REDFERN
RAILWAY STATION
THE GATEWAY STATION

A GUIDE FOR INTERPRETATION

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INDEX

THE SYMBOLIC FUNCTION OF REDFERN RAILWAY STATION

Yes, Redfern station is large in physical terms compared with almost every other railway station in NSW. It is second only to the Sydney Terminal/Central complex in the number of platforms and number of trains that serve the station.

Redfern station is also amongst the largest stations in NSW in terms of people embarking and disembarking each day.

The foregoing aspects of the station form the functional aspects of the station. There is also an equally important function – its symbolic role.

At one time, most trains travelling to Sydney, except the North Shore line, passed through Redfern station. As the trains passed Illawarra Junction, they were boxed in on both sides by massive railway workshops, with timber shops on the left and metal shops on the right. For over one mile, trains entered a funnel of near-ceaseless bureaucratic activity where trains and their motive power were stored, cleaned, refuelled and maintained. The line was like a modern-day flight path that drew trains to the centre of the rail system, namely Sydney/Central station. It was a flight path not of aimless nothingness but of endless and impressive activity.

As next in line to the throne of size and activity, Redfern station was the gateway to the NSW railway empire. Once trains departed Redfern heading towards Sydney/Central, they had entered what Dr. John Bradfield called "the City Railway".[1] The Lawson Street road overbridge marked the boundary. No greater honour was there for a station to mark the change for trains girt by great but dirty and smokey workshops to a place which was the heart of the system.

Thus, the call of the Redfern platform staff "change here for ……" applied to the station's unspoken role as much to its functional tasks.

[1] *NSW Railway and Tramway Magazine*, 1/8/1923, p. 17

WAYS TO LOOK AT THE REDFERN RAILWAY BUILDINGS

1 EYES MAKING CONTACT BUT NOT SEEING THE BUILDINGS – EYES AND BRAIN UNLINKED

This is the normal position for many train users. For example, daily peak-hour commuters don't see any buildings. They are focused simply on their train and getting somewhere on time.

2 EYES AND BRAIN LINKED

The buildings in this mode are visually noted but uninterested to the viewer and are, thus, further ignored.

3 EYES AND BRAIN LINKED AND INTEREST IS ENGAGED

In this case, the viewer sees the buildings as objects built in a past time and that past time and the events that surround that time are the totality of their interest.

4 EYES AND BRAIN LINKED, INTEREST IS ENGAGED AND A PHILOSOPHY OF INTERPRETATION IS CONSIDERED AND APPLIED

In this way, the viewer selects one of the following ways to understand the buildings not just in their contextual, chronological setting but from a much wider perspective of broad economic, social and political considerations.

A major dichotomy will tend to sway viewers' assessment. That dichotomy depends on whether the viewer sees yesterday, today and tomorrow as linked in time, partially linked or not linked. If one accepts the last-mentioned position, it is going to be impossible to see any cohesion between the 1884 building on platform No. 1 and the 1980 ESR platforms.

Six ways of looking at the Redfern buildings are listed below.

i) As objects in a continuum of time with that continuum moving always, relentlessly towards something better – each building is an act of progress
ii) As objects of a system of government, where authority is held and power is exercised by organizations of bureaucrats paid to manage and maintain

sectors of the economy such as the railway system. In this case, it is the railway bureaucracy which makes the decisions about what, where and when

iii) As objects of a political philosophy – the Left seeing buildings as manifestations of power aimed at quieting the proletariat but not really meeting social needs – the Right believing that the buildings were erected with good intent and do really serve the travelling public – the Green aspiring to confirm the even bigger picture to help the environment – the laissez-faire where words are spoken, buildings built but there is no interest in whether the buildings serve any purpose.

iv) As objects of the capitalist financial system in which the buildings are built for the private sector contractors and not the travelling public

v) As objects of different philosophies at different times

Which is the correct way of looking at the Redfern buildings? That's a topic to engage every person and group who comes to Redfern station to have a look. One day, there just may be a clearer picture about what has been happening at Redfern over the past 130 years.

COMPARISON OF REDFERN'S BUILDINGS WITH THE DOMINANT DESIGN FEATURES OF NSW RAILWAY STATION BUILDINGS GENERALLY

UP TO 1989

(Note: there are always exceptions to what is stated below. After 1989, the selection of the overall design of station buildings was progressively transferred to private contractors)

THE PLANNING PROCESS

1. The dominance of engineers over architects
2. The autonomy of the Existing Lines Branch and the Construction Branches up to 1916, as evidence in the application of the 1897-1932 alpha-numerical classification system for platform buildings
3. The freedom granted to external architects that was not given to internal architects as to the use of innovative designs, materials and palettes
4. The extensive variations in individual design elements whilst retaining a similarity to other similarly designed structures
5. The allocation of the size and scale of the structure and level of decoration varies in accord with either the location served, the existence of a nearby, influential resident or the status of the place for railway purposes
6. The pivotal role of the availability of funds supplied by the owner, the State Government

CONSTRUCTION

1. Moderate in size – the majority of buildings being under 55 feet long and narrower than 12 feet wide
2. Restrained and even minimal ornamentation
3. The dominance of single-pitched roofs and the dominance of corrugated "iron" or other steel products as a roofing material – the near absence of terracotta tiles
4. Single-storey
5. Variations in as-built measurements amongst similarly designed examples and compared with architectural plans

FLOOR PLANS

1. Use of standard floor patterns but not necessarily standard plans
2. Separation of toilet entrances for male and females as far as is possible
3. The protection of entrances to ladies' toilets by the use of an ante-chamber, usually the Ladies' Waiting Room
4. The placement of the male toilet on island platforms at the end of the structure more distant from the entry point to the platform
5. The provision of separate spaces for each function, with minimal interconnection of rooms
6. The absence of open planning, high visual contact between staff and the public and the minimal use of glazing on the rail side

DESIGN FACTORS

1. The treatment of women as special people, as reflected in the provision of space exclusively for women and the use of different furniture and decorations
2. The hierarchy of spaces with superior room functions receiving higher quality or different materials or an absence of materials, such as the omission of internal wall longs or ceilings
3. The use of British system to sell tickets, namely through a narrow ticket window 24' high and 18" wide
4. The height of the sill of the ticket window – 4' above floor level
5. Ticket counters set at 3'height above the floor and extending the full width of the Booking Office
6. The 2' 6" width of the ticket counter, with a 6" cut in front of the ticket window
7. The placement of cupboards under the ticket counter
8. The absence of barriers at the point of entry to restrict people from entering the platform

PLATFORMS

1. Raised with a dominance of gravel as the surface material
2. The use of the words "wall", "face" and "batter" to mean the same thing
3. The use of different surface materials on one or both sides of a platform building for the length of the structures
4. Ramped at both ends until 1935 and then one end until 1972 then an absence of ramps
5. Narrow width of platforms, with 12 feet being the most common width
6. Use of non brick platform walls in rural areas and brick walls in cities
7. Seating that is generally 18 inches above the surface, a seat width of 18 inches and the height of the back of the seat at 18 inches

8. The provision of fencing at the rear of side platforms and the ends of island platforms

DISCRIMINATION BETWEEN CITY AND RURAL LOCATIONS

1. Dominance of brick in Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong and non-brick construction in rural areas
2. Use of external window hoods and internal wind scoops in rural areas and their absence in cities
3. Use of rain water tanks in rural areas and their general absence in cities
4. The location of male toilets off-platform in rural areas and on-platform in cities
5. The absence of ticket collection barriers and booths for Ticket Collectors in rural areas, allowing country people greater ease to avoid ticket inspection

THE PATTERN OF STATION BUILDING DESIGNS - NSW RAILWAYS

1855-2013

The designs of railway station buildings fall into distinct periods. These are set out below.

