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Ripponlea Railway Station Glen Eira Road, Ripponlea

There are almost 50 railway stations in Victoria similar to Ripponlea. There is more of this type of design in Victoria than any other (excluding portables, recent standard plans and 'Mallee sheds'). And Ward and Donnelly's excellent survey *Victoria's Railway Stations* covers them all. They were built over 1909-29, often where existing facilities proved inadequate. They all share the same plan and construction and reach for a common grab-bag of decorative details in the Arts and Crafts and Federation manner. Quite a few are in Melbourne (Ivanhoe, Northcote, Merri and Royal Park) but many are in north-eastern Victoria.

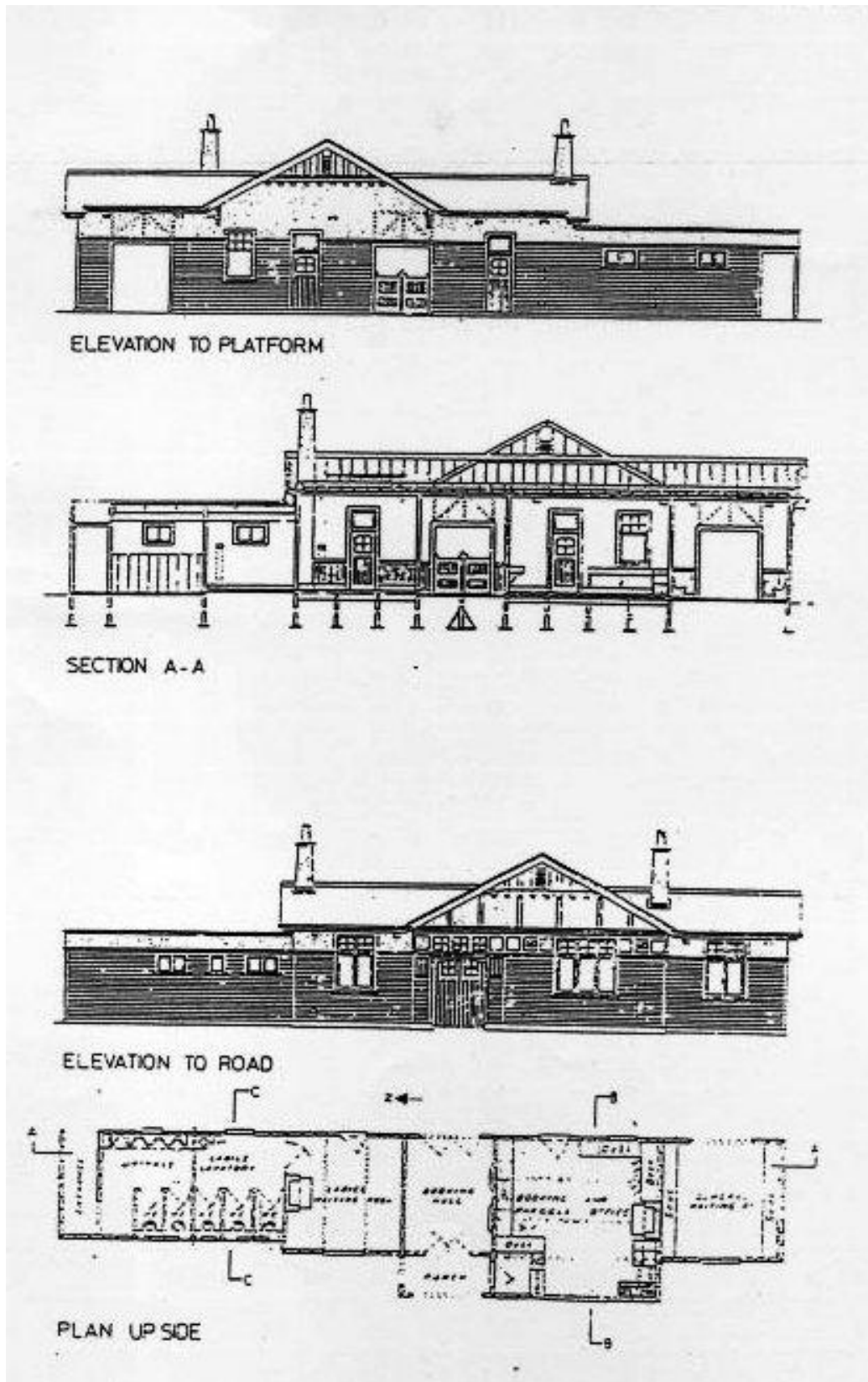


Ripponleas Railway Station, 2002

So why is Ripponlea Station remarkable? Well, it is quite intact (although windows and fireplaces were blocked, the lamp-room yard and store, signal box and advertising boardings were removed). Its station yard was landscaped as the Barnett Grey Gardens, with their radiating paths, continuing on the western side of the up platform along Monkstadt Avenue, and its footbridge does survive. But most clearly, its construction generated the development of nearby housing and shops: the shopping strip in Glen Eira Road all follows construction of the station, becoming later the further away. The shops at 15-27 were completed in 1912 (architects Lane & Morgan); 45-55 in 1914; Brinsmead's

Pharmacy (36) and in the Ripponlea triangle, the Quat Quatta and Erindale estates, were subdivided in 1911.

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Floor Plan & Elevation of the Western Upside Building, c.1911

The architectural drawings for the station are dated 21 December 1911 and construction continued into 1913. They are initialled by J.W. Hardy, chief architect of the Way and Works Branch of the Victorian Railways, however the actual designer is not known. The Sandringham line opened (to North Brighton) on 19 December 1859, and Balaclava, Elsternwick and Windsor stations, opened then. The line extended to Brighton Beach in 1861 and Sandringham 1887. Ripponlea Station opened on 1 May 1912. It is said to have been called Glen Eira Road then, but this is not substantiated.



Locality of Ripponlea Railway Station, and its proximity to Ripponlea Shopping Centre

