Carlton shown above was very much a prototype. The photograph on the left was taken on 11th February 1978 and the image on the right was snapped on 15th July 2023.

Carlton and the five stations listed above were the last structures erected on the New South Wales railway system with the platform awnings being supported by vertical posts. There was one dominant element of the design that identified the structure as being approved after John Whitton's retirement in 1889. That single feature was the provision of three female toilet closets between the main building and the male toilet pavilion.



*The above photograph was taken between 1896 and 1912 and shows the main building on the northbound platform. Although it was the larger structure at the station, the building was small relative to most other station platform structures when the line from Illawarra Junction to Hurstville opened in 1884, the exception being the recreational styled waiting sheds at Tempe. Not only were the buildings smaller at Carlton, but corrugated iron sheets were also utilised to form the fences at the rear of the platforms rather than timber fencing used at other stations to Hurstville. Both the smaller sized buildings and the cheaper fencing reflected a degree of financial restraint. **SOURCE:** Photograph No. 510062, ARHS Railway Archives.*

The same design that existed at Carlton, with one significant elemental substitute, was used for similar sized buildings at the following locations in 1893:

- Lismore, Byron Bay, Parkes, Forbes, Temora, Cobar and Corowa

Those seven structures, while using the same overall design at Carlton, possessed one major change. No longer were vertical posts utilised to support the platform awning. Rather, large brackets cantilevered to the external wall of the structure replaced the vertical columns. After 1893, Whitton's standard roadside design was no longer utilised and Whitton's influence on building design ended.

The buildings on the northbound platform at Carlton, therefore, represented a very significant change in the physical design of platform buildings.

2. THE SOUTHBOUND PLATFORM BUILDING

The design of the building on the southbound platform was consistent with buildings with narrow awnings at the following locations between 1885 and 1895. These were located at the following stations:

- 1885 Como, Woolbrook
- 1886 Brawlin
- 1887 North Clifton, Minore
- 1889 Broadmeadow, Lilyvale
- 1890 Yallah
- 1891 Yarra, Jerrawa
- 1892 Hornsby
- 1895 Dulwich Hill, Campsie

The southbound platform building possessed two design features which mirrored the transition from 19th century to 20th century platform building architecture. These were:

Both the narrow platform awning and the use of the circle motif in the awning bracket design were related to each other as the small size of the awning brackets could not support the weight of an awning wider than five feet.

The concept of the circular pattern had been a design element that started to appear in 1880 at Albury in the clerestory windows above the station entrance. In 1881 the circle was introduced on structures at Willbriggie and Carrathool. Its use was restricted at that time to the design of platform awning brackets at the top of vertical columns. Later in 1881, the circle motif was applied to the ventilators in the building gables at Uralla.

The engagement of the circle concept got major exposure George Cowdery applied a circular gusset at Petersham station in 1884 and Darling Harbour in 1885 for the awning brackets and, again, applied the innovation at Orange, Moss Vale and Sydney Terminal stations in 1889. While the 1891 building at Raglan did not feature the circle concept in the brackets, it was built on an island platform with cantilevered brackets on each side.

Hence, in 1890, two ingredients came together at Carlton to commence the widespread introduction of a new design of platform building which would last until 1935. These ingredients, which are observed at Carlton, were:

- the adoption of cantilevered awnings to replace posted verandahs, thus greatly facilitating passenger movements between train and platform &
- the necessity to restrict the cantilevered awnings to one plane, namely transverse to the platform, thereby providing a considerable cost saving.

While the awning brackets at Carlton were small and the awning itself narrow, they displayed features which did mark the start of a widespread design change in the architecture of New South Wales Railway buildings.¹⁵

CONSTRUCTION OF THE 1890 PLATFORM BUILDINGS

Tenders closed on 2nd June 1890 for the construction of the Carlton station buildings.¹⁶ According to the *Government Gazette*, William Wilson was the successful bidder and he got the nod in July 1890.¹⁷ In addition to Wilson, William Wise and Andrew Maver signed the plans on 8th August 1890. However, in the history of the suburb by Ron Rathbone, George B. Holt is stated as the builder.¹⁸ That puzzle is yet to be solved.

The station was estimated to cost £1,700.



This photograph, taken on 11th February 1978, shows the 1890 building with the additional length and alterations to accommodate track quadruplication in 1924. The location of the first

¹⁵ The circular concept was also applied to the awning brackets and balustrade on the verandah on the roadside of the building on the northbound platform at Carlton. That part of the Carlton building was demolished in 1924 for track quadruplication.

¹⁶ *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 30th May 1890, No.288, p. 4369.

¹⁷ *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 4th July 1890, No.354, p. 5180.