YEARS AND THEME OF PERIOD AND	DOMINANT STYLE OF THE RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION BRANCH	DOMINANT STYLE OF THE EXISTING LINES BRANCH	COMMENTS
THE PRE-WHITTON PERIOD – 1855 TO 1857	No dominant style	-	
THE BRITISH PERIOD 1858 TO 1871	Georgian style, hipped roofs for larger buildings: Gabled roofs for smaller buildings	No dominant pattern	Existing Lines Branch created in 1867 and under separate management until1869
THE EXPERIMENTAL PERIOD 1872 TO1880	No dominant pattern	No dominant pattern, apart from Georgian style, hipped roofs for Second Class buildings:	Existing Lines Branch re-created under separate management in 1878 and continues to exist until 1932
THE QUASI-NSW DESIGN PERIOD 1881 TO 1889 (half British and half Colonial influences)	Different styles for First Class stations: Carpenter's Gothic style for Second and Third Class buildings Awningless, gabled roofed buildings for the smallest stations	Different styles for First Class stations: Georgian style, hipped roofs for Second Class buildings: Gabled roofs for Third Class buildings	No discernible differences in designs in the two branches
THE CITY VERSUS	Predominantly small	Predominantly small	

YEARS AND THEME OF PERIOD AND	DOMINANT STYLE OF THE RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION BRANCH	DOMINANT STYLE OF THE EXISTING LINES BRANCH	COMMENTS
COUNTRY PERIOD 1890 TO 1924	to moderate timber structures in country areas and elaborate brick buildings in Sydney – pre-cast concrete from 1919 in country areas	to moderate timber structures in country areas and elaborate brick buildings in Sydney and Newcastle	
THE POOR PERIOD 1925 TO 1940	Pre-cast concrete in country areas and restrained, brick structures in Sydney to a residential design up to 1938 and then to the Inter-War Functionalist design	Timber in country areas and restrained brick in Sydney to a residential design up to 1938 and then to the Inter-War Functionalist design	Use of concrete buildings ceased in 1932
THE WAR PERIOD 1941 TO 1945	Timber buildings in country areas to the Inter-War Functionalist design	Brick buildings in Sydney to the Inter-War Functionalist design	
THE LONG DECLINE PERIOD 1946 TO 1971	Virtually no funds - No discernible pattern	Virtually no funds - No discernible pattern	
THE REBIRTH PERIOD 1972 TO 1988	No construction apart from ESR	Small, brick or metal-sided structures	ESR design by private contractors
THE EMERGENCE OF A DEDICATED URBAN RAILWAY - 1989 TO PRESENT	Brick, metal and composite materials of varying designs	Brick, metal and composite materials of varying designs	Approval of designs transferred to the private sector

SUMMARY OF APPROVAL DATES FOR THE EXTANT BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES AT REDFERN

PLATFORM NO.	DATE OF BUILDING	NOTES
Overhead Booking Office	1891	Multiple, subsequent additions and changes
1	1884	Open-fronted structure
1	1910-20	Large, brick building – season ticket workshop
1	1927	Small, brick building – male toilet
1	1918	Smoke chutes
2 & 3	1955	Awning
4 & 5	1912	Three bays of awning at Sydney end - Longest awnings on the NSW system at the time
6 & 7	1912	Three bays of awning at Sydney end - Longest awnings on the NSW system at the time
8	1912	Two bays of awning at Sydney end
9	1925	Two bays of awning at Sydney end
10	1925	One bay of awning at the Sydney end
10	1998	Concrete block building at Macdonaldtown end
11 & 12	1980	Underground ESR platforms
Not numbered	1948	Incomplete

SUMMARY OF NOTEWORTHY FEATURES OF REDFERN STATION

- The gateway station - the symbolic role denoting the change in the physical features of the NSW railway empire from dirty workshops to the heart at Sydney/Central
- Second largest station on the NSW rail system, behind Sydney Terminal/Central, in terms of the number of platforms
- Its existence is related to railway function (junction interchange), not the local community
- The rarity of the 1891 brick, overhead Booking Office – first off-platform sale of tickets in NSW
- The first use of Marseille tiles on a NSW railway building (on the overhead Booking Office)
- On platform No. 1, an early example of an urban platform building, manifested by the large, open-front waiting area
- The largest collection of buildings of the same design at any NSW station (platforms 4-10)
- The differences in the level of ornateness between the buildings on platforms 4-9 and platform 10)
- The evidence of the buildings on platform Nos. 4/5, 6/7 and 8 to show the birth of transport planning in NSW and the birth of the concept of a distinct Sydney urban conurbation – by the relative level of ornamentation above and below the windows and other details,
- The narrowness of the platform buildings (8’ 6’ internal - narrowest on the NSW Railway system)
- The way things can change – e.g. the contrast in presentation between the ESR platforms and the other platforms (width, signage, tiling) – the narrow platforms were the work of the NSW Railways while the ESR platforms were the work of external contractors
- Not all action is positive and progressive – e.g. the ugly, concrete block shelter on platform No. 10 at the Macdonaldtown end, the ruined brickwork on the 1891 overhead Booking Office and the ugly 1990s platform canopies
- The significance of the departmental branch structure as mirrored by the Season Ticket building on platform No. 1 and the stanchions penetrating the roofs on platform Nos. 4 to 10
- The role of politics in NSW urban transport – evident in the unfinished platforms

- The links to the Eveleigh railway workshops, reflected by the relics from the Macdonaltown end footbridge
- The importance of the station as a focus for local Aborigines

THE CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

THE QUASI-NSW DESIGN PERIOD - 1881 TO 1889

THE 1884 STATION – FOUR PLATFORMS

In this period, there was a clear move away from British architectural influences to something of a local, NSW style of station building.

The NSW Railways opened a station about 200 metres west of the present station in either 1876 or 1878, naming it Eveleigh. The station was opened well before the opening of the nearby Eveleigh railway workshops in 1884. In 1880, the *Sydney Morning Herald* (11th December, 1880, p. 3) stated that about 3,000 people lived in the area. Thus, the station was opened for local residents, not railway employees.

Nothing much is known of the station in the years between 1878 and 1884. Consistent with the strategy of the time, the two side platforms were staggered, i.e. not opposite each other. The up platform to Sydney was longer at 340 feet than the down platform, which was 270 feet. It was the custom at the time to check tickets at some place before reaching Sydney Terminal. The Redfern up platform was used for this purpose.[2]

At Redfern as elsewhere on the Main West to Strathfield, the platforms were not numbered but named. There were three platforms with a centre island platform flanked by a side platform on each side. The present No. 1 platform was the Up Platform. Next was the Centre Platform and, on the eastern side, was the Down Platform. This platform arrangement and names continued until 1892.

In 1885, a new station was opened at the current location. At that time, the platforms changed to parallel and opposite, consistent with the thinking of the 1880s. The only extant building dating from that period is the brick waiting room on the present platform No. 1.

The open-fronted platform building on platform No. 1 is an example of a style that was functional rather than decorative. Urbanisation accelerated in Sydney, as opposed to

[2] The checking of tickets at the destination point, namely Sydney station, did not commence until the opening of the present Sydney station in 1906. Before Eveleigh station was opened, there was a special platform just outside Sydney station where the ticket collector joined the train – see J. H. Forsyth, *Historical Notes on Main Suburban Line,* Vol. 1, Revised Ed., SRA Archives, 1981, p. 5

rural development, in the 1880s and, at a number of stations, large crowds of people used railway stations. Up to 1880, waiting rooms were generally enclosed using paired doors and fireplaces were fitted to keep waiting passengers warm in Winter. The difficulty of such structures was that the amount of internal seating was too small for the patronage waiting for trains. To address the situation, from 1880 buildings were approved with large, open-fronted waiting areas that were designed more for standing than seating. Table 1 below sets out other urban examples and the reasons why they were provided.

TABLE 1 –OPEN FRONTED WAITING SHEDS IN SYDNEY 1880-1890

YEAR BUILT	LOCATION	SINGLE BUILDING OR PIGEON PAIR ON OPPOSING SIDE PLATFORMS	EXPLANATION FOR USING THIS TYPE OF STRUCTURE
1881	Lidcombe	Pigeon pair	Large crowd attending Rookwood cemetery
1883	Redfern	Unknown	Junction station between Main West and Illawarra line
1883 & 1884	St. Peters, Sydenham, Arncliffe, Kogarah, Rockdale & Hurstville	Single	Unknown, stations opened to promote real estate development
1884	Tempe	Pigeon pair	Large crowd attending social activities on the Cooks River
1885	Como	Single	Large crowd attending social activities on the Georges River
1886	Strathfield	Unknown	Junction station between Main West and Northern line
1886	Stanmore	Similar, but not the same	Nearby, private school
1886	Rooty Hill	Single	Unknown
1887	St. Marys	Pigeon pair	Unknown

The present platform No. 1 structure has a symmetrical floor plan, the centre waiting area flanked by one each room each side. At one was a Ladies' Waiting Room and, at the other end, was a room for staff. The NSW Railways mirrored general social standards in the design of buildings. This was manifested in the main building on

platform No. 1. Women were treated as special people, compared to men. They had their own waiting rooms and the entrances to their toilets up to 1922 were fully protected by the Ladies' Waiting Room, which acted as an ante-chamber. At the same time as the present, largish building was erected on platform No. 1, a detached male toilet block was also built. It is extant, with its parapeted roof. The placement of male toilets on platforms was a sign of an urban located station. Usually, male toilets in rural areas were positioned off-platform, normally at one end of the platform.