Prior to the announcement of the opening of the railway station, Brunnings Nursery (35), with the two nineteenth century mansions, Rippon Lea and Quat Quatta, had occupied its hinterland. The opening of the railway line and Ripponlea station, stimulated growth and development openly. Oak Grove was settled as early as early as 1900, until 1920. Glen Eira Avenue developed from 1912-24. Parades of shops in Glen Eira Road followed: nos: 15-27 (1912); 45-55 (1914); 57-67 (1921). Los Angeles Court (35) was developed over 1927-1938, continuing as Monkstadt Avenue (1929-40).

The downside (eastern) building consisted of booking office and general waiting room, both with fireplaces, with a lobby between. The upside (western) building had Men's Toilets, Ladies Toilets, Ladies' Waiting Room, Lobby, Station Master's and Parcels Office and a Waiting Room. Their timber frame is clad with roughcast render and weatherboards,

with timbered gables. Roofing is diamond asbestos shingles, like the Melbourne's tramshelters. The gardens have eleven (!) *Phoenix canariums* (Date palms) and *Pittosperum undulatum*.

In March 1992, Ripponlea Station was assessed by the National Trust Buildings Committee as being in 'poor' condition, infested with white ants and subsidence. The rare asbestos roof shingles were loose and windows smashed. However it was classified. The community feared the Ripponlea Station would deteriorate and succumb to fires and vandalism as St Kilda Railway Station (19) almost had.

By 1993, a Friends of Ripponlea Station had formed and obtained support from the Alan Brown, the Opposition spokesman for Transport. A 'Heritage Corridor' was proposed linking the station with the Glen Eira shops, all carefully restored and leading to the National Trust's Rippon Lea Estate nearby. In December 1994, a Feasibility Study was prepared by Spiller Gibbins Swan Pty.Ltd and Lecki Ord, architect commissioned by the Ripponlea Transport Committee to prepare redevelopment options proposals. One of the three options allowed retention of the existing buildings, the others to demolish all and build new buildings further along the platforms.

By November 1995, Alan Brown was Minister for Public Transport in the Kennett Liberal government and he and Minister for Education, Don Hayward, jointly announced a \$305,000 'restoration grant'. Finally in February 1999, Ripponlea Station was on the state's Victorian Heritage Register, and its future assured.

References

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