¹⁸ R. W. Rathbone, *The Carlton Story*, Kogarah Historical Society, no date, p. 13. Joseph Holt, possibly a relation of George Holt, was the Treasurer of the committee which organised celebrations for the new station on 22nd November 1890. See *The Australian Star*, 24th November 1890, p. 3.

residence for the Station Master between 1888 and 1924 was in the vicinity of the double light signal on the right side of the picture.

LOCAL COMMUNITY REACTION TO THE 1890 BUILDINGS

On the 22nd November 1890, a banquet was held to celebrate the opening of the second Carlton railway station. Not a word was recorded in the press about the design of structure, though one newspaper stated: “The opening of the new station premises (was) an event of great consequence to the town, as there was no doubt that the accommodation it (i.e., the new station) afforded would give a great stimulus to the district.”¹⁹



These two images show a very unusual feature of the Carlton buildings. In 1924, the Railway Department approved the application of what it called “standard awning brackets” to support the new platform awnings. The brackets sat on what were known as corbels, which are the cream painted elements shown in the above pictures. In those instances where the brackets were to be added to existing brick walls, the usual practice was to directly affix the corbels and the brackets to the existing brick walls. The picture on the left shows the standard treatment. However, the standard treatment was not universally applied to the Carlton buildings and, instead, engaged brick piers were erected and the corbels and brackets were secured to the piers – not the walls. That presentation is shown in the picture on the right. As far as is known,

¹⁹ *Evening News*, 24th November, 1890, p. 3.

Carlton was the only known instance of adding engaged piers to an existing brick building. The images were captured on 15th July 2023.

THE FOOTBRIDGES

The first footbridge at Carlton was built in 1896 and was located at the southern end of the station.

Was the first Carlton footbridge in 1896 consistent with the provision of similar facilities at other stations in the area? The list below shows that two stations – Hurstville in 1890 and Sydenham in 1891 - predated the structure at Carlton but the Carlton footbridge was in advance of seven of the eight other footbridges and subways between Erskineville and Hurstville. Arncliffe got a footbridge in the same year as Carlton.

LIST OF DATES OF OPENING OF FOOTBRIDGES AND SUBWAYS ERSKINEVILLE TO HURSTVILLE

STATION	YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION
• Erskineville	1913
• St Peters	1914
• Sydenham	1891
• Tempe	1918
• Arncliffe	1896
• Banksia	1906 (subway)
• Rockdale	1907 (subway)
• Kogarah	1913 (subway)
• Carlton	1896
• Allawah	1925 (at opening of station)
• Hurstville	1890 ²⁰

A replacement footbridge was erected at the northern end in its present position in 1912. When the second bridge was approved in 1911, it was one of the first examples of footbridges to use a concrete deck. One time railway engineer, Dr Don Fraser, describes the structure as a “double RSJ haunch over trestles”.²¹ The structure was fabricated from steel imported from England. When the plan was issued on 20th April

²⁰ J. Forsyth, *Historical Notes on Illawarra Line*, Vol. 1, Public Transport Commission, 1976, pp. 5-20.

²¹ D. Fraser, *A Survey of Railway Footbridges*, Internal Report to the State Rail Authority, 1996, Appendix.

1911 for the second footbridge at the northern end of the station, dotted lines were shown on the plan for the future for duplication.



*The second footbridge at Carlton station was erected in 1924 as a part of the track quadruplication works. It was placed at the northern end of the platforms and the first footbridge at the southern end was removed. While the decks of both the first and the second footbridges were supported by metal beams, the second bridge was of a slightly different design to the first footbridge, being classified as a haunched beam. **SOURCE:** NSWRTM, Roundhouse, August 2015, p. 35.*

Heritage Engineer, Bill Phippen, OAM, BSc, B.E., F. Inst. Eng. comments on the above photograph:

"In general, I think of a haunched beam as one which gets thicker near the support so as to maximise the spanning capacity while keeping the beam as thin as possible at midspan where it needs to stay above the structure gauge of the track below. I suppose having a separate cantilever girder below near the support produces the same result. That is how it would be done if it were a timber bridge so perhaps this is the evolving process of a timber bridge design being adapted to use iron. I don't know that there is a strict definition of haunched and it may mean what the writer wants it to mean but, within the technology of time when this (Carlton) bridge was built, the net effect is a haunched beam and I would not dispute the use. The real problem is that engineers use words to categorise a wide set of variations but physics and forces flowing through bridge beams don't always fit neat categories".²²

²² Email from Bill Phippen on 9th December 2023.

