

The Fate of Eveleigh: More of 'Ugly Sydney' or an Enhancement of the Greatest Rail Heritage Site in the World?

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Lovers of heritage and of a human-scale city alike are alarmed at the latest proposal for the old Eveleigh Railway Workshops site that covers many hectares of inner Sydney.¹ The New South Wales Government Planning Minister Frank Sartor has recently excised the area from heritage protection legislation in order to allow maximum possible development of the site for high-rise apartment blocks.² Of particular concern is the current threat³ to close the still functioning Large Erecting Shed and transform it into either a completely new 12 storey office tower or an 'adaptive re-use' four storey block.

Unfortunately, the concerns of community groups, even if they represent a majority of citizens, mean little to contemporary Governments, especially at the State level. This is particularly true of the New South Wales Government, which is in the perverse position, after 15 years of uninterrupted economic boom, of being squeezed between accelerated development brought on by the boom and declining tax revenue⁴ exacerbated by the increasingly unequal power distribution between the States and Canberra. Developer Section 94 contributions allowed for under the NSW EPA Act⁵ go to Local Government, thus giving the State Minister an incentive to excise choice areas and over-develop them as a means of much-needed revenue raising from special developers' contributions which go direct to the State Government. The

¹ The best pictorial presentation of is in danger of being lost is in: D. Moore, *Railways, Relics and Romance: Eveleigh Railway Workshops, Sydney New South Wales* (Sydney: Caroline Simpson, 1995).

² The Redfern-Waterloo Authority Act of October 2004, created the Redfern Waterloo Authority (RWA) to manage public infrastructure, land and properties in the Redfern and Waterloo area, outside local Government control and responsible directly to the Minister, with the full support of both major parties. At the time, Elizabeth Farrelly commented in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (29-11-04) that: 'it invests the minister, Frank Sartor, with unheard-of discretionary powers, even within this Thatcherite development corporation mentality, to plan, acquire, approve and develop public or private lands, within and without the given area, without outside scrutiny'.

³ Advertised by the Redfern Waterloo Authority, August 2006.

⁴ Added to this fiscal squeeze on the States is the prevailing prejudice against budget deficits that discourage Government borrowing.

⁵ New South Wales Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (Amended).



A poster to mobilize support—showing the grandeur of the building.

nett effect of this has been to deliver much of government planning into the hands of the biggest single bidders, the mega-developers. It is interesting that even Friedrich Hayek, doyen of the neo-liberals, had doubts about the privatisation of town planning⁶, suggesting that it might be prone to chronic market failure and institutionalised corruption.

Industrial heritage, usually comprising large and complex buildings and plant, are seen as a potential drain on resources unless they can be tacked onto ‘adaptive re-use’ projects. It is therefore difficult for the State Government to recognise that the Eveleigh railway workshop zone can itself be the driving force of adaptive re-use. What the Government sees as an inconvenient nuisance, Eveleigh’s centrality to all Sydney’s destination nodes, can be, with proper handling, the country’s most valuable asset for developing cultural heritage tourism. Tourism, and increasingly cultural tourism, is close to the top export earner for most developed countries. Few cities have maintained such a complex of service lines, rail fans, turntables, and the backup facilities of yards, workshops and machinery that Eveleigh encompasses. A site as choice as this has the capacity to become the mainstay of a visitor pilgrimage which in its memorialisation of a lost industrial past can rival in attraction the Gothic Cathedrals of Europe and their evocation of a similarly lost spiritual past. Critical to the integrity of Eveleigh for this purpose is the maintenance of at least one small part of it as a functioning rail

⁶ See, for instance, F. Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, Volume 3 (1979).

workshop, which is why maintaining the Large Erecting Shed is important. Other adaptive re-use projects at the Eveleigh site such as the Performing Arts Theatre will be that much more effectively positioned around the activities of this working Shop, and it will keep Eveleigh alive to be the link to the other (very few) surviving Railway Workshop sites in Australia, such as Ipswich in Queensland and Midlands in WA. None of these has the size and public access possibilities of Eveleigh.

