

3.5 Heritage Significance

The summary statements of heritage significance included within this section have been extracted from the non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal Heritage Study reports prepared for the project (prepared by Curio Projects and Artefact Heritage respectively).

3.5.1 Eveleigh Railway Workshops

The following overarching Statement of Significance for the ERW has been extracted from the Draft Overarching CMP for the Eveleigh Railway Workshops site (2017).¹⁶

‘The Eveleigh Railway Workshops complex is of exceptional heritage significance to the state of NSW for its major contribution to the establishment, operation and growth of the NSW railways, which was essential to the growth and development of NSW from the late nineteenth century onwards. The operation of the railway workshops and stores at Eveleigh is associated with the phenomenon of railway networks that allowed the unprecedented development of Sydney suburbs and rural NSW at the end of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. The Workshops complex is significant as a rare remaining example of a relatively intact, large-scale nineteenth century railway workshops that retains unity of character as well as continued links to railway operations for over one hundred years to this day.

The complex is significant as one of only a limited number of such facilities within the country, with individual states within Australia generally having established a single major railway workshop facility for maintenance and also manufacture of rolling stock and engines, supplemented by smaller workshops. As such, the Eveleigh Railway Workshops represent one of the largest industrial enterprises in Australia and the large-scale infrastructure demonstrates Government confidence in establishing and expanding rail networks in the late nineteenth century.

The site retains the ability to demonstrate a range of characteristics that are typical of major railway construction and maintenance workshops in Australia, including the range of building types providing similar functions, aesthetic qualities and comparable history in terms of growth and expansion, involvement in wartime production, subsequent decline and adaptive reuse. There are opportunities to undertake further detailed research to identify potential national values, particularly in the context of the integrity of former railway workshop sites in Australia. Similarly, there are opportunities for further investigation of international railway workshop facilities to clarify the potential significance of the Eveleigh Railway Workshops in an international context.

Historically the site is important for its links to an early phase of railway development in NSW, with onsite evidence remaining intact from as early as 1887. Though many structures and items have been removed, the remaining site evidence reads as a living interpretation of the technological, administrative, social and cultural developments in over 100 years of railway operations in NSW, including the major transition from steam to diesel and electric powered train operation. The layout of the extant site elements is also indicative of the functional and administrative arrangements during the period of the site’s operation.’

'The Eveleigh Railway Workshops site is associated with the life and work of the early railway engineers John Whitton and George Cowdery, individuals whose life and work made significant contributions to the establishment, development and operation of railways in Australia and NSW. Whitton, Chief Engineer of the NSW Railways between 1856 and 1899, was responsible for the major restructuring of the rail system which resulted in the resumption of land at Eveleigh and the relocation of the old Redfern Workshops (Sydney's first railway yards) to Eveleigh. George Cowdery, Engineer for Existing Lines, executed the detailed design at Eveleigh.

The Eveleigh Railway Workshops have considerable aesthetic significance as an industrial landscape formed by the complex of functional buildings and associated infrastructure. Aesthetic and technical significance is demonstrated in the high quality design and construction of the original buildings, which are substantially intact and display finely detailed polychrome brickwork and well-articulated facades that embody the pride of the late Victorian era. The simple,

strong functional forms of the workshop buildings have landmark quality, not only as important townscape elements in the Redfern/Eveleigh area, but as part of the visual train journey of thousands of passing commuters. The combination of the southern locomotive sheds at the Australian Technology Park and the former Carriage and Wagon Workshops provide a distinctive landmark in the Sydney landscape and define views to and from the site.

The Workshops are of social value to generations of railway employees past and present as a workplace producing high quality craftsmanship utilising state-of-the-art technology. The place served as a training ground for thousands of apprentices, tradesmen and engineers and was one of the biggest employers in New South Wales. Workers of the Eveleigh Railway Workshops centred their social activities on the workplace and social events were organised by and for workers both on the site and beyond. The site also has social value as a heritage icon for current local communities, which is reinforced by ongoing community interest in the place.

