



CHULLORA RAILWAY WORKSHOPS

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

**A Report For
PLANNING WORKSHOP**

Godden Mackay Pty. Ltd.,

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

The need for new railway workshops came about as a result of the rapid growth of the railway system, the decision to change from steam traction to electric traction on the suburban network and because the Eveleigh workshops were no longer adequate for all railway construction. Eveleigh had developed a mile from Central Station on the main line, on 62 acres of land resumed in 1879 and upon which work had commenced in 1882. These were the principal locomotive and carriage workshops but Redfern had become a residential suburb and no expansion could take place there.

The new site was to be more than a newer and larger Eveleigh. It was planned that over the years, as various workshops needed to expand they would move to this site, until eventually all branches of the railway department would be located there. For this reason it was necessary for Eveleigh's successor to be located close to the centre of the metropolitan system.

The site chosen, Chullora, was eleven miles from Central Station and roughly midway between the Main Suburban and Bankstown lines. As the Chief Mechanical Engineer observed in 1926, it was as central to the suburban system as practicable. The price of land and the large area which was required precluded the workshops being nearer the centre of the city.

The new site consisted of 485 acres of reasonably clear and level land, triangular in shape. One of its boundaries was the main southern road (Liverpool Road or the Hume Highway) and a second was the main goods line between Enfield and Regent's Park. It was close to the Enfield locomotive running depot which was the largest in the state. It also became a significant presence for the nearby residents of Bankstown.

The impression emanating from material written in the 1920's is one of order, design, planning, and an all pervasive sense of the presence of electricity. Electricity was a factor in the layout of the workshops, in the equipment installed in the carriages and in the equipment for the new electrified suburban lines.

Chullora, like Eveleigh, has not been used to capacity for several years as more of the engineering work has been put up for tender. With the rationalisation of the rail system and its operation, whole workshop and storage areas at Chullora became redundant. Some years ago two large areas were leased or sold to the private sector. More recently the saw mill, timber yard, signals and communications workshops were closed and the Permanent Way Workshops converted to the Manufacturing Centre. These changes have meant a drastic reduction in staff and have greatly increased the amount of land which is surplus to requirements and available for disposal.

1.2 Background

In early 1990 the State Governments Property Management Group commissioned Planning Workshop Pty Ltd to assess earlier work by other consultants concerning SRA land which was surplus to requirements at Chullora workshops. It has been proposed that several parcels of land will be sold and will probably be used for manufacturing purposes.

Planning Workshop commissioned Godden Mackay Pty. Ltd. to prepare a heritage and archaeological assessment which will be incorporated in a larger document detailing future possible strategies for the site.

The aim of this preliminary heritage assessment is to identify those buildings and relics which are part of the cultural heritage. As this report is preliminary only, the recommendations may indicate further work is needed to determine management strategies for individual buildings and relics.

1.3 Author Identification

This report was compiled and written by Don Godden, Jill Sheppard and Beverly Johnson of Godden Mackay Pty. Ltd. The description and assessment of buildings and relics was done by Don Godden and Jill Sheppard. Beverly Johnson was responsible for research and writing the section on the establishment of Chullora.

1.4 Methodology

This report follows the methodology outlined in J.S. Kerr The Conservation Plan, the National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.), 2nd Edition, 1985, up until the assessment and statement of significance phase. The report complies with the principles of the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (the Burra Charter) and its guidelines. The Burra Charter and its guidelines relating to Cultural Significance are reproduced as Appendix B.

The terminology used in this report, and particularly the words place, cultural significance, conservation, maintenance, preservation, restoration, reconstruction, adaptation and compatible use, follows the definitions provided by the Burra Charter.

The term Chullora refers to the site bounded by the Hume Highway, Brunner Road, Rookwood Road and the Enfield-Regents Park rail line. One small section is bounded by Weroona Road, Berner Street and Enfield Regents Park line.

The precincts referred to in that site are as shown in Fig 1. of this report. The names of buildings are according to the plan named Per Way Workshops Chullora Layout No. 228B. Most buildings are one storey high and layout refers to the ground floor level.

1.5 Documentary Research

A history of Chullora workshops was not available when this report was compiled. A series of short reports by the SRA and its forerunner, the Department of Railways, were made available to Godden Mackay by Mr. Thomas Austin, Heritage Officer, SRA. These reports, entitled "Way and Works Branch, Chullora Workshops" and "Way and Works Branch, Plant Depot, Chullora" were published in 1962. They provided some information on the site but concentrated on the Way and Works area.

Other documents which provided information were the account of a Visit of Inspection to the Workshops by the Institution of Engineers of Australia in 1927 and the three part series on the Electrification of the Sydney and Suburban Railway published in the 1928 Transactions of the Institution of Engineers.

Several plans of the Per Way Workshops were supplied by Mr. Charlie Caruana, Deputy Manager of the Construction Workshops.

1.6 Fieldwork

The equivalent of five and a half person days was spent on the site in May and June 1990. Each structure or building was examined and each artefact of potential significance was located and recorded.

A photograph of each building and relic of heritage potential was taken in black and white and an inventory sheet prepared.

1.7 Limitations

Documentary evidence in the form of a history was not available to Godden Mackay before this report was completed.

Absence of historical information relating to the site before its acquisition by the Department of Railways, and then of the development of buildings, structures and operations, has limited, the conclusions about some of the equipment and structures.

This report identifies items of potential significance only. It does not address future management strategies for these items.

Insufficient documentary information was available to determine with any accuracy the location of areas of archaeological significance. The site has been used as a dump for clean fill for some time and the material buried by this action and the original profile of the land in several precincts is unknown.

1.8 Acknowledgments

Particular assistance has been given by Mr. Charles Caruana, Deputy Manager of the Chullora Manufacturing Centre. Mr. Caruana was a great source of information particularly about the operations of Per Way Workshops No. 2.

Col Barclay and Theodore of the Returned Material Store, long serving SRA employees who were caretaking the Carpenters Sawmill and Returned Materials Store respectively, assisted with descriptions of the function and history of buildings and machines.

The Chain Shop staff gave invaluable assistance by describing and demonstrating their craft. The steam crane operators also gave a working demonstration.

Mr. Phillip Lingard, Workshop Manager of the Locomotive Maintenance Centre, shared an enthusiasm for history and was a great source of information.

The Trackfast management and security staff also facilitated fieldwork.