As the application for National Heritage⁷ status argued:

The Large Erecting Shop is the last tangible link to the original functioning of the Eveleigh Railway Workshops as the largest locomotive maintenance and construction workshop in Australia. It has maintained this function continuously for 110 years since being constructed in 1896. The inclusion of the site on the National Heritage List would enable the fabric, skills, function and stories to be protected and interpreted for future generations by way of a plan of management. Of the many buildings on the greater Eveleigh Railway Workshop site, this is the only remaining purpose built shed still intact and performing its original use. The significance of the site is recognised at a local, state and national level as well as by international heritage bodies for its building fabric and construction, machinery, skills and its operations. While protection is required for the fabric, the intangible aspects of the item, which contribute to its significance, such as skills, and social, cultural and physical context are most vulnerable to changes created by the *Redfern Waterloo Authority Act* zoning.⁸ This zoning overrides all heritage provisions enjoyed elsewhere in New South Wales. The last two schemes advertised by the Redfern Waterloo Authority for the Large Erecting Shop site include demolition of this significant building to allow the construction of a 12-storey office or a 4 storey adaptive reuse of the existing building... The Large Erecting Shop is the last of the big rail workshops in Australia still in use, presently housing the much used steam locomotive 3801. The brick shed has six rail bays internally and one externally to the south, with a fan of access tracks and direct access to a turntable. The workshop is a large classic, Victorian era, industrial red-brick building with arched timber-framed doors for each rail access bay. . . Four large overhead cranes run within the roof space. The floor is concrete with servicing pits between each track. The turntable is 25 metres long and is connected to the workshop. The building contains operating Steam Locomotives 3801 and 3830, and the Governor-General's carriage from 1901 as well as many other carriages and rolling stock and servicing machinery. The building is intact and fully operational, with nine full time staff and 200 volunteers. [Despite protests, 3801 and heritage carriages were relocated recently].

⁷ Australian Government, Department of Heritage and Environment, National Heritage List Nomination Form, submitted by: 3801 Ltd, NSW Rail Transport Museum, Powerhouse Museum, State Rail Authority, RailCorp, Redfern Waterloo Authority, Sydney City Council. Australian Railway Union, Metropolitan Aboriginal Land Council, Friends of Eveleigh.

⁸ The gazetted planning instrument to implement the RWA Plan and its associated maps (3MB PDF) can be found on the Department of Planning website at <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/plansforaction/keydevelopment.asp#redfern>

The fact remains that this workshop is not only a functioning heritage treasure but, even in the crude commercial terms of the modern neo-liberal world, it is an extraordinarily valuable asset to aid Sydney's attempt to re-position itself as a cultural destination. Currently, there is apprehension that the number of tourists coming to Sydney, particularly from the lucrative Japanese market, is in decline.⁹ Culture in modern global tourism is very much theme-driven, with literary/film sites, genealogy, bird-twitching and train-spotting coming out in the top half dozen (leaving out some of the more unsavoury ones). There is an estimated population of 400,000 train spotters in Japan alone!¹⁰ The spaghetti maze of rail lines stretching 5km south from Sydney's Central station to the surviving functioning workshops at Eveleigh could represent a huge tourist magnet.

The progressive makeover of Sydney from the virile working city of the last 220 years to an endless bland vista of high rise apartments has done nothing to excite the tourist heart. The fiscal squeeze on the States caused by their declining take of tax revenues means increasing reliance on one-off developer contributions to fund infrastructure.¹¹ Weak and venal Governments, comprising political parties devoid of any commitment to ideals such as the public good, simply bow to the big investment houses awash with the public's superannuation funds. Because of the huge concentration of these funds, and the need to invest quickly for a guaranteed return, the institutions are biased towards big projects regardless of their civic worth, such as airports, large dams, and towering office and apartment blocks. Not for them the attractions of micro-credit and a million imaginative local schemes that would spread wealth and enterprise widely. As far as these investing institutions are concerned, the devil is in the obstructing details, such as heritage. But it is these details that make up the urban delights that give a city its 'liveability', and so its attraction to overseas visitors, and in no place more than the

⁹ J. Robinson and R. Polygenis, 30-10-06. Chasing the Tourist Dollar. *Tourism Update*. Economics@ANZ. A strong dollar and higher fuel prices and airport fees mean that tourists come for shorter stays and want more central attractions with lower transport costs.

¹⁰ Deborah Cameron. Bullets and steam give thousands of train-spotters their own platform (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 9–10 September, 2006, p. 23). The article points out that 'Trains are a lifelong backdrop to work, leisure and romance in Japan featuring frequently in films, music, videos, and books.'