ARRANGEMENTS TO MEET THE FORTHCOMING TRACK DUPLICATION

1. THE “INADEQUATE WEATHER SHELTER” ON THE SOUTHBOUND PLATFORM

The Carlton Progress Association protested in 1921 about the paucity of weather protection on the southbound platform. In reply, the Commissioners pointed out that, although they admitted that the existing shelter “may not be all that is desired”, they considered that “the ordinary requirements of the present time are sufficiently met”. The Commissioners explained that the “finances prevented any improvement but, when the quadruplication of the lines was carried through to Carlton, alterations would be made”.²³

It took the Carlton Progress Association a year to get its act together about the Commissioners’ response relating to the alleged inadequate accommodation and it was not until the middle of 1922 that the Association expressed its anger with the Commissioners’ reply, which had the audacity to say that the existing shelter for 30 passengers on the southbound platform was sufficient.²⁴ The Commissioners replied to the request for lavatory accommodation and additional seating accommodation, on the southbound platform at Carlton saying:

“As part of the first stage of the quadruplication work, sanitary accommodation will be provided on the Down platform, the present waiting room to be converted into a ladies' room and a new general waiting room 20 feet by 12 feet with seating accommodation to be provided. It is considered that, when this work is carried out, the requirements will be reasonably met”.²⁵

²³ *Propeller*, 27th May 1921 p. 4.

²⁴ *Propeller*, 9th June 1922, p. 2.

²⁵ *Propeller*, 4th August 1922, p. 2.

2. THE OVERHEAD BOOKING AND PARCELS OFFICE



The photographer is facing towards Sydney on 11th February 1978. The overhead booking and parcels office appears much larger than it was. The extensive roof provided the illusion. The roof was covered with asbestos cement “slates” with terracotta ridging and finials. The Railway ticket department deployed two roof designs. The more visually engaging design involved the use of what was known as a Dutch gable where the ends of roofs featured a combination of hips and gables. This style was applied to Arncliffe and Rockdale and about 20 other locations. The second design was much plainer in appearance and could feature a simple gabled or a simple hipped roof, as at Carlton. When electrification was introduced in 1920s, the portal electrification structures were designed by engineers – not architects – who understood that a nice-looking, though pedestrian, structure engaged waiting passengers in a positive manner. At Carlton, this was reflected in the form of steel pyramidal caps at the top of the portal masts. They are faintly visible in the picture. Vandals destroyed the Carlton overhead booking and parcels office in 1978.

A plan was issued on 30th July 1923 for the erection of an overhead booking office adjacent to the existing footbridge. The plan showed a small timber structure 20 feet by 12 feet but the style of the planned roof was inconsistent with what was erected. Overall, the facility was constructed to a standard design of timber framing with weathboard cladding on the external walls. It was the design of the roof that made the overall building appear larger than it actually was. The roof was of medium pitch in the shape of the capital letter “L”. The roof covered four areas, these being:

- the combined ticket and parcels office
- the pedestrian entry/exit point, which was officially known as “the booking hall”
- a retail space opposite the ticket window &
- an extension onto the existing footbridge to provide weather protection for the ticket collector.

The central location for the sale of tickets and parcels business above the tracks obviated the need for separate ticket offices on each platform as well as eliminating the need for customers to carry parcels up and down the stepway to Nos. 1 and 2 platforms, on which parcels traffic was formerly conducted.

The existing footbridge at the northern end was raised six inches to allow for electrification with the work finalised on 1st May 1924.



*Long time railway officer, Neil Munro, writes the caption for the above photograph. He writes: "The train in the photo is S7A+S7B on a limited stop service to Cronulla in 1962. It was not scheduled to stop at Carlton. These Commonwealth Engineering built trains with power operating doors were commonly referred to as '1955 cars' and as 'Sputniks'. The eighty cars did not commence to enter service till 1958 due to equipment supply delays and priority being given to the single-deck interurban sets which had commonality with many equipment parts. This would achieve major operational savings by having the interurban sets replace loco hauled commuter trains to Lithgow and to Gosford. The S sets were the first suburban trains with four-motor power cars and were authorised to run up to 115km/h where appropriate as against 80km/h for the previous types. In 1964, they became the first suburban sets to incorporate double-deck trailer cars, the single deck trailer cars cascading down to run with the earlier suburban fleet". Neal also provides details about the toilets, of which the timber privacy screen of the male toilet is visible. The screen utilised vertically set weatherboards, which was contrary to the traditional policy of setting the boards horizontally for building walls. The Railway Department made an exception for male privacy screens. Neil adds: "I have an impression that the men's toilet had the old black urinal with minor privacy screens and penny-in-the-slot cubicles. I cannot comment about the ladies' toilet. It was a rare occasion to join or alight from a train at Carlton on the Illawarra Mains (Platforms 3 & 4)".²⁶ **SOURCE:** Photograph No. 469945, ARHS Railway Archives*

²⁶ Emails from Neil Munro on 26th and 27th November 2023.