The remaining tangible evidence and intangible site values reflect the technological, social and cultural development of the NSW railways, as well as broader important historical events. The Eveleigh Railway Workshops has a strong historical association with union activities and is credited as being pivotal in the Australian Labour Movement, with the formation of the Amalgamated Railway and Tramway Service Association (ARTSA) in 1886. Eveleigh was seminal in many major industrial strikes, the ramifications of which were felt throughout the nation. In addition, several significant figures in the labour movement worked at Eveleigh, including James McGowan, the first Labour Premier of NSW.

The Workshops represent significant research potential for their ability to inform through remaining physical, documentary and oral evidence the functions and operations of a large-scale nineteenth and twentieth century railway workshops. The site also retains an exceptional and rare collection of historically and technically significant heavy machinery, although many items have been removed in the process of modern site development.¹⁷

3.5.2 Aboriginal Heritage Significance & Values

An understanding of the relevance and importance of the Aboriginal cultural landscape is key to sensitive cultural design development. This understanding provides opportunities to explore Aboriginal peoples' unity with the natural environment, their traditional knowledge of spirit, places, land uses and ecology, and the ongoing interrelationships between past and present. These understandings are best developed through authentic and sustained consultation with Aboriginal knowledge holders and professionals.

'The Aboriginal cultural landscape of the RNEP is highly valued by Aboriginal people because of their long and complex relationship with the land, both pre- and post-contact. The area, part of the traditional lands of the Gadigal, has a wealth of intangible and tangible Aboriginal heritage values. Intangible heritage values are communicated through story and song and should only be shared through meaningful consultation with knowledge holders. More tangible heritage values, communicated through Aboriginal sites, are recorded and cared for through the AHIMS database, which is continually updated with new archaeological discoveries.

The Redfern area has been associated with Aboriginal communities for tens of thousands of years, with a strong deep time connection formed between peoples and Country. The local region

was rich in resources, supporting Aboriginal people who cared for Country in return. The Aboriginal heritage values of the area are rich and complex.

While the traditional custodians of the site and local area are the Gadigal, many other groups also have strong connection to Redfern, as it has grown to become the Aboriginal heart of Sydney. The Redfern area is significant for the continuous associations formed between the Aboriginal communities of the area, through deep time to the present day.

Many people of the Redfern Aboriginal communities became connected to the railway, travelling via rail from the country to Sydney to find work and search for family members. Deeper connections to the area's rail history were forged through employment at the Eveleigh Railway Workshops. The

railway workshops and the general progressiveness of rail workers and unionists had affected the Aboriginal communities of Redfern, as the railway workers campaigned for equal pay and treatment during the twentieth century. Though documentary evidence of Aboriginal employees is scarce due to poor record keeping, close family connections to Redfern North Eveleigh through the railway workshops have been reported anecdotally.

Redfern is often referred to as the Aboriginal heart of Sydney, and a centre of Aboriginal activism, where major Aboriginal legal, health and community services were established. The Redfern area continues to hold great cultural significance for Aboriginal people; both those who have lived here for generations and for communities who identify with the historical and political significance of the area.*

3.5.3 Paint Shop Sub-Precinct

The Paint Shop Sub-Precinct is of exceptional heritage significance to the state NSW, related to the key role it played as part of the major industrial site of the Eveleigh Railway Workshops complex, which itself was key to the development, growth and operation of the NSW Railways Department from the late nineteenth century.

The Paint Shop Sub-Precinct is historically significant as part of the establishment of the railway in NSW. The evidence remaining on site symbolises and demonstrates the technological, administrative, social, and cultural developments which occurred in this location for over a century and was a contributing factor in the transition from steam to diesel and electric powered train operation. The layout of the site continues to represent its past functions and management regimes. The Paint Shop Sub-Precinct is associated with many key influential figures in the development, management, and establishment of

railways in NSW and Australia. John Whitton, Chief Engineer of the NSW Railways from 1856 until 1899 at Eveleigh, was in charge of the restructuring of the rail system. George Cowdery implemented the detailed design at Eveleigh in his role as the Engineer for Existing Lines. Whitton and Cowdery are two examples of influential figures associated with the Paint Shop Sub-Precinct.