¹¹ The Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) welcomes these contributions, its realpolitik recognising the power that they give them to influence Government, as in their 10 November 2006 news release: 'by pitching the average state infrastructure levy at \$33,000 per lot, (the Minister) has arrived at a reasonable figure which will both improve housing affordability and allow developers to move ahead with land acquisitions. The UDIA NSW publicly announced its support for an average levy of \$30,000 several months ago, and is still the only industry association to have placed a realistic levy on the table. The industry association also welcomes the application of levies to industrial land, a recommendation that UDIA NSW made repeatedly over the last year.'



Map showing the heritage items to be listed. Numbers are referred to in the text headings which follow.

romance of transport systems. Melbourne wisely kept its trams: the rulers of Sydney seemed poised to destroy what little is left of its formally formidable train system.

The community operation of the remaining parts of the Eveleigh Railway Workshop demonstrates how a small enterprise can generate a rich network of experience and skills with valuable knock-on effects to cultural tourism. While the operation of the Large Erecting Shed is revenue-neutral and self-sustaining, it produces valuable intangible benefits that feed into the tourist trade. It also of course preserves some of the very real benefits in technical and mechanical training that were destroyed with the over-hasty closures of railway workshops. If either of the Redfern Waterloo Authority proposals for the building are implemented the most significant aspect of the site, the working/skill base and ongoing heritage training will be lost as the nexus between built fabric and function is severed. In addition, the working skills to operate them will be lost with the result that steam-hauled trains will be excluded from the NSW rail network.¹²

While the adaptive re-use policy can certainly be commended for saving many of the buildings on the greater Eveleigh Railway Workshop site, the real context and the depth of the cultural landscape can only be understood if at least some of the engineering facilities, such as the Large Erecting Shop, remain in everyday use. However, it needs to be integrated into a broader plan to develop heritage tourism across the site and the surrounding area. First of all, the Old Eveleigh Works must be presented to the public as a whole item in which to blend its rich history and meaning for the future. We therefore propose the following plan, as a first stage, eventually linking to heritage transport tourism sites across Sydney, including the Sydney waterfront and ferries, the Alexandria canal, and a revived tram and trolleybus network. As Asian tourists tire of Sydney's beaches and other natural wonders, better presented elsewhere, the urban fabric of the oldest Anglo city in the Pacific Basin can be set out to delight and surprise the cultural sensibilities of overseas visitors—unlike internationally homogenous high-rise apartment blocks.

¹² As Elizabeth Farrelly noted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (03-05-06): 'Last year, with 10 full-time staff and 97 volunteers, it generated \$2.1 million in income. Over 20 years, more than half a million Sydneysiders have ridden and there's talk of opening the building as a working museum. Under the draft plan, the shed (like much of Redfern) is zoned high-rise. Twelve storeys on the shed, 18 on the park. The train and its beautiful shed represent Australian ingenuity, independence, craftsmanship and pride ...'.

The Future of Listed Heritage Locations within the Redfern Railway Precinct

The First Stage of the Redfern Waterloo Project lists twelve ‘Heritage Items’ within the Redfern Railway Precinct (categorised in the Heritage Schedule).¹³ Following are positive suggestions for presenting some of the locations to provide a concept of the heritage value of the whole Redfern site. The comments go beyond the heritage value of the buildings to other events that are significant in Australian industrial history. The listed locations have been arranged as a walking tour that progresses from one to the next. The overall site viewed in this way opens the way for the creation of sound economic-based proposals for the renewal of the Redfern Railway area and use, other than the big high rise development that the Government sees as the only source of finance for the Redfern Waterloo Project. A public call for alternative proposals for the site should follow and be directed at protecting the heritage nature of the area, while retaining good liveable spaces for those who will live and work in the area.

Redfern Railway Station Ticket and Booking Office (Heritage Item 11. See map on p. 161)

The plans are for a massive refurbishment of Redfern Station. If this could retain heritage items it would be unique in the world. Sections of the railway station office provide a glimpse of the older booking booth that dispersed tickets through a slot in a small glass-sliding window to the customer. No doubt the area could feature many things associated with the old booking office including a manually operated destination indicator board to Sydney suburbs. However, the view to the city from this spot looking north should also be considered. From this point many of the buildings and locations associated with the original Redfern to Parramatta line can be seen including the site of the original Redfern Railway Station at Cleveland St, the mortuary etc. A further display at this booking office might be devoted to those who worked there. This always included a large number of Aborigines on the staff, as well as many winners of the NSW Railway garden competition that was a feature of the Redfern Number 1 platform.