3. ALTERATIONS TO THE PLATFORM BUILDINGS

Plans were also prepared in 1924 for the alteration to the platform buildings. On platform Nos. 1 and 2, the rear verandah and steps connecting with Carlton Parade were removed and the direct access was closed. On Platform No. 1, the Department erected a standard awning using standard steel brackets cantilevered from the building wall. More radical surgery occurred to the building on platform Nos. 3 and 4 where a ladies' waiting room and female toilet as well as a male toilet were added to the southern end of the existing two rooms. The open front of the general waiting room in the existing structure was "built up" and provided with a door. The roof of the 1890 building was raised and extended to cover the new work. Standard awnings were built on both sides of the structure using standard awning brackets cantilevered from the brick walls of the building. Unusually, engaged brick piers were provided, of course, standing proud of the building wall. The Carlton buildings are the only known example of engaged piers being added to an existing building when a cantilevered awning was added. Normally, the cantilevered brackets would be fixed to the existing wall without such piers.

The opportunity was taken to modernise the male toilets on the platform Nos. 1 and 2. The slate back for the urinal and the full height slate urinal stall dividers were demolished and replaced by a rendered and rubbed concrete urinal back with one inch thick with half size stall dividers. These were also used in the new male toilet on platform Nos. 3 and 4. The male urinals on both island platforms provided standing room for six concurrent users.

4. PAINTING OF THE EXTERNAL BRICK WALLS

The alterations to both platform buildings for track quadruplication were significant and it is probable that the brickwork of both structures was painted to cover any dissimilarity in the colour, size and shape between the existing and new bricks.

MINOR IMPROVEMENTS AFTER TRACK AMPLIFICATION 1924-1978

There was extremely little funding made by state governments after electrification of the suburban network in the 1920s for railway improvements generally. It has been referred to by one commentator as the long period of nothingness. The funding shortfall did not commence to end until the election of the Neville Wran Labor Government in 1976. The inattention to capital improvements by governments was reflected in the issue of plans for works at Carlton. Between 1924, when the track quadruplication works were approved and open, and 1978, when a plan was issued for the location of an air-conditioning unit in the booking office, no plans were issued for the 54 year period.

In 1928, the Carlton and West Kogarah Progress Association sought facilities for funerals departing from Carlton station. The word, “facilities” was code for a shed to hold coffins prior to the arrival of the funeral train plus a gate in the boundary fence. The Commissioners maintained that “the circumstances do not warrant provision of a shelter shed at Carlton Station”.²⁷ They said that the facilities that existed at Kogarah were adequate.

The 1890 brick lamp room was demolished on platform Nos. 1 and 2, with the work being completed on 30th November 1945.

The platforms were asphalted in November 1955. At the time, each platform featured seven garden containers with shrubs and flowers.



Neal Munro captured the photograph in 1962. Neal writes: “I lived at Carlton from 1948 till 1965. Oh, for Saturday afternoons at the Odeon cinema on the Down side at Carlton! The 57 class and 60 class roared through the station as they climbed the grade through Carlton. There were 32 and 36 class on commuter trains and 38 class on the expresses. Unfortunately, the absence of steam, the wonderful electric trolley buses and even the later Leyland double decker buses at Kogarah brings a tear, at the very least a big sigh, to what has gone. The demise of the good times is expressed in a 1960s song the words of which stated - once upon a time, the World was sweeter than we now know, but once upon a time never comes again”.²⁸ The Station Master’s house was relocated off the end of the platforms on the left side. The long period of nothingness was mirrored in the poor condition of the male toilet on platform Nos. 1 and 2. SOURCE: Photograph No. 469944, ARHS Railway Archives.

²⁷ *Propeller*, 31st August 1928, p. 3.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

The Public Transport Commission issued a plan on 4th March 1974 for the upgrading of the toilets on platform Nos. 1 and 2. Nothing happened for the next year. Then the plan was revised on 13th August 1975 with the work including:

- replacement of the existing corrugated iron sheeted wall between the main building and the toilet block facing platform No. 1
- quarry tiles covering the floors of both the male and female toilets
- reduction in the size of the urinal from 6 to 3 stalls and the replacement of the existing concrete urinal with a 6 feet long stainless steel unit
- installation of a hand washbasin in the male toilet (the first time such a facility had been placed in the male toilet at Carlton)
- new cisterns and toilet suites in two male and two female closets (the third female closet was to remain closed)
- ceramic wall tiles affixed to a height of 5 feet in each closet
- provision of a 6 feet long vanity in the ladies' waiting room with wall tiling above the vanity
- skirting placed at the junction of the floor and wall with one row of bullnose tiles, &
- vinyl floor tiling in the ladies' waiting room

In 1976, 204,243 tickets were sold at Carlton station but the number had declined by 16% to 172,664 in 1985.²⁹

On 11th April 1978, Ron Christie, the then General Manager, Way and Works Branch, approved the provision of a Kelvinator air-conditioner in the temporary booking office on the overhead bridge at Carlton.

²⁹ State Rail Authority, *Suburban Passenger Statistics 1976-1985*, ARHS Archives, location 2.47.