There is also one further identifier of an urban station that the platform No. 1 building possessed. That feature is the symmetrical, hipped roof. Hipped roofs had been a feature of platform buildings in the 1860s and 1870s but they then fell out of favour for new lines constructed in the 1880s. During that last decade, new line construction featured either complex roof patterns or simple gabled roofs. Interestingly, while the plain, hipped roof was not used for new line construction, the designed was adopted by the Railway Commissioner for replacement buildings, especially for what was officially called Second Class stations. The hipped roof, as on platform No. 1, was a mark of a superior station but, more importantly, identified that Redfern was an urban station.

In short, the features of the main platform No. 1 building that indicate an urban station, than a rural station are:

- Open-fronted waiting area,
- Plain, hipped roof, &
- Detached male toilet on the platform

It may seem that the building on platform No. 1 was erected with knowledge that many Railway employees from the nearby workshop would be using the platform. While that might have been the case, it is more likely that the platform No. 1 building was designed with the knowledge that lots of people would be changing trains between the Main West railway line and the new Illawarra line, the first section of which was opened in 1884.

The junction of the two major trunk lines in 1884 was at Redfern station. The first Wells Street signal box controlled train movements through the station, diverting trains to one of the two lines. For the first time in the history of the NSW rail system since the design of Granville (Parramatta Junction) station in 1855, an island platform was used as opposed to side platforms. The 1884 configuration of the station was a centre island platform flanked by two side platforms, one of which is the present platform No. 1. The 1884 design at Redfern was replicated in 1886 for the junction between the Main West and the Main North lines at Strathfield.

THE CITY VERSUS COUNTRY PERIOD 1890 TO 1925

1. THE 1891 STATION – SIX PLATFORMS

In this period, there emerged differences in both design and materials between stations in Sydney and those in The Bush. Sydney got the handsome structures and mostly brick. The Bush got the reverse.

Chief Commissioner, E.M.G. Eddy, convinced the NSW Government to fund the amplification of the main lines that radiated from Sydney. For the section of track between Redfern and Homebush, he increased the number of running lines from two and three to four. The project was massive and involved the complete rebuilding of every station except Stanmore, Petersham and Strathfield.

For the new stations, Eddy insisted on a new design, which would emphasise the section of track as forming a distinct urban railway. Previously, the same design of buildings was applied to both rural and urban areas but Eddy changed that situation.[3] Using the 1884 configuration of platforms at Redfern as a template, he changed the layout of tracks at every station between Macdonaldtown and Homebush to the same as at Redfern, namely a centre, island platform which was flanked by two side platforms.

At all stations but Stanmore, Petersham and Strathfield, he erected the same style of timber buildings, with the centre platform containing the largest structure about 100 feet in length with single-room waiting sheds on the two side platforms. At Redfern, despite the existence of the 1884 building, he erected one of his newly designed buildings on platform No. 1. As he did elsewhere, he built a large timber structure on the present Nos. 2/3 platforms and a small shed on the present Nos. 4/5 platform. Eddy approved the demolition of all the 1884 platform buildings, apart from that on platform No. 1. There is a photograph of the 1891 main timber building, on the present Nos. 2/3 platform on the rear cover of *The Railway News*, February, 1990. Other photographs are in J. Sargent (Ed.), *RailScene NSW*, Vol. 12, p. 19 and in J. Richardson (Ed.), *Australian Railways Today*, p. 22

[3] The only example of Eddy's design outside the Redfern-Homebush corridor was at Katoomba, again in 1891. It is thought that Eddy applied the design at Katoomba to reflect a homey feeling to those elite people who holidayed at the then newly opened Carrington Hotel.

Eddy applied his exposure to British station design to the stations between Redfern and Homebush. The dominant design feature was a very wide timber fascia partly hiding a low-pitched, hipped roof. The English origin of the new design was shown in another feature of the design. The sale of tickets was conducted off-platform, either above or below platform level. Every station received a new booking office and all but Redfern and Newtown were located below the tracks in subways. It was Eddy who introduced at Redfern the idea of having one, central booking office. Up to that time, the policy of the NSW Railways was to provide a booking office on each platform.

At Redfern and Newtown, brick, overhead booking offices were erected. Some architects call the style Queen Anne but Conservation Architect, Paul Davies, is perhaps more sophisticated and more correct when he described the building as "restrained Queen Anne NSW Railway style".[4] This means that the structure had some features belonging to the Queen Anne style but these features were limited in presentation. These were very smart looking buildings with hipped roofs covered with flat terracotta tiles. This was the first application of this product, together with the Devonshire Street Railway Institute, on the NSW rail system. There was ornamental fretwork on the ridges of the roofs. Unfortunately, the roof of the building at Redfern was damaged and part of the roof was replaced at an early date with corrugated iron sheeting. Inside the Booking Hall, the high ceiling followed the shape of the roof and was covered with timber lining boards. The pleasing level of attractiveness can be seen in the newly restored booking office on King Street at Newtown station. Apart from a new building at Strathfield in 1906, the overhead booking offices at Redfern and Newtown remained the only such elevated booking offices erected in brick until a new brick structure was erected at Carlton in 1980.

Two of the three 1891 platform buildings at Redfern were demolished to make way for new brick structures in 1912. There was one exception. The Eddy influenced timber waiting shed survived on platform No. 1 - until 1984.

In 1906, the name of the station changed from Eveleigh to Redfern. This co-incided with the opening of the present Sydney station in the same year. Up until 1906, the common names for Sydney station were Central, Sydney, Redfern and Chippendale.[5]

In 1910, the official railway records show that a toilet was erected on the then platform No. 1, which is the present day platform Nos. 4 & 5. No doubt this male toilet was provided for the homeward thousands of railway workers using the station. On the roof of this 13 feet by six feet brick building were "asbestos slates". This roofing product was not long introduced on NSW Railway buildings. It was amazing that the internal walls were rendered with a half inch thick cement render. Like all male toilets, there was no

[4] P. Davies, *Redfern Station Heritage Assessment*, unpublished report for the State Rail Authority, 2007, p. 7
[5] Newspapers in 1855 stated that the location of the Sydney terminus was Chippendale.

ceiling in an effort to quickly evacuate the odious nature of the male ablutions. The sewerage system serving the local residential community had been connected to the station by this time and the water closet in the toilet was flushed by a concrete cistern above head height. It was activated by a chain hanging down towards the head of the occupant. The three stall urinal was very traditional with full height stall partitions. The urinal wall was formed of brickwork in cement mortar and strengthened by wire netting. The partition stalls were the traditional one inch thick slate sheets. Water washed onto the urinal from a cistern and discharged through perforated copper piping.

2. THE 1912 STATION – EIGHT PLATFORMS

From 1892, the platforms at Redfern, like all other stations on the Main West to Strathfield, were numbered 1, 2 and 3, much like ferry wharves at Circular Quay today. Today, platforms are generally numbered starting from the left facing Sydney from the country end. However, up at least to 1912 the reverse was the case. The present No. 1 platform was No. 3 platform up to 1912. It was a crazy system because trains were proceeding in opposite directions from the island platforms. The date when the platform numbering was altered to the present system is unknown.

Something very different happened in the early 20th century about the Sydney metropolitan area that did not happen in the 19th century – transport planning. This trend was reflected in the warrant for the establishment of the Royal Commission into the City of Sydney in 1908 and the delivery of its report in June, 1909. The concept of metropolitan railways using electric trains and serving a new, larger Central station were recommendations. In 1912, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works was taking evidence from John Bradfield about the construction of a Sydney Harbour Bridge. In 1913, the Town Planning Association of NSW was formed. The administration of Railways was deeply involved in these proceedings and, from the evidence of the works at Redfern station at the time, it is easy to say that the NSW Railways embraced the concept of a distinctly urban railway system.