The walk along Platform 1 simply requires a railway ticket. It could begin by going down the steps and along a platform of the gardens that were once a highlight of the South Sydney area and Sydney’s Spring festival. An alternative for local residents and non-railway ticket holders would be a walk down Little Eveleigh Street to the city end of Wilson St.

¹³ The main document from the RWA about this area is the RWA’s Redfern-Waterloo Built Environment Plan. It can be obtained in printed form from the RWA or it can be downloaded from the RWA website.

If the wooden fence along little Eveleigh Street, that has been built on top of the cliff overlooking Platform 1, were replaced with a viewing platform and a see-through fence erected, this would provide a view of South Eveleigh down to the Large Erecting Shed and the area of the original locomotive running sheds. Details of the overall site could be added to this viewing platform. The short walk down this lane provides several examples of Eveleigh workers' cottages that were once a feature of the area as well as entry to the former Carriage Works site via Wilson St from where a footbridge once joined the two sides of the old workshops. Under the Redfern Waterloo plan a similar bridge is to be installed.

The Telecommunications Equipment Centre (HI 10)

The first heritage listed building is the Telecommunications Equipment Centre. This is a modern name for the small workshop located immediately at the end of Platform 1. The land extends under the old bridge that once joined Wilson St with the Locomotive Workshop. This workshop was associated with the railway signalling and communications system that ran alongside every railway line in the system. NSW Railway used Morse Code telegrams from its early days and later its own telephone systems. They were Australian pioneers in a service that connected with other Australian States and the overseas telegraph service long before the PMG was established.

A display of this early equipment associated with this workshop could easily be developed at this location as a result of the work of a voluntary association who have collected and repaired this historical equipment. Also this would be an excellent location to place alongside the workshop on an existing railway spur of the Fan Track a display of the NSW Railway's Travelling Post Office, described by Banjo Patterson in his poem 'The Travelling Post Office'. The repair of the postal vans used in this operation was regularly undertaken in the carriage repair area. Some of the original vans are still available for such a display.

Directly outside this area 10 metres to the left (now mainly pulled down) was the *Train Equipment Workshop* originally known as 'Train Lighting'. This workshop saw the development of the lighting of NSW trains from candles and gas lights to small electrical generators and the building of air-conditioned trains like the Silver City Comet. This is an interesting story in itself of cutting edge nineteenth century technology developed by Australian Electrical Engineers.

Chief Mechanical Engineers Building (HI 9)

Facing Wilson St level 20 metres above the Telecommunications Equipment Centre is the Chief Mechanical Engineers Building. In the early NSW railway systems this building housed those who played a

major role in the building, running and repairing of anything that opened and shut in the railway. This included managing a string of major workshops (not just in the Eveleigh area), running depots, bridge building operations such as those that built the second Hawkesbury River Bridge. An exhibition showing this huge engineering planning process and those who worked from there would provide an understanding of how this operation reached into every part of NSW and the background to some of the Engineers who were responsible for this work. This building once had many features and art items that were related to the railways in the Eveleigh and Redfern area.

Scientific Services Building (HI 8)

This listed building is connected by a short passage to the Chief Mechanical Engineers Building. Its heritage and historical significance lies partly in the fact that this was the technical control hub for all railway equipment and the many products that the railway produced itself or purchased. Their major responsibility was to detect faults. The existing building still may have the testing rooms and equipment that would date back to the early days of Eveleigh and would provide a display of applied science in the railway industry.

Portion of The Fan Tracks, North Eveleigh (between HI 7 and 8)

This is a series of railway lines set out in a fan shape, listed for their heritage value. Railway carriages would enter the railway yard for repairs or overnight storage before going into service at Central Station or into the carriage repair areas. This occurred via a single line coming out of the main railway line near Redfern Station. The carriages would then be shunted into the yard through a series of hand-operated points. This enabled them to be fanned out to other railway lines where they could be fed into the next major building (the Paint Shop) or proceed on to other parts of the carriage works. This section of rail track would be the last operating fan track in NSW, and perhaps Australia. Some thought should be given to a display demonstrating how the fan operates.