Photographer, Neal Munro, writes: In the early 1960's Flemington Depot was becoming congested, partly due to the increasing length of night trains to Melbourne and Brisbane with their new air-conditioned sleeping cars and the Spirit of Progress consists. The suburban fleet had also expanded with the single deck S-sets for the Penrith electrification and the single deck interurban fleet. ACDEP Eveleigh was on the distant horizon but adjustments had to be made with the maintenance of emu trains at Flemington. A re-shuffle of some suburban sets to Mortdale, Punchbowl and Hornsby was carried out. In addition, minor servicing of interurban emu trains such as cleaning and brake adjustment was carried out on some sets at Mortdale. The eight-carriage U-set in the photo taken in 1962 has been attended to at Mortdale and is proceeding empty cars to Central to commence an afternoon commuter service. It was to be another twenty years before these single deck U-sets became a regular sight on the Illawarra Line.³⁰**SOURCE:** Photograph No. 461167, ARHS Railway Archives.

DESTRUCTION OF THE 1923 OVERHEAD BOOKING AND PARCELS OFFICE AND THE REPLACEMENT FACILITIES – AUGUST 1978



³⁰ Email from Neal Munro on 26th November 2023.

These photographs taken on 25th November 1979 show the temporary use of two portable buildings following the fire.

1. THE FIRE

A fire started in the newsagency on the overhead concourse on 11th August 1978 and spread to the ticket and parcels office. Pat Prendergast, the Public Transport Commission Public Relations Officer at the time, said: "It is another in the long line of fires in booking offices" and that it was "a senseless act of vandalism".³¹ A temporary metal clad building acted as a booking office until a new brick structure was approved in 1979.

2. THE FIRST PLAN FOR A REPLACEMENT BOOKING OFFICE – SEPTEMBER 1979

It took the Way and Works Branch just over a year to issue a plan for a replacement building. Ron Christie was the General Manager of the Branch and he approved a plan on 11th September 1979. The brick structure was 7.5 metres (25 feet) by 7.5 metres. The combined ticket/parcels office was located on one side of the entry way. On the other side of the approximately 8 feet wide entry were two closets in a female toilet with two washbasins and two closets, a stainless steel urinal holding three standees and one washbasin in the male toilet. There was also a space for the ticket collector and his seat. There was a "bookstall" located opposite the stepway to platform Nos. 1 and 2. That plan did not go ahead.

3. THE SECOND ATTEMPT TO ERECT A REPLACEMENT BOOKING OFFICE – OCTOBER 1979



These two photographs were taken on 30th December 1995. On the left is the ticket office window and on the right parcels office window. While the fibreglass surround of the ticket window has been replaced with a new CityRail bullet-proof aperture, the similar feature around

³¹ *Daily Mirror*, 11th August 1978.

the parcels window has not been removed, merely repainted. The concrete floors were not covered with tiles.

Doug Neil had been acting in the top position for over a month when he approved a second plan on 30th October 1979 for the replacement building on the overhead concourse at Carlton, which had been destroyed the previous year. The overall design using a near flat roof hidden behind a wide fascia and face brick walls was the same as the earlier plan. However, there were two major changes. Firstly, the size of the combined booking/parcels office was reduced. It was still 7.5 metres (25 feet) on one side but the other side was truncated from a length of 7.5 metres to 5 metres (just over 16 feet). Whereas the first plan had a floor space of 56 square metres (183 square feet), the floor space of the revised plan was 37.5 metres (123 square feet). This was a reduction of nearly 50%. The second major change was the complete elimination of the male and female toilets opposite the booking/parcels office. The space proposed for those facilities was left vacant, though the future use was indicated by the words on the plan “paper stall”.



Taken from platform Nos. 1 and 2 looking north, the dominant feature of this 1995 photograph is the indescribable architectural style, which featured a near flat roof concealed by wide fascias. The architecture and the materials were a direct copy of what was occurring in the private sector for commercial buildings. The design held sway in the Way and Works Branch in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s because of its low cost. Facing the footbridge is the parcels window and the structure opposite the ticket office is the newsagency.

Doug Neil included a parcels counter protected by a roller shutter. Although there was no defined space for the Station Master, the staff did receive their own toilet, as well as a pie warmer, hot water urn and stainless steel sink. The structure was face brick with raked mortar. The near-flat Lysaght Colorbond Klip-Lock roof was concealed by a wide, “Panelrib” fascia with vertical ribbing. As usual, aluminium framed windows

were fitted at ceiling height except for the ticket and parcels windows which were expressed with fibreglass surrounds very similar to what had been applied in the same year to the ticket windows on the Eastern Suburbs Railway. The conventional ticket collection system was expressed by the use of welded swing gates with pipe barriers to control passengers leaving the station. A new style of glass in the ticket windows was fitted with a different arrangement of holes to that applied earlier in 1979 to similar alterations to booking offices at Flemington and Telopea.



