

SORELL HERITAGE SURVEY

Address: 6 Station Lane Sorell 7172		UPI: 2902513	PID: 5934743
Name: FORMER SORELL RAILWAY STATION			
Feature Type: Rail terminal	Structure Type	Dating:	1891 - 1915 1892
	Site Feature Type	Access Restrictions:	Not available
		Inspection Date:	October 96 P Davies
		Style:	Victorian Italianate
		Grid ref:	5462 545850 5263250
Indication of Significance: Probable Significance		Theme: Railways	
Material:	Timber siding Metal tiles	Listings: SMC Schedule 3	
Condition:	Fair		
Integrity:	Altered, extended unsympathetically		
National Estate Criteria: A4 B4 C2 D2 F1		Photograph Index: 2:17-19	
Risk:	Excavation: ☐	Development: ☐	Maintenance: ☐ Vandalism: ☐

SITE DESCRIPTION:

The railway station, now used as a residence, is of timber construction on a stone base set on the original stone platform. The railway yard (or a section of it) is now the garden area. The building has been extensively altered losing most of its character and significance in the process. The surviving elements are the overall form and part of the platform verandah which still sits on paired columns and retains its corrugated iron roof.

The building has had additions to the rear and a first floor addition over the verandah, a brick extension on the platform area has garages. Bay windows have been altered and other windows to the upper floor have been added. The main platform doors and detail to gables survive.

The site is now situated in a light industrial and commercial area with the former locomotive shed in the former council work depot adjacent.

HISTORY:

The genesis for a rail line between Kangaroo Point and Sorell lay in a Parliamentary survey in 1883. Tempers flared as opponents lambasted 'this idiotic railway' and its proposed route before work finally began in 1890 with plans to later extend it to Spring Bay and Bream Creek. The railway, with its tunnel through tunnel hill and 580m causeway and bridge across Pitt Water to Shark Point was opened in 1892. A weir and pump house were constructed on Sorell Rivulet below the rectory to supply water for the steam engines at the station. A station house, workshop and engine shed were constructed at Sorell.

The line only realised a profit in one year and ran its last service on June 30 1926. It was defeated by the lack of a direct link to the main rail line across the Derwent. Its rolling stock, described as those 'damn old carriages, they rock and buck, everything is loose . . . The seats are terrible, no screws to hold them down', was already second hand in 1892 and never replaced. The single line and lack of switching yards and turntables at Sorell meant that the train went forwards in one direction and reversed on its return journey. It had stations at Sorell and Frogmore and helped to reduce the district's isolation, bringing weekend and day tourists to the town. After its closure the track was dismantled and much of the formation became the roadway to Shark Point. The pump house on Sorell Rivulet was buried in fill and the railway station eventually became a privately owned residence.

The station building was both the railway station and the station master's residence, although there were no doorways connecting the two sections of the building. The station included a ticket office (where the easternmost bay window now is, an open waiting room (now enclosed) and a ladies' waiting room with toilet facilities (where the westernmost bay window is). The railway station wall has been almost completely rebuilt with bay windows added in recent years to replace earlier windows which had suffered irreparable wind damage. The complex formerly included extensions which were to store firewood and parcels awaiting transport to Hobart.

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BOUNDARY:

The listing boundary is formed by the title boundary of the property.

COMMENTS:

The station building, although altered in a major way, retains significance as the physical reminder of the railway to Sorell and its importance to the community for 40 years as the contact with Hobart and the opening up of the area. Sufficient fabric remains to see the form and detail of the former station and it is one of the rare surviving ornate station buildings to survive in the State.

It meets Criteria A4, B2, C2, D2 and F1 for inclusion in the Register of the National Estate.

It should continue to be included in Schedule 3 of the Sorell Planning Scheme and should be nominated for inclusion in the Tasmanian Heritage Register.

BIBLIOGRAPHY + PREVIOUS STUDIES:

DAVENPORT, W.T. Spirit of Clarence: A Tasmanian Community. City Of Clarence, Rosny Park.

JONES, D.H. 1971. Bellerive To Sorell Railway Line. Tasmanian Transport Museum, Hobart.

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