The Paint Shop (HI 7)

This is one of the largest buildings of the 'Heritage Items within the Redfern Railway Precinct'. It is 0.6 ha in area. At the moment a major part of RailCorp's mobile heritage items are stored here. This is basically a collection of mobile carriages including the Royal Carriage, and the Governor's and Railway Commissioners' Carriages. They were stored in this area originally with the view that the Paint Shop (their historical home) would become part of a NSW railway museum site. The fan of railway tracks mentioned above lead from this covered area into the yard

that could provide excellent display sites for these carriages rarely seen by the public. The Paint Shop history is important and has many interesting railway stories that should be featured at this site. The skills practised in the Paint Shop were by master painters of a bygone era, which among other things required them to prepare paints to be used on the spot. Their decorative skills were not limited to paint but include all kinds of paper decorations and other rare materials. In some cases, as in the presentation of the Royal Carriage, knowledge of working with gold was required. In the early days where thin metal was used for such things as ornate ceiling casts this was carried out by specialist tinsmiths who could trace their craft back to making armour for royalty. On this site when War World 1 was declared in 1914, the first recruiting for the Railway Regiment of the 1st AIF took place and many of these workers marched to the city to join up.

Blacksmith Workshops, North Eveleigh (HI 6)

This listed Blacksmith Shop situated 10 metres from the carriage workshop end of the Paint Shop has a different function to the heavy blacksmith's functions carried out in the first two bays of the Locomotive Workshop (ATP) blacksmith area that is still intact and functioning. This blacksmith shop was lighter than the locomotive one and was more attuned to the Art-Deco requirements of the heritage carriages that historically were kept and repaired in the paint shop and supported by practitioners of manual arts skills. This area lends itself to include examples of railway manual arts as items that were manufactured at this location. It is adjacent to Arts NSW development of the old Carriage Works Performing Arts Centre and has already seen some development as the Wilson St entrance to the theatre.

A broader picture of the new Performing Arts Centre,¹⁴ to be known as the 'Carriage Works (first stage to open at the end of January 2007), indicates that the development will occur in 'five of the 10 bays in the [Carriage] workshops.' And the centre will contain 'three performing spaces, with the biggest seating 800, three rehearsal rooms, workshops, office space, a cafe, a long bar, and an observation deck that looks down on the gigantic 65-metre-long foyer. Parts of the complex will be let to commercial tenants who will subsidise the arts spaces.'

Interestingly this article describing the intended functioning of The Performing Arts Centre is the first sign of any real attempt to link the 12 heritage locations of the Redfern Railway Precinct with their past. It says: 'At the main entrance, an orange-red glass wall will be etched with a blueprint of the old Everleigh rail yards, while foyer panels will tell the

¹⁴ Valerie Lawson, 'Edgy venue forged from gritty past', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 October 2006.

story of the site, once home to 15 workshops housing blacksmiths, coppersmiths, tinsmiths, springsmiths, plumbers, gasfitters, boilermakers, patternmakers, wheelwrights and carpenters’.

Ambulance Room First Aid Centre (HI 5)

The Carriage Works Ambulance Room is not mentioned in the listed Heritage Items but it was located at the bottom of the steps leading from Wilson St. A second industrial Ambulance Room was located at the Locomotive Workshop. These rooms which have been destroyed were the foundation site(s) of industrial medical centres in Australia. They were built and staffed with trained industrial medical people in response to one of the highest rates of industrial accident rates found in Australian heavy industry. This Wilson St entrance could include a display area of such pioneering industrial safety policy. Among the medical staff to work in these rooms for many years was Sister Agnes Mary Lions who was awarded the MBE for her services to Industrial Nursing. This was one of the few areas in which Eveleigh women workers were recognised. Many women were employed in this workforce during the Second World War in special wartime industrial production. Their role deserves recognition.

The Carriage Works Traverser (surrounds of HI 5)

Again this piece of railway technology seems to have escaped Frank Sartor’s heritage list. Like the Fan Track at the opposite end of the paint shop this is a functioning piece of railway engineering that demonstrates how the giant repair system of the Carriage Works functioned. The traverser was a mobile link between operations in the Paint Shop and all other repair functions carried out in the main buildings of the Carriage Workshops and areas beyond. This traverser has the potential to be an operating demonstration of railway engineering.

The Carriage Works—North Eveleigh (HI 5)

This is listed as an area of 1.7 ha in the Heritage List, but it is uncertain how much exactly has been allocated to the Redfern Waterloo Authority.