This photograph shows the clinical simplicity of the design, namely a box with a flat lid. There is no architectural term that describes the features. The man leaning on the fence was the author's father and our Carlton visit was the last time he accompanied me on a station visit before his death in 1996.

There was nothing special about the design of the overhead booking and parcels office which had been approved in 1923 and built for the opening of the track quadruplicate to Hurstville in 1924. That was not the case in 1979 for its replacement.

The decision in 1979 to build a replacement overhead ticket/parcels office in brickwork was very significant. The New South Wales Railways had exclusively used non-masonry building products, particularly timber and asbestos cement sheets, for all overhead booking/parcels offices for the previous 80 years. The last brick overhead booking/parcels office approved was at Strathfield in 1899 and, unfortunately, either the supporting substructure was inadequately designed or the load of the brick building on top of it was excessive for the supporting structure. Whatever was the source of the problem, the New South Wales Railways provided additional supports for the overhead building.

The problem with the Strathfield crisis were reflected in its replacement by an underground facility in 1927. Prior to the Strathfield structure, the only previous brick buildings on the New South Wales system were at Redfern and Newtown in 1892. It would appear that the relatively small size of the proposed replacement overhead

facility for Carlton may have been an important factor in the decision by the Public Transport Commission to use face brickwork rather than the traditional timber frame and weatherboard cladding. In any case, the successful construction and existence of the Carlton building provided the assurance to Railway engineers and architects that they needed and, henceforth, the traditional use of timber framing gradually disappeared for overhead booking/parcels offices.

Arsonists also destroyed the interior of the Station Master's office at the northern end of the 1890 building on platform Nos. 1/2 on 14th October 1980. There was also an unsuccessful attempt to set fire to the female toilet. The whole of the building suffered smoke damage.³² The damage was repaired.



It is 11th February 1978 and the building at Carlton reflects the colours of the time – pastel blue on the building, green platform seats with yellow script, small blue rubbish bins and black and white circle-and-bar station nameboards. It was a time when vegetation on the platform was officially viewed as a positive feature.

THE IMPACT OF CITYRAIL

In the main, the establishment of CityRail in 1989 was good news for all stations in the metropolitan areas. Carlton got its red and white platform seats, red rubbish bins and new station nameboards. Unfortunately, there was one major blunder. It was the painting of all the walls of the historically significant overhead booking and parcels office. The work was carried out on the claim that it was easier for the staff to remove

³² *Railway Digest*, January 1980, p. 19.

graffiti, which was a claim applied to many stations. There was some validity to the assertion. It was not always possible to do a 100% good job of graffiti removal when the mortar was raked, as at Carlton. Nevertheless, in terms of the heritage significance of the station, the painting of the walls was a mistake.



Photographer, Chris Sim, captured the essence of CityRail in 1995 with the red platform reds, rubbish bins, red lamp standards. CityRail also chose to repaint the platform buildings in a shade of off-white with lilac trim. The application of paint repeated the policy of painting the platform buildings, which had existed at Carlton for 70 years at that time. Therefore, the painting of the bricks was not a sin in that case. Note that the pyramidal cap is still affixed to the top of the overhead electrification portal stanchion on the left.

CityRail placed a strong focus on staff working conditions and amenities from 1989. The installation of the revised design of the booking office workstations, with bullet-proof ticket windows and hearing loops, was carried out across the suburban network in the 1990s. In 1997, it was the turn of Carlton to get a new work station in the overhead booking office.

It was possibly at that time or thereabouts that CityRail erected the pre-fabricated, portable, uni-sex toilet adjacent to the newsagency on the overhead footbridge opposite the booking office. It is known to have been erected prior to 2004.



These two images show the (now closed) newsagency on the left and the unisex toilet on the right. They have been painted in the same shade of baby poo as the ticket office. Taken on 20th January 2020.

In March 1999, the then Shadow Minister for Transport, Michael Photios, met the Liberal Party candidate for the seat of Kogarah at the station and announced “multi-million financial commitments to upgrades at Hurstville, Allawah and Carlton railway stations”. Photios promised to provide easy access at Carlton and Allawah, if elected. The promise was not worth a cracker and the Labor Party remained in office until 2011.

In 2000, there was a massive programme to increase the number of CCTV cameras and those at Carlton were installed in that year.

A disabled toilet and store room were erected in 2006 on the footbridge as a part of the CityRail easy access programme. Unfortunately, the purging of every architectural position within the organisation in the 1990s and early 2000s resulted in a considerable downgrading of supervision of the work of contract architects. The new disabled toilet reflected the lack of supervision with the use of exposed fasteners to secure the composite wall panels to the steel frame. Concealed fasteners would have displayed a much smoother presentation but were simply not selected by the contractor and not supervised by the project manager.