The aesthetic significance of the Paint Shop Sub-Precinct is reflected in its industrial environment which is demonstrated through the high-quality designs and construction of the earlier structures that are still in considerably good condition. The Paint Shop is an example of the Victorian era workshops which is made up of polychrome brickwork and articulated facades. The appearance of the workshops and structures within the Paint Shop Sub-Precinct was socially significant as hundreds of onlookers on the train line passed it every day.

The Paint Shop Sub-Precinct holds social significance to railway employees, past and present, as the home of training for apprentices, tradesmen and engineers with the latest technology, the operation becoming one of the largest employers in NSW. Many social activities were organised by the Eveleigh workers, for themselves and others outside of the Eveleigh Railway Workshops, which occurred in the workplace. Numerous union activities and major industrial strikes occurred at the workshops and played a role in various labour movements, the repercussions of which had a major influence on blue collar workers across Australia.

The technological advancement and contribution of the work undertaken at the Eveleigh Railway Workshops and the Paint Shop Sub-Precinct was pivotal in the evolution of the railway in NSW. Therefore, there is significant research potential through the physical, documentary, and oral evidence providing information on the functions of the activities undertaken at the 19th to 20th century railway workshops.

The Paint Shop Sub-Precinct is rare in NSW, especially associated with the Eveleigh Railway Workshops, and retains a rare collection of heavy machinery.



Figure 3.5 Detail of a plan depicting the N.S.W.R. Eveleigh Yard showing buildings within the Paint Shop Sub-Precinct prior to 1924. Source. SLNSW, 003 - ZSPE123.

3.5.4 Paint Shop (c1888)

The Paint Shop is of considerable historical significance as a key element in the function of the NSW railway network during the 19th and 20th century. The Paint Shop contributed to the function, growth and development of the railway service by providing services for painting of carriages and wagons. The Paint Shop is associated with Mr. John Whitton, the Chief Engineer of NSW Railways, and Mr. W Scott, Locomotive Engineer, who requested the Paint Shop to be constructed due to the increased accommodation of carriages at the Sydney terminal which caused overcrowding and therefore an increased demand in carriages.

The structure and form of the Paint Shop was specifically designed to establish controlled conditions for the painting of carriages and wagons, such as skylights designed to offer plenty of diffused southern light and installed louvres at the sawtooth apexes for increased ventilation. In an attempt to control the high temperatures, which ensure high quality

paintwork and varnish work was achieved, steam pipework was installed below the Paint Shop floor in c.1890, which was at the time a highly advanced technology and rare in Australia. The construction of the northern Paint Shop extension in 1912 demonstrates the increasing demand at Eveleigh for clean, dust free conditions when painting carriages.

The Paint Shop is of aesthetic significance being one of the finest examples of industrial buildings at Eveleigh and in Australia, known for its size, scale, industrial form and character. The building is detailed with the use of fine masonry, polychromed brickwork and sandstone trims, delicate skylights, well-articulated fenestration with recessed panels, and multi-paned curved topped cast iron windows. The exterior details the extreme care in the design of facades which were in the public eye. The interior of the Paint Shop includes robust cast iron columns, support light and tracery-like wrought iron trusses which support the large, glazed skylights.



Figure 3.6 South western view of the Paint Shop's eastern facade. Source: Curio 2021.

The preservation of the interior of this structure is one of the best in industrial complexes from the late 19th century in Australia.

The Paint Shop is socially significant to railway employees of the past and present, employing many workers in the late 19th and 20th century. This included women who worked in the Paint Shop at least from the 1900 engaged in upholstering work with cloth and leather for carriage interiors and cushions.

The Paint Shop is rare in NSW, especially associated with the Eveleigh Railway Workshops, as a relatively intact workshop which was a key element in

the function of the ERW. The continued use of the Paint Shop for over a century testifies to the construction and design of the building.