An Overhead Foot Bridge (between HI 10 and 3)

Two traditional walking links were located within the Redfern Railway Precinct when the area functioned as a working unit. One link under the main railway line was located near the carriage works and joined this area with the 1880’s steam running sheds on the locomotive side of the site. The second was an overhead bridge with an entrance from

Wilson St located near adjacent to the Chief Mechanical Engineers Building that allow a direct walking link with the Locomotive Works Manager Office the first listed building on the current ATP site. The original bridge allowed railway workers access to the Eveleigh site as a whole and some convenient access for local residents in the western sections of Redfern to local activities in south-eastern areas such as Alexandria and Moore Park. The bridge played a big part in keeping the Botany Road shopping street alive by being used by University students and railway employees. The bridge also serviced those in the university who travelled to Redfern from other suburbs. The Redfern Waterloo Authority plans include a proposal to rebuild the bridge for foot and cycle to re-connect the Australian Technology Park with North Eveleigh, as well as all these with the refurbished Redfern Station and new town centre. This would be a welcome and important step in allowing walking access to the precinct incorporating the concept of a park or rail tourist centre, and linking with the renewed Redfern Station and town centre.

Works Manager's Office (HI 3)

This heritage-listed building is an impressive edifice as one enters the Australian Technology site from the eastern side of Redfern station or the parks at the city end of the complex. Very little effort has been made by the current or former management of this site to link it to its former role in the production and maintenance of Australia's (not just NSW's) steam locomotive fleet for 100 years. This together with the larger more accessible New Locomotive Workshop (ATP) 10 metres away are areas rich in the history of the site, but no attempt has been made to use either of the buildings to introduce the visitor to the site's historical functions.

New Locomotive Workshop (HI 2)

A small section of this workshop has a stand of old hand washing basins installed in the 1950's which has been kept as a connection with Eveleigh's industrial past. But even here the story of Eveleigh's rich history of workers' struggle for decent conditions is ignored or misrepresented. Nowhere can be found the most common washing facility issued to workers on the site for almost 70 years 'a metal bucket.'

The New Locomotive Workshop became the first office space of the Australian Technology Park that was to provide the Australian people with an introduction to modern industrial technology. Those people who were aware of the significant role that steam played in Australia's industrial development welcome this plan feeling that the management of this park would very quickly link the site's future with its past. Within these New Loco walls Australians constructed locomotives that proved

to the world they could match overseas manufacturing. This so far has not been demonstrated by the current management of this site.

Courtyard (between HI 1 and 2)

Leaving the New Locomotive Workshop we step out into a very pleasant tree lined courtyard that features a single shunting engine that once worked in the location. At the western end of this court yard a working railway line remains that currently allows access to the area from the old running shed location down as far as the Works Managers Office. If this courtyard is to act as a display area of modern technical railway equipment or heritage live steam technology this line must be retained. Not to do so would also affect Eveleigh's capacity to assemble tourist trains that could operate in, out and around Sydney, an important consideration for future tourism.

The Locomotive Workshops (HI 1)

Entering this heritage building from the courtyard we come to one of the original jewels in the Redfern Railway Precinct heritage crown. This by the way is not mentioned specifically in the list of 12 buildings that might be kept. Here we find, in several bays of dirt floor, part of the old heart of Eveleigh. These bays contain the blacksmith and spring-smith working bays of the locomotive workshop. This heritage working area dates back to the 1880's and contains working steam equipment that remains in the same working condition it was in when the steam to the area was turned off twenty years ago. The tragic stripping of these heritage workshops that occurred in the 1980's would be repeated if the future of this heritage location is not addressed soon in the Redfern Waterloo project plans for the Locomotive Workshop.

A short walk further into the heart of the Locomotive Workshop area that is now already mainly business offices and organizations of the type expected to be attracted to the recycled building shell. It is very hard to find any displays that tell a story about this site's history. The viewers, at the moment, must remind themselves that this Eveleigh location was one of the most advanced steam engineering operations in the world. Walking towards the Large Erecting Shop the visitor at the moment comes across a few scattered machines that were a feature of the old Eveleigh machine shop. This display of machines from about 9 to 13 bay of the old workshop again fails to capture the overall spirit and heritage value of this location. While the individual machines are documented with some of their background, no details of the machine shop like the overhead drive shafts, belt and pulleys that were a feature of how a steam powered machine shop functioned, are displayed. Without such an image no-one under 50 could grasp the heritage value of this area or what part these machines played in it.