It was CityRail which introduced its Easy Access Programme, with the target of providing lifts and ramps to all stations that required improved access. In January 2008, lifts were installed at the station. Leighton Contractors erected the equipment.

THE TIME OF SYDNEY TRAINS

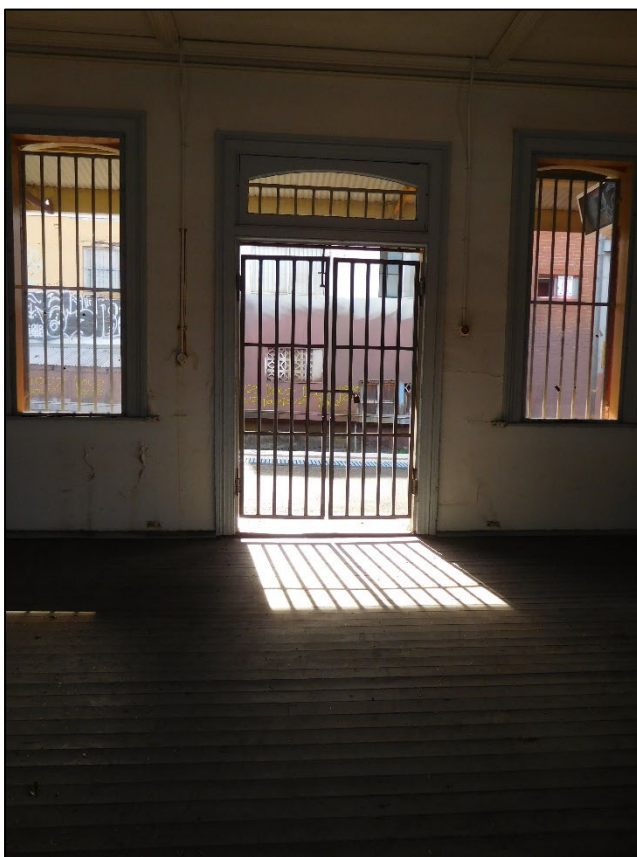
When Sydney Trains was established in 2014, it was the objective of the Liberal/National Parties coalition government to rename the metropolitan railway organisation from CityRail. The Government's next objective was the purging of all signage, logos, terms (e.g., Easy Access) and colours associated with the former administration. The work at Carlton to rebadge the station commenced in 2014 but, in the last ten years, the buildings do not entirely reflect the full impact of Sydney Trains. With a Labor Government in power from 2023, the station policies of the former coalition government have continued but Carlton station still mostly shows the colours before 2014.



*Treads on the stepway to the platforms were renewed in 2023, but the replacement programme has not yet extended to the stairs which reach beyond the railway boundary. Railway observer, John Stebbing, took this image on 9th January 2024 looking north. The key identifier of the time period is the trademark orange nameboards on the platform seats and light standards. The system-wide introduction of the orange and white nameboards started in the first year of the establishment of Sydney Trains in 2014. Ten years later, the orange paint is fading when exposed to direct sunlight and the plastic-like covering is peeling. A similar problem affects the yellow safety strip adjacent to the platform copings. However, not every item at Carlton station which was painted in the colours of the former CityRail has been eliminated. Overall, the walls of the buildings on the footbridge have not yet been repainted the current colours of Sydney Trains, namely dark grey and black and reflect the more energetic spirit of CityRail. Also, the white, loop top fencing survives at the ends of the platforms. **SOURCE:** John Stebbing.*



On the left is the 2008 built combined lift and store room. The store room has a door in the rear wall. The surface coating on the wall is already delaminating. Current station policy restricts access to the facility when all stopping trains operate from platform Nos. 3 and 4.



The closure of platform level waiting rooms is a policy that commenced in the 1980s in an attempt to stop the then rampant vandalism and graffiti. All subsequent administrations have continued the policy to some degree. This is the case at Carlton. The photographer is standing on platform No. 2 and its facing into the former general waiting room to platform No. 1 the date is 15th July 2023.



Neil Munro writes the caption to accompany his image above. He says: “The train was travelling very fast and moving away from the camera. In such circumstances, it is always difficult to judge the precise moment to capture the best image when milli-seconds are involved. The train was a limited-stop CityRail service from Cronulla was moving fast on the downhill run from Hurstville to Rockdale as it rockets through Platform No. 3 at Carlton on the Up Illawarra Main line on the 21st of September 2004. The train consists of a three-car S set leading a four-car S19, all seven cars being non-airconditioned carriages built by Goninan in Newcastle. While the heritage platform buildings are still extant, the former commodious booking office on the station footbridge has been replaced by a much less imposing structure. The parcels office has gone and no longer are there multiple ticket windows for the Monday morning commuter rush or to reserve a seat or sleeping berth on services to NSW and interstate destinations. The large and imposing advertising hoardings along the fence line have been removed and Station Masters would soon become an endangered species”.³³

SOURCE: Image No. 458006, ARHS Railway Archives.