Perhaps the best evidence of the difference of the first part of the 20th century was provided by the NSW Railways. In the Commissioner's *Staff Bulletin* No. 24 of October 1923, readers were told:

> 'In the last 10 years, the business offering the Railways has not increased at the same rate as in the 10 years prior to 1914. From 1905 to 1914, our business – passenger and freight – increased by 126%, while in the interval between 1914 and 1923, the business increase was only 25%'

In the one year ended 30th June, 1910, the Railway Commissioner reported a 65% increase in passenger and 9% increase in goods traffic over the previous year. In 1906, the then new Sydney Terminus station was far from completed when it opened. When work was under way on the new Sydney station, the NSW Railways was fearful that the project would be a white elephant. In 1901, it was stated that the new station "will mean a big expenditure upon which no return whatever can be realised, and one that will always, to the extent of the annual interest required, be a drag upon the whole railway system".[6] Firstly, the pessimism about the new Sydney station proved not to be true. In fact, the opposite was the case. Patronage exceeded all expectations in the following years by a very substantial degree. The then newly appointed Railway Commissioner, James Fraser, said that so rapid was the growth of passenger business than four additional platforms had to be provided at the Sydney railway station in 1914, in addition to the 15 platforms opened in 1906.[7]

Added to the surging increase in business and the developing urban focus and interest in transport planning was improved climatic conditions. The long drought from 1900 had ended. Wages had been depressed for a long period and did not meet their 1891 levels in real times until 1909. Times were much better after 1910.

The Labor Party took office from 1910 for the first time in NSW and held office until 1916, at which time the debates on conscription split the Party. With the Labor Party as a strong political force, public servants generally and railway workers specifically became much more aware of the politics around them. This was manifested, not much further in time, as the great Railway Strike of 1917 which endured for months.

Another indicator of both the propitious timing for Redfern station and transport planning generally was the creation, for the first time, of the portfolio of Minister for Railways in 1916. The NSW Railways took over direct management of all Railway Refreshment Rooms in 1916 in order to improve service to the public and, in 1917, the Railway Commissioner's duties were enhanced by the addition of the construction of new railway lines, a task formerly performed by the Department of Public Works. Sometimes, the appointment of a new Commissioner or the head of a relevant branch of the NSW Railways explains a change in station designs or a change in the level of decoration. This was the case in 1891 when both the Chief Commissioner and the Engineer-in-Chief were relatively new in the jobs and the outcome was the 1891 timber platform buildings and the existing Booking Office on Lawson Street. This possible explanation did not apply in 1912. There were no staff changes until 1914. Thus, it was the political, social and economic environment that produced the buildings on platform

[6] The *NSW Railway Budget*, 21/8/1901, p. 273

[7] James Fraser, *The Development of the NSW Rail System*, an address to an interstate Gathering of the Institution of Civil Engineers, October, 1919

Nos. 4/5, 6/7 and 8 and these exist today to mark the 1910-1917 period as very different from the period before 1910.

In 1912, planning was underway to double the existing two tracks between Redfern and Sydenham on the Illawarra line, making the four tracks between these two locations. This was a massive project that involved the relocation of the junction between the Main West and Illawarra lines and the construction of a new, signal box positioned above the tracks towards Macdonaldtown which was opened in 1916.[8] Although the signal box was closed in 1979, the location still is known as Illawarra Junction.

The NSW Railways initially proposed a completely new station for Redfern. New, brick structures were planned for all platforms. However, no doubt because of the very high financial cost involved, the Railways decided not to provide new structures on platform Nos. 1 and 2/3. Platform No. 1 was left as it was. Another important reason for not placing a brick building on platform Nos. 2/3 was the lack of space to fit all the new platforms. Two additional platforms had to fit into the available space. To squeeze in all the platforms, the Railways made them amongst the narrowest on the State railway system. The decision was made to completely eliminate a building on platform Nos. 2/3 and to provide a very narrow platform. The NSW Railways built a large covered waiting area. On all the platforms, the internal width of the buildings was 8 feet 6 inches, the narrowest on the entire NSW rail system.[9] The layout of the platform buildings was based on a linear model, with individual rooms placed one after each other. No rooms were located side-by-side across the platforms. It was policy to position the male toilet at the end of the building farthest from the entrance to the platform. The platform buildings at Redfern accorded with the then prevailing policy, being located at the Macdonaldtown end of the building. However, with the construction of a footbridge at the Macdonaldtown end in the same year, the layout policy did not fit the circumstances at Redfern.

The buildings on platform Nos. 4/5, 6/7 and 8 contained a Ladies' Waiting Room, which also acted as an ante-chamber to the ladies' toilet and male toilets, which were entered from the Macdonaldtown end of the buildings. The location of the male toilet was consistent with the general NSW Railway policy of locating the entrance of the male toilet as far away as possible from the entrance to the female toilet. This policy remained in force until 1965. There was one significant concession made to the buildings on platform Nos. 4/5, 6/7 and 8 that was absent from similar designed examples at other locations. This exception was the large, covered waiting areas at the

[8] The signal box at Illawarra Junction was one of only two signal boxes positioned above running lines, the other being West Box in Sydney yard. Wells Street signal was designed and built above a rail track but the track under the signal box was never installed.

[9] The buildings on platforms 4/5, 6/7 and 8, erected to same design, are visible in a photograph in *The Railway News*, February, 1990, rear cover

Sydney end of the buildings. No doubt, this was an acknowledgement of the large number of Railway employees waiting to catch homeward trains at the end of their shifts at the nearby workshops.

The roofs of the buildings on platform Nos. 4/5, 6/7 and 8 were covered with corrugated iron sheets. A cement product, officially known as concrete or asbestos slates had been in use from 1908 but this was not used at Redfern at this time. Yes, it had been used for a male toilet in 1910 but that applied to a small, insignificant structure. Believe it or not, corrugated iron was officially considered superior to the concrete product, which was generally restricted to locations outside Sydney and Newcastle. Again, this was an example of discrimination against rural stations. Overall, discrimination between Sydney/Newcastle and The Bush did not exist before 1912 on the NSW railway system so far as the design of buildings is concerned.

The decision was made to place buildings of the same design and size on platform Nos. 4/5, 6/7 and 8. This was a radical departure from the previous policy that had existed from 1855 which dictated a hierarchy of buildings. Station Masters had their offices in the larger or largest building that formed the station complex. This structure would normally be of superior detail, superior size or superior materials or all of these options. With the provision of buildings for the 1912/13 changes, all the new platform buildings were of the same size, ornamentation, material and floor plan.

Because platform No. 8 was a side platform, the plan for the building on platform No. 8 had tuckpointing only on the rail side and the end wall nearer to the steps, the other walls were silicone painted with brickwork in cement. In contrast to the other buildings, there was clear glass in the nine little panes in the upper sash rather than the multi-coloured, Cathedral glass and “C” class glass in the lower sashes.

All the buildings on platform Nos. 4/5, 6/7 and 8 possessed the same level of ornamentation, apart from the colour of the glass. Their high degree of presentation relative to what was being built in rural NSW at the time, demonstrates the birth of the concept of an urban identity for Sydney. Although the general design had existed since 1892, the Redfern buildings were amongst a group of structures approved between 1912 and 1924 that were highly and consistently decorated of all the examples built between 1892 and 1935. While it is argued that the buildings had the highest level of ornamentation, their design features were not architecturally excessive, but sufficient to be attractive; not expensive but appropriate for the time and not large but adequate for the intended functions.

The buildings on platform Nos. 4/5, 6/7 and 8 had extensive use of render above and below the windows, a moulded string course around the external walls, stone corbels supporting the awning brackets, tuck-pointing of the mortar between the bricks and

moulding around doorways. One feature adorned these buildings that had been only introduced the year which the buildings were approved – 1912. It was the addition of what were officially known as nameplates or nameslips. The name of the station was expressed in white letters against a blue glass background in a rectangular section of lower window sashes at window sill level. The family of buildings to which the Redfern examples belonged had a long history. The design was first used in 1892 at Kiama and examples of 1895 are extant at Marrickville, Canterbury and Belmore. At the outset of the design, the examples were very ornate and there was a considerable amount of variation amongst examples. From 1912, the NSW Railways decided upon a uniform level of treatment for stations in the Sydney and Newcastle urban areas and this treatment was implemented from 1912 to 1922.[10] On platform Nos. 4/5, 6/7 and 8, the buildings at Redfern accorded to the standard that applied at all Sydney stations at that time.

The structures had a combination of 19th century Victorian detail and 20th century influences of the Federation period. These are set out below.