The heritage value of this machinery is not confined to its technical features. This machinery was used through two World Wars to support Australia's armed services and is a story in itself. Nor can one find at the moment any details of the social struggle that touched the nation that occurred in these old walls. Ben Chifley, future Prime Minister and then engine driver was a regular visitor to this site, and during one of his working runs made contact with the army of Eveleigh workers and carried the news back to Bathurst of the 1917 Railway strike. The social impact of this strike on Australians like Ben Chifley was immense.

And as Lucy Taksa ¹⁵ observed:

. . . Eveleigh reflects our history of democratic citizenship. Here we have an environment—a heritage place—which has links to the election of the earliest railway workers to the NSW Parliament in the 1880s and early 1890s; a place that spawned at least 25 Members of parliament (state and federal) three NSW premiers and one Governor-general. Here too workers joined together, as far back as the early 1930s, to promote better treatment of and citizenship rights for our long-disenfranchised Indigenous Australians. They campaigned against the loss of tribal lands during the Maralinga (nuclear bomb) experiments in the 1950s, against the death sentence upon Aborigine, Rupert Max Stuart and in support of Albert Namatjira when he was gaoled. The site was also significant for its employment of women as munitions workers during WW2 and also as industrial nurses.

Large Erecting Shed (South Eveleigh) (HI 10)

Our walk around the 12 heritage sites continues up through the machine shop area of the old Locomotive Workshops to the Large Erecting Shed. It was here that many of NSW's largest locomotives were built, stripped and re-assembled after repairs. Today it is associated with the preservation and operation of Locomotive 3801 and several other historical locomotives. To call it a shed down plays its size and value as it contains two cranes that are capable of lifting between them locomotives of 200 tonnes. The general heritage value of this part of the 12 heritage sites is well described by the National Trust of Australia who have listed various parts of the Eveleigh site under their heritage charter.¹⁶

To round off this brief look at the heritage-listed locations it should be mentioned that the area south of the Erecting Shed is important to consider if a service for operating steam tourist trains in and out of the Sydney area is to remain a relative simple operation. It is true steam locomotives can be serviced by such organizations as the fire brigade pumping local water and a coal truck to supply fuel but the facilities to properly water and service steam locomotives is currently available only

¹⁵ Personal communication.

¹⁶ See their web-site for this information on the future of Eveleigh: <http://www.nsw.nationaltrust.org.au/news/redfern2.asp>

in this area and should be maintained as part of the heritage features of Eveleigh.

Conclusion

One major criticism of the government's short-sighted approach to the Eveleigh complex is that it does not recognise the importance of one of the very few locations that the tourist to Sydney can reach in a short time during their stay. There has been no serious public study of the potential for Railway cultural tourism, other than the excellent papers and discussion at the Tamworth Railway Heritage Conference in 2005.¹⁷ RailCorp and the Transport Ministry are probably not the organisations to conduct such a study as their interests have been diverted by current rail problems. The possible loss of some of the steam heritage features of Eveleigh at the moment (in the rush to transfer responsibility for the site) could lead to a situation where no tourist heritage trains can operate in or out of the Sydney Area.

The tourist and cultural potential for the site requires an overall approach by several Government Ministries even to see the economic value other than that proposed by building developers. The new Performing Arts Theatre would have a much greater guarantee of success if it were integrated with a real technology park exhibition interlocked with exhibitions of the area's historical associations.

The acrimonious public dispute centred on the fate of the Large Erecting Shed and the possible demise of Locomotive 3801 cannot be separated from a broader rail heritage debate about Eveleigh in general and touching on the whole debate about 'Ugly Sydney' set off by the more civic-minded editorial staff of the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

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Sites For Further Information:

Railcorp, http://www.railcorp.info/heritage/heritage_strategy (Note also Railcorp Fact sheet on Sustainable Rail Heritage Management Strategy at http://www.nswrtm.org/news/SRHMS_factsheet.pdf)

National Trust, <http://www.nsw.nationaltrust.org.au/news/redfern.asp>

3801 Ltd, <http://www.3801limited.com.au/helpus.htm>

NSW Rail Transport Museum, <http://www.nswrtm.org> & <http://www.nswrtm.org/3801/>

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¹⁷ Soon to be published by Ikomos and University of New England.