SIGNIFICANCE

1. THE TRANSITION IN PLATFORM BUILDING DESIGN FROM THE 19TH TO 20TH CENTURIES

The buildings Carlton station received in 1890 were significant because they represented a transition from 19th to 20th century railway architecture. On the northbound platform was the 19th century tradition of using vertical posts to support the platform awning while, on the southbound platform, the use of cantilevered brackets represented the shift to 20th century architectural thinking.

³³ Email from Neil Munro on 3rd December 2023.

The suite of three structures on the northbound platform also reflected design changes associated with the departure of John Whitton. This was especially evident particularly in the placement of the three female closets in the section between the main building and the male toilet pavilion.

2. THE MODIFICATIONS IN 1924 TO THE BUILDING ON NOS. 3 AND 4 PLATFORMS

A part of the changes to the existing brick building involved the provision of a wider awning on platform No. 3 and a new awning on platform No. 4. What was built were called standard awnings and they were attached to the existing-but-lengthened building on the island platform. This standard awnings utilised what were known as standard awning brackets, which were cantilevered from the brick walls of the building. Unusually, engaged brick piers were provided standing proud of the building wall. What was applied to the building on both platforms is the only known example of engaged piers being added to an existing building when a cantilevered awning was added. Normally, the cantilevered brackets would be fixed to the existing wall without such piers.

3. THE FIRST BRICK TICKET OFFICE ON AN OVERHEAD BRIDGE IN 80 YEARS

There was nothing special about the design of the overhead booking and parcels office which had been approved in 1923 and built for the opening of the track quadruplicate to Hurstville in 1924. It was typical of what was being erected at other stations at the time.

On the other hand, the overhead ticket and parcels office in existence today was atypical and is very significant. In 1979, the then Public Transport Commission acted to build a replacement overhead ticket/parcels office in brickwork. The New South Wales Railways had exclusively used non-masonry building products, particularly timber and asbestos cement sheets, for all overhead booking/parcels offices for the previous 80 years.

The last brick overhead booking/parcels office approved was at Strathfield in 1899 and, unfortunately, either the supporting substructure was inadequately designed or the load of the brick building on top of it was excessive for the supporting structure. Whatever was the source of the problem, the New South Wales Railways provided additional supports for the overhead building after its opening. The problem with the Strathfield crisis were reflected in its replacement by an underground facility in 1927.

Prior to the Strathfield structure, the only previous brick buildings on the New South Wales system were at Redfern and Newtown in 1892.

It would appear that the relatively small size of the proposed replacement overhead facility for Carlton may have been an important factor in the decision by the Commission to use face brickwork rather than the traditional timber frame and weatherboard cladding. In any case, the successful construction and existence of the Carlton building provided the assurance to Railway engineers and architects that they needed and, henceforth, the traditional use of timber framing quickly disappeared for future overhead booking/parcels offices.

4. MATERIALS, METHODS AND COLOUR

The architecture of things at Carlton is not the only instrument to interpret the historical changes to the place. The buildings at Carlton station are composed of an array of changing materials, construction methods and colour. For instance, the platform buildings were erected in solid nine inch thick walls. The bricks on the overhead booking/parcels office are set with cavity brickwork – a construction method of a later time. The bonds that hold the brick in place also show the pace of time with English bond on the platform buildings and stretcher bond above the rails. Bricks were not the material of choice for the disabled toilet. Instead, a steel frame and composite wall materials were used.

Even the station access tells the story of the passing years – stairs and lifts. On the platforms, people stepped up six inches to enter buildings but not upstairs where level access is now mandatory.

The various railway administrations have chosen the colours of their time for the buildings. There is little doubt that Carlton station in the future will wear the greys and blacks of Sydney Trains. The changing hues to an extent mirror the aura and spirit of the social and economic milieu in which they were applied. Take the present. Black is the negation of colour; the colour of evil; the colour of the Dracula and the colour of death. Sydney Trains has chosen well for the 2020s.



Chris Sim took this photograph in 1997. He is standing at the northern end of platform Nos. 1 and 2. Yes. The red painted light standard is gone. So too has the gardens on platform Nos. 3 and 4. It is sad to think that Sydney Trains cannot support the planting of gardens as a means creating a better station environment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Donna Newton, Librarian of the Royal Australian Historical Society and to the staff of the State Library of New South Wales. Ian Hill, Neil Munro, Steven Neil, Chris Sim and John Stebbing were involved in the supply of photographs and captions. Many thanks to them.

Stuart Sharp

22nd January 2024



It's time to go to another station. I hope 3830 will stop for me! (Photograph by Steven Neil showing 3830 arriving at Carlton powering shuttles as part of the celebrations for the 150 year anniversary of the New South Wales Railways in 2005).