The elements of the platform building at Redfern that reflected the Federation influence were:

- The use of face brickwork for all external building walls
- The square-headed windows
- The use of small, multi-coloured window panes for the top sash for all windows and for fanlights above doors.
- The corbelling of the brickwork on the chimneys
- The style of the terra cotta pots on top of the chimneys
- The position of the moulded string course around all four sides of the building exterior
- The application of a soldier course of brickwork above the windows
- The moulding under the window sills
- The gabled ends of the building
- The design of the finials on the gables

However, there were features of the platform building that had their origin in the preceding period of 19th century Victorian architecture. These were:

- The use of four-panel doors with the smaller panels at the bottom of the doors
- The use of render on the building exterior as a design feature
- The existence and design of the chimney pots of any style

[10] There was discrimination against stations in rural areas, which were often treated with lower levels of ornamentation, such as the Telegraph Office at Bathurst in 1917, which omitted the moulded string course and possessed a fitting not seen on Sydney stations, namely a fixed weather hood over a rear window.

- The use of corrugated iron on the roof rather than Marseille tiles

The design style that was applied at Redfern was first used by Henry Deane, Engineer-in-Chief, Railway Construction, in 1892 for the station at Kiama. Kiama station building was 108 feet in length and additionally contained a separate office for the Station Master and a separate parcels office. At that time, Kiama was the only example on the South Coast line but Deane extended the use of the design in 1895 for Marrickville, Canterbury and Belmore on the Belmore branch. From then on, the style became the standard until last used at Wickham in 1935. It was also adapted as the design for some pre-cast concrete buildings in rural areas. The whole architectural thrust of the Edwardian period was to strip away at the high level of ornamentation on buildings that were features of the Victorian era.

In the decade that followed the construction of the Kiama building in 1892 until the design of the structure at Redfern, a large number of both Victorian and Federation building elements had been stripped from the 1892 example. This trend was to continue in roughly chronological order until the last Federation influenced example was planned at Wickham in 1935, Condobolin and on No. 1 platform at Pennant Hills. All the stylistic influences that were discernible at Redfern had disappeared by 1935.

Materials were applied to stations in a hierarchical fashion and the fact that brick was used at Redfern for the platform building would have meant in the 19th century that the station served an important location. A strange practice in NSW was the application of a timber screen to cover the opening to the men's closets, rather than brick, from 1892 to 1924. Because timber deteriorated much faster than other materials on the platform, it was often the case that the timber screens were either eliminated or replaced with brick screens in later years.

The platform buildings at Redfern represented a transition of design characteristics from the Victorian to the Edwardian and Federation influences. The buildings erected at Redfern were not structures that boldly reflected the fullness of Federation architecture. Much Federation decoration used on private houses was missing. Instead, the people got a design that reflected the mixture of social, political and economic events then happening, plus a big dollop of past railway practices. In particular, this included the birth of urban transport planning, cultural practice of the railway organisation and influences that were affecting domestic architecture generally. Designs of platform buildings in NSW changed slowly and the rail administration, by using a mixture of Victorian and Edwardian features, showed that the organisation was as much living in the past with past traditions as it was surviving in a contemporary world.

More importantly, the examples at Redfern did not contain some of the more exquisite design features of a few examples of Federation design, as at the super-detailed building at Bankstown in 1909. In this latter case all door and window openings were chamfered and featured attractive stop-chamfered bricks. In other words, the buildings at Redfern do not contain the very highest level of design elements that a few other examples possessed but they contain a higher degree of prettiness of the vast majority of buildings erected between 1892 and 1912 and between 1924 and 1935. While the railway administration gave Redfern station an elegant and superior appearance, designers believed that they did not warrant maximum level ornamentation and stylistic treatment. The politics of visibility was based on meeting perceived community expectations and the NSW Government Railways successfully achieved this objective through careful design work.

In the year that the buildings on platform Nos. 4/5, 6/7 and 8 were built, namely 1912, approval was given for the construction of the same style of building at 19 other stations. Ten were to be brick and ten were to be timber. Only two examples of the brick version were proposed in rural NSW, namely a completely new, but very plain, station at the long-term, up-scale site of Lochinvar and the Railway Refreshment Room at Temora. All the timber examples were outside the area of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. Hence, the Redfern buildings are a manifestation of the dichotomy between urban and rural NSW. After the construction of the building at Redfern, more buildings of the same style, with the same level of decoration, were built particularly in Sydney and particularly in brick.

The 1912 and 1925 buildings at Redfern belonged to a class of building that contained 266 examples. Some 143 were in brick (54%) and 123 in timber (46%). About 86 examples, or approximately one third, were erected in Sydney, used both for new and replacement buildings. Of these, all but 17 or 80% of the examples in metropolitan Sydney were constructed in brick. In 1911, the NSW Railways decided to adopt the policy of using brick exclusively in Sydney and Newcastle for new platform buildings and, thus, Redfern was an early example of the new policy.

As well as the platform buildings at Redfern, additions were made in 1913 to the overhead booking office on the eastern side to provide an expanded Booking and Parcels Office as well as an office for the Station Master. “Shingle tiles” were to be placed on the roof to match the 1891 structure. The Station Master’s office was 20 feet six inches by 13 feet six inches. On the eastern or left side, the new Booking and Parcels Office measured 30 feet by 20 feet. There was an enlargement of the Booking Hall 55 feet six inches by 21 feet because of the elimination of the former separate Parcels Office on the western side and its subsequent amalgamation with the Booking Office on the opposite or eastern side of the Booking Hall. On the western side, the original but, after the 1913 changes on the eastern side, non-matching pavilion

comprised a room 25 feet by 12 feet wide occupied by the Signal Inspector's Clerks. Unfortunately, the additions ruined the symmetry of the original structure and marked the start of a period of unsympathetic, evolutionary additions and alterations to the building. Conservation Architect, Paul Davies, reflected that the varying roof styles were "without any logic".[11]

As part of the changes to the station the steel, beam footbridge at the Macdonaldtown end of the station was erected in 1913. The plan specifically stated that the footbridge was intended for railway workmen, not rail customers. This is most easily demonstrated by the fact that the footbridge was not placed on the platforms but 50 or more feet from the end towards the workshops. For some inexplicable reason, the footbridge did not originally serve No. 8 platform until 1919. R. Butcher, *The Great Eveleigh Railway Workshops*, privately published, 2004, p. 187 referred to the structure as "the bridge that thousands of workmen plied each year, shoulder to shoulder with keen Sydney University students taking a shortcut"

In 1916, the Engine Dive, then called the Up Engine Dive, from Eveleigh locomotive workshops was opened under platform No.1.[12] This tunnel allowed locomotives to proceed from the locomotive running sheds to Sydney Terminal station without crossing the main lines at grade. The smoke chutes, or troughs as they were officially named, were erected on platform No. 1 in 1918.

Although the date of the Season Ticket building on platform No. 1 is unknown, it appears to have been occupied between 1910 and 1920 for the production of metal, season tickets. Metal tickets had been in use at least as early as 1901. The building may have existed before 1910. More important than the date is its location on the platform. Space was at a premium on both side of the rail corridor. Many of the branches of the NSW Railways had buildings at one or both of the two Eveleigh sites. Behind platform No. 1, the Signal and Telegraph Branch erected in 1912 a brick workshop measuring 95 feet by 24 feet.[13] It survives. The Season Ticket building belonged to the Traffic Branch and the only space that Branch controlled in the area was on the Redfern platforms. Thus, the building tells two stories. Firstly, it is a reminder of the high level of railway activity at Eveleigh and, secondly, it is a mirror into the way the NSW Railways was organized into functional branches.

Another strong indicator of the branch structure of the NSW Railways is reflected by the penetration of the roofs on platform Nos. 4 to 10 by the steel stanchions that support the overhead wiring system. These were erected in 1926 but many of them were replaced

[11] Davies, op. cit., p. 34

[12] On the NSW Railways, a dive is one underground railway track under another at-grade railway track, excluding minor sidings such as those provided for the loading of locomotive ashes. It is a tunnel.

[13] R. K. Butcher, *The Great Eveleigh Railway Workshops*, privately published, 2004, p. 20

in the second half of the 1980s. Each of the branches was virtually autonomous and did what it pleased. The platform buildings were under the control of the Way and Works Branch but the overhead stanchions were under the management of the Electrical Branch. It is outrageous that the Electrical Branch would not relocate its stanchions away from the roofs of the platform structures. It was an act of departmental arrogance that the Electrical Branch penetrated the roofs of the Way and Works Branch buildings. The penetrations remain to tell the story.

THE POOR PERIOD 1925 TO 1940

THE 1925 STATION – TEN PLATFORMS

In this period, there was declining funding for railway stations and standards of station presentation declined.