The Paint Shop is representative of a Victoria era railway workshop and is significant as one of the best surviving examples of a large workshop used for the painting of carriages and wagons, repairs and installation of the interior elements of the carriages in Australia. The structure includes very early surviving heritage fabric such as the original 1880s roller door mechanisms, hardwood timber blocked floors, early water, gas, electrical and air lines, original cast iron windows and hardware.



Interior view of the Paint Shop. Source: Curio 2021.

3.5.5 Paint Shop Extension / Former Suburban Car workshops (1912)

The construction of the northern Paint Shop Extension/Suburban Car Workshops in 1912 is intrinsically linked to the original Paint Shop building and they share the same themes in terms of being historically and socially significant for comparable reasons.

While not constructed to the same architectural standard and level of fine detail as the original Paint Shop, this building was integral to the continued operation of the Eveleigh Railway site into the 20th century and its construction demonstrates the increasing demand at Eveleigh for clean, dust free conditions when painting carriages. The Paint Shop Extension is important in what it represents and demonstrates about the expansion and development of the Eveleigh Railway Yards into the 20th century, and in the evolution of the form and technology of rolling stock as a

whole, with the building intentionally built to accommodate newer wider bodied cars that the original Paint Shop was constructed to house.

Like its 1888 counterpart, the Paint Shop Extension is also rare in NSW as a key element of the function of the Eveleigh Railway Workshops. The Paint Shop Extension was technologically advanced for its time, probably the first true modern factory building constructed at Eveleigh—the first use of full steel framed construction at the ERW using “Dorman Long & Co Middlesborough England” steel sections—and represented a shift in architecture and engineering in Eveleigh buildings from the fine detailed masonry and heavy cast iron columns of late 19th century, towards more modern buildings using lighter steel supported columns and standard angled trusses.



Figure 3.7 Eastern elevation of Former Suburban Car Workshops (right) and the c.1888 Paint Shop (left) (Source: Curio 2021)

3.5.6 Chief Mechanical Engineers Building (CME Building)

The CME Building is listed as an individual heritage item on the SHR ("Eveleigh Chief Mechanical Engineers Office and movable relics", SHR #01139) along with the moveable heritage associated with the building.

'The building is a very fine late Victorian railways office on a scale above all other such structures in the State. The building reflects the importance of the railway engineers in the development of the State and its closeness to the Eveleigh workshops (mainly under the control of the Mechanical Branch) indicates the confidence in railway construction.'

The building is in a style not often seen in Sydney and is a rare survivor. More often this form of building is in evidence in the country where the pressure of development is less. It is an important element in the town and streetscape of Wilson St, Redfern, particularly its close proximity to the railway workshops.'¹⁸



Figure 3.8 View south-west of the Chief Mechanical Engineer's office from Wilson Street (Source: Curio 2021)

3.5.7 Telecommunications Equipment Centre

The Telecommunications Equipment Centre (TEC) building has historical and technological significance for the ongoing part it played in the management of the NSW train network, continuous from the early 20th century into the start of the 21st century.

Purpose built in 1912; the TEC at Eveleigh functioned continuously as part of the NSW Railway telecommunications department from 1912 to 2002, and was the technological heart of NSW railways communications systems. The use of telegraph and later when technology advanced, telephones, from this building was integral to the management of smooth and uninterrupted train network. The TEC was integral both to the operations at Eveleigh, as well as to the wider NSW train network.

While the TEC appears to have fallen into considerable disrepair since its decommission as part of the NSW Railways telecommunications branch in 2002, the interior layout of the building, along with many original fixtures, and a large movable heritage collection of machinery, remains intact and in situ within the TEC.

The Telecommunications Equipment Centre is of State significance and is of High significance as a contributory item within ERW complex.



Figure 3.9 Northern view of the TEC from previous area of Elstons Sidings (Source: Curio Projects)

3.5.8 Scientific Services Building No. 1 (1916)

The Scientific Services Building No. 1 is of historical, social, and technological significance for the role it played in the development of materials sciences and laboratory testing, specific to rail and transport technology within the NSW Railways.

