EAGLEHAWK RAILWAY STATION PEDESTRIAN SUBWAY

Location

HALL STREET EAGLEHAWK - PROPERTY NUMBER 12, GREATER BENDIGO CITY

Municipality

GREATER BENDIGO CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7724-0643

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 17, 2022

What is significant?
The pedestrian subway is significant generally as an aspect of ‘Boom Style’ mid-Victorian Railway Station architecture. The Pedestrian Subway is considered a rare feature of that same period style, that may likely be more or less intact. It also has aesthetic significance in built design and as innovative architecture of the Victorian period.
An example of past lifeways and problem solving. An example of result of population growth and attendant infrastructure growth during and post Gold Rush boom
How is it significant?
The pedestrian subway which is uncommon to rare in municipalities of this size, if not unique. Presumably largely intact Victorian engineering and solution to expanse of railways as direct result of the Victorian Gold Rush.
Why is it significant?
Uncommon to rare feature if not possibly unique. Aesthetic - as an example of Victorian era architecture. Presumed largely intact.

Theme

3. Connecting Victorians by transport and communications

Hermes Number 209210

Property Number

History

The pedestrian subway was built in 1889 by contractor Mr George Pallet at the cost of £1497.48 (who originally wanted to blast a tunnel for the subway and as a consequence lost the contract but won it back again when he (Mr Pallet) stated that the Railways did not specify that blasting was not a preferred option and that he could resort to a less drastic means of construction). The subway is built in the Victorian style/materials matching the station and goods shed building style and materials. (see Plate 10). Interestingly the pedestrian subway does not appear in Andrew Ward's overarching compendium of Victoria's Railway Stations (1982).

Victorian Railways engineering drawings dating from 1922 indicate refurbishment and strengthening of the subway, when concrete rail slabs (probably replaced a long row of single rails which along with wooden sleepers were used ubiquitously in railway constructions until the mid-late 20thc), detail the design and engineering of the subway. A c.40cm concrete foundation set at c.2.7m below the surface sits underneath brick cement abutment (c.90cm thick), that was found when uncovered in 2022 to have red bricks set in the English brick bond style (a pattern formed by laying alternate courses of stretchers and headers echoing the engagement columns on either side of the large warehouse portals of the original brick Goods shed building) and struck off flush, except for the top 5 or so courses on either side which were pointed in a succeeding style no doubt reflecting modifications made to accommodate the new concrete rail slabs in 1922 . Above these abutments rivergum sleepers sat (sit) lengthwise and upon these were laid the concrete rail slab. There appear to be two types of concrete rail slab, the larger concrete rail slab was 3.3m long and the poured concrete enclosed
three similar lengths of rail. These sat directly under each surface rail line (each rail line one of two composing the track) and in this period the Station had three tracks, six lines in total. The smaller rail slabs probably encased a single rail line but was of the same length. These sat in between the tracks. Dry spalls (broken rock or gravels) filled in the cavities between the structure and the undisturbed ground. Above this array lay ballast and above that the surface tracks. The interior of the subway was decorated with scotia and a ceiling of galvanised corrugated iron, both probably introduced in 1922. Down pipes in the walls led to a drainpipe sitting under the subway floor. The works in 1922 also lowered the subway floor by c. 6 inches. This floor was tar paved over the ground surface. On the Downside of the tracks the subway then turned some 35 degrees to the SE exiting behind and to the south of the Eaglehawk Railway Station toward Milburn Lane between Sutton Lane and Market St. Local residents indicate that the subway had prior to being filled in, white tiles on its walls at least in part (pers.com). The contractor for the 1922 refurbishment is not recorded.

The Pedestrian subway seems a relatively unique feature for a borough of Eaglehawk's size, perhaps more likely to be found in larger centres, however reflective of the once surrounding industry and initial Victorian Gold Rush which attracted and settled a population. Once the Swan Hill line extension was built Eaglehawk became a junction leading to no doubt greater traffic and commerce. While pedestrian underpasses are not uncommon, they are usually above ground under a raised rail network. The 2022 signalling works unearthed part of the subway revealing it to be in relatively good condition although damaged/removed in one section by the previous placement of utilities. On the western side of the track a new platform occupies the area above the pedestrian subway. Whether the subway staircase remains intact underneath is unknown. There is a good chance that the entire length of the subway structure underneath the track on the west side (adjacent to the stairway) persists, and similarly the rest of the length of the structure towards Milburn Lane.

There are no signs or surface details of the subway or its exit on the east side of the track towards Milburn Lane. Nor are there signs of any materials that compose the subway that may have be excavated for any reason, present at any location.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/