Major alterations were underway between Central and Redfern in the early 1920s. These were associated with the commencement of the underground City Circle. The major visible component of the project in the area was the construction of what became known as the Flying Junctions, a devise which gave maximum flexibility to train operations. Trains to and from Central were able to be routed to proceed in either direction around the City Circle.

Another part of the project involved major track changes between the Cleveland Street road overbridge and Redfern station. The third signal box opposite Wells Street was built, opening on 3rd October, 1926, and closing on 20th October, 1979, in conjunction with the opening of Eastern Suburbs Railway (ESR). Redfern station was flanked by two of the most unusual signal boxes on the rail system, both built above running lines but one (Wells Street) parallel to the rail lines and the other (Illawarra Junction) transverse to the lines. These elevated signal boxes added to the role of the rail corridor between Illawarra Junction and Wells Street as the throat leading to the head of the NSW Railways at Sydney Terminal/Central.

Alterations were made to the building on platform No. 8 to accommodate the new platform No. 9 and the conversion of the platform from a side to an island platform. This building was, like the others at Redfern, amongst the narrowest on the NSW rail system, being only eight feet six inches wide internally. A new side door to General Waiting Room was provided. As the platform No. 9 side of the structure had no openings or awning, new awning brackets and an awning were planned and built. As well, planning for a new platform No. 10 and building were approved.

A new side platform No. 10 was built. It was 520 feet long, which had been the standard length of platform throughout NSW since 1912. Alterations were made to the building on platform No. 8 and a new awning for the platform No. 9 side. Doors were inserted into the side of building. At the ends of the awning, vertical timber six inch wide by one inch thick curtain boarding was provided to match was built. There was a new brick building on the new platform No. 10. It was 65 feet six and a half inches by 11 feet wide internal. There was cavity brickwork on three sides but not for the wall on the side facing the track, which was formed by a traditional nine inch thick double brick wall. There were a General Waiting Room and a Ladies' Waiting Room with porched entry to the female toilet . The relative economy of the platform No. 10 building, when compared to its more beautiful sisters on platform Nos. 4-9, was reflected in the following features:

1. Ugly, dark brown face bricks from the State Brickworks,
2. Use of monochrome brickwork, rather than contrasting colours,
3. Absence of rendered string course around external walls,
4. Omission of ornate window heads,
5. Omission of doors to the General Waiting Room,
6. Square window and door reveals, rather than shaped or chamfered reveals
7. Replacement of timber finials with small zinc "terminals",
8. Omission of tuck pointing for the brickwork,
9. Bullnose bricks for window sills in place of render,
10. Absence of heating in waiting rooms,
11. Use of 21 oz, clear rather than multi-coloured glass in the nine small panes in the upper window sashes,
12. Concrete corbels supporting the awning brackets rather than stone,

Other features of the platform building were:

1. roof was covered with No. 26 gauge corrugated iron, not Fibrolite as at Newtown
2. small open waiting area at Sydney end,
3. render and set internal walls
4. stock cornices
5. The use of concrete for toilet and Out of Room floors
6. The name of the station was at the bottom of the lower window sash
7. Mill Rolled glass louvres used in toilet windows,
8. Brick arches over doors and windows,
9. "G" class glass in all lower window sashes ,
10. No. 16 gauge iron roof ridging,
11. 11 feet six inch ceiling height &
12. small corrugated iron for ceilings
13. application of a traditional NSW Railway palette of stone shades on non-brick surfaces

The NSW Railways was not particularly over-generous when it came to provide platform seating. For example, in D. Estell et al, *Coaching Stock of the NSW Railways*, p. 201 there is a photograph that shows only one platform seat on platform Nos. 4/5. Other classic NSW Railway station features in the photograph include the use of Locksley granite on the platform surface and picket fencing for the access way to the Macdonaldtown end footbridge.

With the construction of the track amplification to ten tracks between Redfern station and Illawarra Junction, the Illawarra Dive was constructed.

In 1927, the existing brick toilet on platform No. 1 was erected for the male staff at the Season Ticket Building, both of which survive on platform No. 1.

Electrification stanchions were erected to cover platform Nos. 3 to 10. When built, the structures were topped with elegant pyramidal caps. This was a standard design feature for all overhead wiring structures until 1957. The caps at Redfern lasted until the mid 1980s but have now all been replaced. A photograph showing the caps is in R. Preston, *Tender into Tank*, Second Ed., p. 142. It also shows the platform walls, and station nameboards in the 1960s.

The footbridge at the Macdonaldtown end was altered as part of the electrification scheme. Three changes were made. Firstly, it was extended to serve platform No. 10. Secondly, as the catenary system was affixed to the underneath of the footbridge, protective safety screens were affixed to the balustrades to protect users against misadventure through electrocution. Thirdly, the original deck of Malthoid sandwiched between two layers of hardwood timber was replaced by pre-cast concrete slabs. This was an unusual and early use of concrete at the time.

Baffle screens were also placed underneath the Lawson street concourse and footbridge to help stupid people from being electrocuted by the overhead catenary system.

In 1934, a very small, timber parcels shed measuring ten feet by seven feet was erected at the Central end of platform No. 5

In 1938, a timber Ticket Collector's cabin was placed on eastern side of the Macdonaldtown end footbridge to replace gates measuring two feet eight inches wide by three foot six inches high.

Also in 1938, approval was given for the provision of additional Booking Office which was proposed for the corner of Wells Street and Gibbons Street. Like most other well-intended projects in this period, the structure was not built.

THE LONG DECLINE PERIOD 1946 TO 1971

It was in this period that State Governments largely abandoned funding for the vast majority of the fixed station infrastructure throughout the State.

In 1948, work started on new station buildings on the site on present ESR entrance. It was intended for the never-built Southern Suburbs Railway. In 1954, a financial estimate was made for a pair of Otis escalators to cover a vertical distance of 42 feet two inches. Nothing happened.

The first new structure at the station for 17 years was approved in 1955 as part of the works to electrify the two main lines passing through the station to Sydney Terminal. These lines had been omitted from the 1926 electrification scheme because these tracks were used only for long distance, steam hauled passenger trains. It was proposed to replace the 1891 timber building with a simple awning on platform Nos. 2 and 3. Two plans were prepared for the 24 foot wide platform. One plan involved the construction of an awning 40 feet long and the other for a 100 foot long awning. Both options featured what was called an “umbrella style awning” (i.e. a butterfly) roof. The smaller, cheaper version was built in 1957. It had a corrugated iron on roof initially and the RSJs were welded, not riveted. This was a highly unusual technique at the time. J. Sargent and I. Dunn (Eds.), *Locomotive Profile NSW Railways 40 Class*, p. 33 has a photograph of the 1957 awning on platform Nos. 2 and 3 and also shows pre CityRail seating and the Macdonaldtown end footbridge. The Circular Quay station, built at about the same time as the awning was riveted construction for the railway component. At that time, Lawson Street was called Wells Street.

At the same time, No. 1 platform was extended at the Macdonaldtown end to 520 feet, which was the standard length for eight car, suburban electrification trains.

In 1956, approval was given for the largest project at the station in over 30 years but the structure was not located at the passenger station site. It was the massive parcels depot in Wilson Street. It was 76 feet by 39 feet. Its large size was a reflection of just how much manufacturing industry was located around the station. The facility was erected in 1960, taking four years to find the capital funding.

Also in 1960, pre-stressed, pre-cast concrete slabs were laid on platform No. 1 as a trial for a distance of 327 yards. The slabs were laid by the Monier Brick Company, being one of the very times that private contractors did work on any NSW railway station between 1910 and 1970.

Approval was given for the Trading and Catering Service, which was the rebadged Railway Refreshment Room, to provide small food and drink outlets, officially called kiosks, in 1963 on platform Nos. 4/5 and 8/9. It is unknown whether these were provided.

In 1971, the then Department of Railways continued work at Redfern station on the concourse entry to the proposed ESR platforms. At that time, the steel frame was erected. The work on the ESR project had been kick-started as a result of the election in 1965 of the Askin-Culter coalition to State government. That election in 1965 was the first occasion when rail transport, including the completion of the ESR, became a major platform item in the suite of election promises.

THE REBIRTH PERIOD -1972 TO 1988

In this period, action started by the creation of two new organizations with the specific task of upgrading NSW's rail system. State Governments provided funding for the first time in 50 years to help revitalise the State rail system.

1. THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT COMMISSION – 1972-1979

When the Public Transport Commission was established in 1972, some stations benefitted. Redfern did not, at least initially. New blue spot stickers adorned the walls of the parcels depot but that was about the end of any improvements. During the 1970s, the original timber picket fences from the Macdonaldtown ends of the platforms to the footbridge were replaced by Weldmesh fencing. A photograph of the work is in Beckhaus and Halgren, *Sydney's Electric Trains*, p. G104. The poor condition of the platforms is evident in another photograph in the same volume, p. Q178.

In the 1970s, the Macdonaldtown end footbridge was renovated by use of Colorbond to replace the existing balustrade screens and additional strengthening took place. In 1975, the PTC proposed the demolition of the 1891 Lawson Street Booking Office but, at that time, opposition from the heritage industry thwarted the proposal. Then, the station building was still in its 1954 white paint but the condition of the paintwork was horrendously bad.[14] The paint was removed during the 1986 upgrade but at the cost of damaged mortar and bricks. In 1954, the only concession (Railway speech for retail outlet) at the station was located on the eastern side of the station entrance. A florist had direct access from Lawson Street.

[14] There is a photograph of the condition of the building in *NSW Digest*, Vol. 15 No. 8, December, 1975

A humpy for a Ticket Collector was placed on the Macdonaldtown end footbridge at an unknown time on the University of Sydney side after students were allowed to use the facility to gain a shortcut access to Wilson Street. A photograph of the humpy is in N. Gee and J. Sargent (Eds.), *Railmotor Profile - NSW Railmotors*, Studfield, Train Hobby publications, 1999, p. 12.

R. and B. Wheatley, *Railway Portraits*, Vol. 2, privately published, 2006, p. 7 has a photograph of the overhead booking office in 1977 showing the cupola and no awnings. P. 6 shows the pedestrian bridge at the Macdonaldtown end of the platforms.

J. Sargent (Ed.), *Locomotive Profile NSW 43 Class*, p. 20 has a photo taken from the Macdonaldtown end footbridge looking in the Central direction in 1977. It shows all platform buildings, including the metal clad structure on platform Nos. 2 and 3. Note that all the male toilets in the platform buildings were located at the Macdonaldtown end, away from the primary station entry.

2 THE STATE RAIL AUTHORITY - 1979-1988

In 1979, the Eastern Suburbs Railway (ESR) opened from 23rd June but it operated for the first year as a shuttle between Central and Bondi Junction. The ESR was integrated into the Illawarra line on 20th July, 1980 and new platform Nos. 11 and 12 were provided at Redfern from that date. This was the first major change in over 50 years. Wide platforms, colourful wall and floor tiling, modern tri-level signage and an electronic ticket system made the rest of the station look outdated at best and neglected at least. A photograph taken in 1981 in Geoff Moss, *Sydney's Electric Trains*, p. 155 shows the poor quality of the platform surfaces, the condition of the original stepways, the circle and bar and rectangular platform nameboards, the Bath style (pull-down) platform train indicators and the universal white paint on building exteriors. The overhead footbridge at the Sydney end was extended at this time to serve the ESR platforms.

Two additional platforms were intended to be provided at Redfern in the 1948 ESR scheme but these have never been developed. They were marked in 1948 as being for the "Down Southern Suburbs" and "Up Southern Suburbs" railway lines. The area for the two platforms is visible from platform No. 11.

There was one very important thing that occurred in the 1980s. It was the new Chief Executive of the then State Rail Authority (SRA), David Hill, who was appointed foundation Chief Executive in 1980. Hill had the 100% backing of the then Premier, Neville Wran, to "fix" the NSW Railways. The support Hill got was massive in terms of capital funding. For the first time in the history of Sydney's stations, Hill actually had a strategy to improve passenger facilities. He decided that priority would be given to

those stations whose role was fundamental, either as junction interchange stations or locations used by large numbers of commuters. It was called the *Major Station Replacement Programme* and commenced in 1981 with six stations to be completed by 1983. Those stations for which work was well advanced formed the initial stations in the Programme. Redfern was included in another programme, called the Station Works Programme, in 1981/82 to upgrade the existing toilets. Major works were not far away. While Redfern fitted the bill as a major station in both respects of high numbers of commuters and as an interchange location, the SRA renamed the Station Replacement Programme because stations were not be replaced but merely upgraded. Hence, the Station Upgrading Programme was born.

In July, 1983, the SRA issued a Press Release in which it listed the works at various stations in the State Government's 2.6 billion dollar Station Upgrading Programme. Redfern station was amongst the list. In 1984, David Hill approved the upgrading of the station by the selection of colourful wall tiles in the public area of the Overhead Booking Office. He extended the concourse walkway roofing a little and opened new concessions. The treads on the stepways were renewed and new, manually operated train indicator boards were provided on the overhead concourse. He also upgraded the inside of the Booking Office and the Station Master's Office and painted the external walls. The work was completed in 1986. Further work was undertaken in 1986/87 and 1987/88 which included the construction new ticket barriers and additional floor paving. Also, all the platform buildings apart from platform Nos. 1, 2 and 3 were refurbished, canopies were erected on the stepways and all the platforms were resurfaced. All these projects involved several millions of dollars and represented the first major improvement to elevate the customer appeal of the station since World War 1, apart from the ESR. However, there was one disappointing aspect. In 1983, SRA had published a brochure entitled *Travelling by Train is Easier* and in it was a list of stations "with built in access and facilities for the disabled". Surprisingly, Redfern station was in the list of 18 stations. At that time, the SRA introduced a moveable platform on tracks, known as 'Stairmate,' which could accommodate a non-electric wheelchair to take people between the concourse and platforms. Redfern was so equipped. There were problems with the system. The maximum load was 90 kg and they were unbelievably slow and they generally fell out of use. Other solutions were considered and, in 1984, the structural and spatial difficulties that Redfern station possessed prompted the SRA to believe that it would not be possible to provide improved disabled access at the station. The following guide for disabled people, known as the *Access Guide for Persons with Disabilities and Elderly Passengers* ,did not list Redfern station.

David Hill also had a charter to improve industrial relations in an attempt to reduce the frequency of general strikes and other industrial action undertaken by the many railway trade unions in the 1980s. As well as providing improved staff facilities, Hill re-

introduced the Statewide garden competition. In 1985, from a field of 90 stations, Redfern won the station garden competition. This was very much the effort of the then Station Master, Hilton South, who acknowledged the work of the Redfern Aboriginal Community for planting over 2,000 shrubs and flowers. At that time, the State Rail Authority stepped up recruitment of Redfern Aborigines to work at the station. The story was revealed in an article entitled "In a Rages to Riches Story" in *Railway Digest*, February, 1986, p. 43.

It was in1986 that the traditional circle and bar style station nameboards disappeared. In their place, the SRA introduced metal nameboards featuring rounded corners. The background colour was blue and the letters were white. Not much else was undertaken on the platforms but attention was given to the platform surfaces a little later. The lamp posts remained a traditional stone colour and the platform surfaces were still scrappy. See Howarth and Ryan, *Sydney's Suburban Standards – The Leeds Forge Power Cars,* p. 98.

A significant casualty of the CityRail upgrading in the 1980s was the demolition of a small, timber waiting room on platform No.1. At the time of demolition, the building was used as a Store. The 1891 structure was part of a suite of three platform buildings approved by Chief Commissioner Eddy in 1892 and was specially built for the quadruplication of the main West line. It was an important building at the station because it contrasted with the 1984 open-fronted waiting shed. The small waiting room had doors enclosing the waiting room and even a fireplace with brick chimney, mimicking Eddy's background of cold climates in Great Britain.[15]

In 1988, the SRA relocated the Overhead Booking Office from the western to eastern side of the ticket barriers. Originally, the Booking Office was on the eastern side and was still there in 1935. There was also a new chemist shop with pedestrian access between from both Lawson Street and the concourse, as well as pedestrian access between the Booking Office and the chemist using what was officially called a "Rota Gate", which allowed entry but not exit. Also, a meal room and staff toilet were provided. In that year, the Station Master, Hilton South, transferred from Redfern to Blacktown. He was reported as transforming Redfern from "inner city grime to horticultural splendor". See *Railway Digest*, April 1988, p. 122.

[15] There are two photographs of the 1891 timber structure in *NSW Digest*, Vol. 11 no. 8, December, 1973, front cover and Vol. 15 No. 8, December, 1975.