The construction of the Scientific Services Building No. 1 reflects the increasing scientific role NSW Railways was playing in the first years of the 20th century in ensuring that NSW had the most advanced rail system and fleet possible. Works being undertaken from this site concentrated on scientifically testing and checking railway components, and chemical testing of water quality from rural supplies. The laboratories of the Scientific Services Building No. 1 played an important role in the wide range of scientific research, development, and field testing of Railway locomotives, machinery, and building/bridge fabric, including testing and work with materials, oils and lubricants, paint, detergents and cleaning agents, and metallurgy and welding.

Works undertaken at this building also facilitated the training of future generations of scientists who began work within the Scientific Services building and laboratory as cadets', including a number who stayed in the employ of NSW Railways long term.

The building's construction, function, and expansion over the years is testimony to the great growth in the development of the railways in the early and mid-20th century. It's location next to the CME building, under the surveillance of the Chief Mechanical Engineer underlies the impact of the scientific testing works being carried out as part of NSW Railways, and is demonstrative of the importance and high esteem in which scientific testing and experimentation was held, to the ongoing and evolving functions of the Eveleigh Railyards, and directly to the function, safety, and progression of the NSW railways as a whole. Internally, a great deal of original fixtures and fittings remain intact and in situ within the building and serve to illustrate the works that took place from this building.

The Scientific Services Building No. 1 is of State significance and of Exceptional significance as part of the wider Eveleigh Complex.



Figure 3.10 Northern elevation of the Scientific Services Building No.1
Source: Curio Projects, 2021

3.5.9

Traverser No.1 (1887/1969)

Traverser No. 1 is of High significance as a contributory item in Eveleigh Railway site. While not the original Traverser in this location, it is of significance for its ability to demonstrate the technology used at the site to ensure that trains were easily able to be moved between multiple buildings. It is one of the last remaining traversers at the Eveleigh Railway site, and is thus a rare and representative tangible example of the practicalities and methods of moving large scale machinery and rolling stock throughout the railway yards as required.



Figure 3.11 Traverser No.1 (Source: curio Projects, 2021)

3.5.10 Fan of Tracks

The Fan of Tracks is of High significance as a component of the Eveleigh Railway site. Remaining in essentially their original location (although the exact fabric of the tracks would have been interchanged, replaced, and recycled throughout the functioning years of the ERW), the tracks were crucial to the function of the Eveleigh Carriage Workshops site, and intrinsically linked to the Paint Shop, allowing the movement of carriages and wagons in and out of the workshops. Over 120 years after their construction, the physical presence of the fan of tracks still represent a tangible demonstration of how trains were moved around the site and specifically in and out of the Paint Shop and onto the Carriage Workshop.



Figure 3.12 The Fan of Tracks as they appear today. View east towards Redfern Station across the subject site (Source: Curio Projects, 2021)

3.5.11 Brick Retaining Wall

Built in the earliest phases of construction at Eveleigh and integral as a forming the northern wall of precinct buildings (e.g. the Compressor House and Blacksmiths Workshop), the brick retaining wall is an excellent example of the substantial infrastructure required to delineate the site boundaries of the ERW from early in the establishment and function of the railyards. The wall's fabric and construction is also significance for the quality of both, reflective of the high standards of NSW Railways at the time. The Brick Retaining Wall is of State significance and of high significance as a contributory item for the Eveleigh Railway Workshops.



Figure 3.13 Section of the brick retaining wall north of the Telecommunications Equipment Centre (Source: Curio Projects, 2021)

3.5.12 Overbridge Footings (1914)

The remains of the Overbridge footings are of moderate significance as a contributory item of the ERW for their ability to demonstrate infrastructure required for the use of the site by workers and members of the public. The remains of the Overbridge footings are of local significance.



Figure 3.14 Remains of the overhead footbridge support south west of the Telecommunications Equipment Centre, north of the rail corridor (Source: Curio Projects, 2021)