THE EMERGENCE OF A DEDICATED URBAN RAILWAY - 1989 TO 2013

1 THE *CITYRAIL* PERIOD

In this period, station presentation benefitted from the creation of a management organisation solely focused on Sydney's urban and inter-city rail system.

CityRail was formally established on 1st May, 1989. This was the first time the Sydney metropolitan railways had been organised into an institution solely to focus on urban railways. One of the basic aims of CityRail was to upgrade 200 stations by 1995 in order to help achieve its goal of being a world class urban rail system within five years. Priorities were based on need and the ease of work so that CityRail could be seen as doing something fairly quickly. In 1990/91, Redfern station received minor upgrading works. In 1992, what was called in the old days a noticeboard was renamed officially as an "Information Centre". One was placed on the concourse. Two concessions on the concourse existed. On the eastern side, the 1988 pedestrian access between the Booking Office and the former chemist, later a bottle shop, was initially retained. The second concession was located in front of the public toilets on the western side of the concourse.

There was an overall CityRail policy to provide only a single pedestrian entry/exit point for stations. This was related both to reduce staffing levels and reduce fare evasion. In implementation of this policy, the 1913 footbridge at the Macdonaldtown end was demolished in 1994. Two public explanations were given – the first saying that there was insufficient funds for maintenance of the structure and, secondly, the implementation of the policy for single entry/exit. Tick the latter.

With the introduction of automatic ticketing, a set of ticket gates were installed in the early 1990s onto Gibbons Street at the top of the ESR. There was also a third exit from the station along platform No. 10. It led to the Technology Park and is still in use and access to the platform was controlled from a set of automatic ticket gates near the ESR gated entry. So much for the policy of single entry/exit points!

In 1998, the ugliest structure still surviving was erected at the station. In an attempt to eliminate assaults in the subway access from the Macdonaldtown end of platform No. 10 into the former Eveleigh locomotive workshops, CityRail built a Bessemer-style, pre-cast concrete block building with a curved roof at the top of a new stepway at the Macdonaldtown end of platform No. 10. Because supervision of contract building works had largely ceased at that time, the building remained in an unpainted condition with excess mortar oozing from the mortar joints. There is a photograph of the structure in

Beckhaus and Halgren, *Sydney's Electric Trains*, p. G113. The photograph also shows the lower two metres of an overhead wiring stanchion painted red. This red paint was a feature of the time of Ross Sayers from 1989 and was applied liberally around all CityRail stations until 1998, when blue became the new corporate colour. A photograph of the triple-level platform nameboards and use of red paint is in M. Morahan, *Diesel and Electric Locomotives of the NSWGR,* Vol. 3, Burwood, RTM, 2000, p. 131.

White, loop-top, pool fencing appeared on platform Nos. 1 and 2/3 in the 1990s. This was a standard treatment for stations where there was no local protests about the inappropriateness of the design or colour. Beckhaus and Halgren, *Sydney's Electric Trains*, p. K134 has a photograph.

Another change introduced system-wide was the closure or minimization of public toilets. At Redfern, this involved the closure of all platform toilets and their centralization and reduction on the overhead concourse.

In the second half of the 1990s, canopies were erected on all platforms except Nos. 1 and 2. Along with the concrete building on platform No. 10, they represent an era were external contractors were allowed to design and build ugly structures that detracted from the heritage values of many stations. Conservation Architect, Paul Davies, described the canopies as "poorly conceived and inappropriate".[16]

In the 1990s, various changes were made to the platform buildings, mainly to provide improve staff accommodation for employees flagging away trains. For example, the former male toilet on platform Nos. 8 & 9 has been converted into a staff office and the roof extended at the Macdonaldtown end to the position of the former external privacy screen.

In 1999, CityRail built a canopy over the ticket gates at the Gibbons Street entrance/exit and extended the canopy over the footbridge to the main entry at Lawson Street.

For the year 2000 Olympic Games, CityRail used Redfern station as a major interchange and it envisaged major use of platform No. 1. In order to cope with the expected numbers of people, the 1891 stepway to platform No. 1 was replaced in 1999, though the newel posts at the bottom of the stepway was retained. Within a few years, superficial rust started to appear because of the absence of an adequate galvanised substrate on the structure. On the platform, much of Hilton South's garden was removed to make way for a perceived large increase in the number of people that would be waiting on the platform.

[16] Davies, op. cit., p. 34

In 2000, plasma screens were being provided at the station on all platforms but they were not operational for the Olympics. The decision was made to remove them in September 2000 to avoid confusion for travellers seeing blank screens. The existing, pull-down or Bath type train indicators continued to be used. There is a photograph in *Railway Digest*, November, 2000, p. 27 of the indicators on platform Nos. 2 and 3.

Investigations of air right development were underway in 2002, as well as at several other stations. Like the vast majority of such investigations, nothing came of the proposal because the relative development costs of air rights were higher than surrounding land.

Many stations in NSW are the centre of local attention for various reasons. They may be the only government land on which to build a war memorial, a meeting place for local school children or use by homeless people for overnight shelter. At Redfern, the railway station has been a popular place for Aborigines to meet and greet passing rail travellers. On 15th February, 2004 the overhead Booking Office was attacked by Aborigines who threw Molotov cocktails through a window from Lawson Street. The structure caught fire and the Station Master's office and the booking office were extensively burnt. In case of a repeated attack, the next day CityRail obtained urgent approval from the Heritage Office of NSW to brick up the windows facing Lawson Street for a short time. The attack was in protest at the death of a 17 year old boy by Police.

2 THE *SYDNEY TRAINS* PERIOD

From 1st July, 2013, Transport for Sydney replaced CityRail with new logos and new uniforms as well as a new name. Redfern station now comes under the control of Transport for Sydney.

While CityRail was the first rail transport organisation to focus on passenger trains, *Sydney Trains* is the first institution to manage trains just for Sydney. Now, another body runs longer distance passenger trains. Will this make a difference?

IN THE FUTURE

A new central, elevated concourse was proposed in 2002 as part of the plan to develop the air rights above the rail corridor. Nothing happened because the notions about the station got caught up in a broader idea of the then State Government to adopt an all-of-government approach to solving the area's social problems. In 2004, the newly created Redfern-Waterloo Authority proposed the demolition of the entire station to make way for an elevated Redfern-Waterloo town centre. The Authority was reported as saying that Redfern station "would attract considerable interest if it were put to tender. In fact a

developer would be likely to pay more than will be required to redevelop the station if it was (sic) assured of planning approval on the scale contemplated".[17] Nothing happened, thankfully.

In 2006, the then Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport, John Watkins, announced that "concept work would soon commence on the major redevelopment of Sydney's Town Hall and Redfern stations". Watkins stated that "Redfern station is the lynchpin in the Redfern-Waterloo renewal project and, like Town Hall, is one of the ten busiest stations on the CityRail network". An advertisement appeared in the Sydney press calling for tenders for design options to include disabled access and 'more efficient interchange facilities for passengers'. A project Co-ordination Group was established and a project manager appointed. Not surprisingly, nothing happened, again.

In 2012, Redfern station was again the scene of a significant protest. This time it was peaceful. The Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore, and the Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Graeme Innes, brought the media in an endeavour to get lifts installed on each of the platforms. The *Lift Redfern* campaign called upon the State Government "to make equitable access at the station a priority".[18] Nothing has happened, no doubt because the high cost of providing lifts, without input of private sector funding, would preclude any similar work at many other stations for a considerable period. The high heritage values of all the buildings added to the difficulty of solving the access problem.

Redfern was listed in a 2013 survey of 11,000 commuters undertaken by the NRMA as being in the top five "most frustrating stations" in Sydney.[19] With a new organisation managing Redfern station, many people are watching to see what is different in the future compared to the past.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The opening and growth of the station were attributed not to any large increase in urban population but to the operational requirements of the NSW Railways. The opening in 1884 was due to the need to have a junction and change station between the Main West and the Illawarra lines. The amplification of the station in 1891, 1912, 1922 and 1979 were all due to increases in the number of tracks passing through the station.

In regard to the 1912 station, the buildings on platform Nos. 4/5, 6/7 and 8 had exactly the same appearance, materials and level of ornamentation as those built at other

[17] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29th December, 2004, p. 1
[18] Press Release, Australian Human Rights Commission, 22nd March, 2012
[19] *Open Road*, July/August, 2013, p. 14

locations between 1912 and 1922. The building on platform No. 10, built a decade after the other platform buildings, is an excellent contrast of time with its much lower level of presentation. The station has very high heritage values.

Stuart Sharp

15th August, 2013