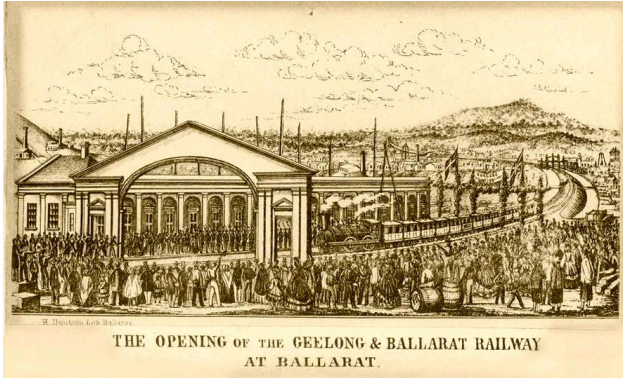


8. The arched roof of the **train hall** (under construction in the sketch below) has protected the travellers from the weather for over 155 years.



Can you see the Eureka flag in the 1862 sketch ?

The National Trust citation notes that *'the train hall is unique at the National level as a large neo-Classical design with elliptical arched entrances and is further enhanced by the footbridge and additions with clock tower and Grecian portico of 1888.'* Note the absence of contrasting modern features is also unique.

9. Cross over the 1877 **railway foot bridge**, and enter the grand **booking hall** under the **clock tower**. The size and impressiveness of this 1888 to 1890 building reflects the increased traffic caused by the huge expansion in gold mining activities in the region during the 1870s and 80s. Admire the elaborate decoration of floor tiles and Egyptian style columns supporting the exquisite timber coffered ceiling with octagonal lead light lantern. Note the large historic wall-mounted railways of Victoria map, that illustrates all of the numerous lines that served the colony and the State.

To your right, under the old clock high on the wall, is the passage to today's booking hall, formerly the very busy and capacious parcels office, served by the large doors facing the loading/unloading area, used today as a regional bus interchange.

The former **dining room** (now unused) to the east of the booking hall is also very elaborate. The **original railway refreshment rooms**, still operational and accessed from platform 1, provide a strong indication of the style of decoration used.

The **stationmaster's residence** and accommodation for dining room staff were incorporated into lower levels of the tower. A fire which damaged the tower in December 1981 led to the closure of the dining room, the dormitories and the station master's office and residence. However, a clock was not originally provided in the tower due to cost overruns on the original project, the downturn in gold production and the Colony's economic depression of the period. A clock was eventually provided, after the tower's external restoration in 1984.

10. Walk out of the hall, under the arcade and turn left towards what was the **original bluestone 1862 engine shed** and part of the original locomotive depot and which today is used as a carriage shed. Admire the hand tooled stonemason's art especially the arches formed with voussoirs and oculus above. Look back at the details of the magnificent tower.

*Written and produced by Dr Anne Beggs-Sunter, Hedley Thomson and Lorraine Huddle. © September 2017.*

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# Ballarat's Railway Heritage

Short Walking Tour - 30 mins

Discover the nationally significant architecture, history and engineering on this self-guided tour.



*"Ballarat Railway Precinct is without peer in Australia. It has the most elegant train hall in the land, and the largest goods shed on the Trunk Lines..all this irrespective of its situation in a most extraordinary historic streetscape. Rarely if ever do the factors imparting cultural value come together as they do in this part of Lydiard Street North."*

Architectural and railway historian Andrew Ward.

**1.** We start the tour from the **Lydiard St railway gates** at the western end of the precinct. Stay for a minute or so to take in the historic panorama surrounding you. Here we stand at the terminus of Victoria's first inland railway line, opened between Geelong and Ballarat on 12 April 1862. Other than for minor alterations, the complex retains its original lay-out, built to the highest engineering standards to showcase the Victorian-era city of Ballarat, literally built on the great riches extracted from local gold mines from 1851.

The precinct is of state and national significance because of its combination of historical, architectural, social and technological values.

Facing the passenger station, ahead of you, you see the majestic station train hall, clock tower, platforms and semaphore signal gantry. Turning in an arc to your left, you see the Ballarat bluestone goods shed, the brick freight forwarding office and, on the western side of Lydiard St, adjacent to the operational railway gates, the stately **timber signal box** (known as Ballarat 'B'). Note the metal rods hanging under the signal box. These are connected to levers inside the signal box. Before upgrading of signalling and the gates to electrical operation in recent years, these levers were connected to the **gantry semaphore signals** and the gates as part of an integrated, manual, mechanical train control system known as INTERLOCKING.

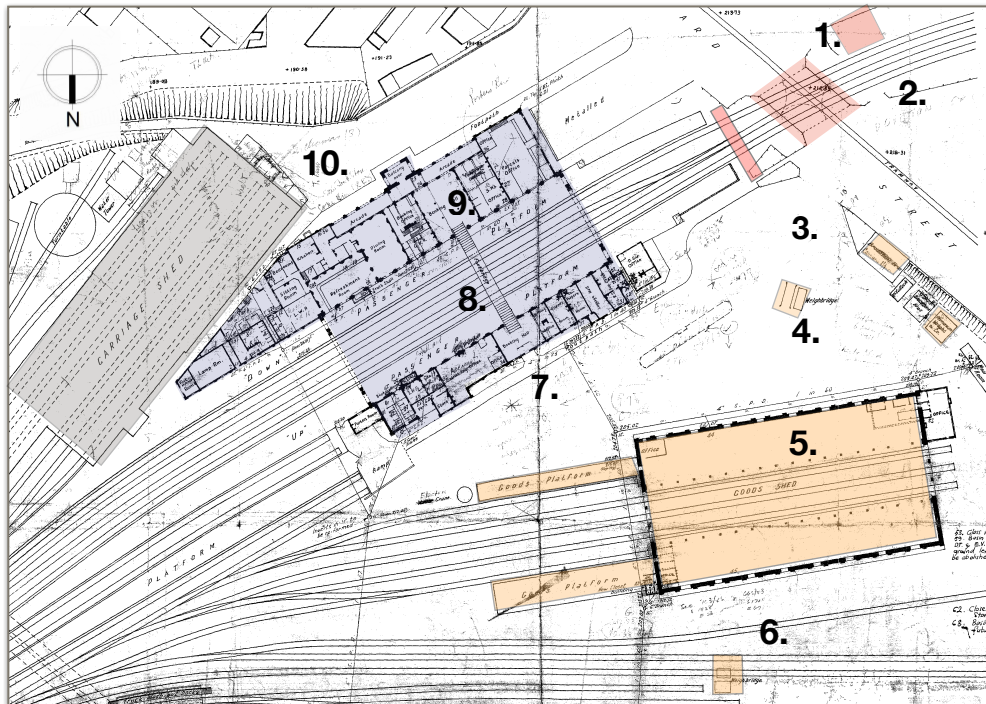
**3.** On your left the red brick, former **freight forwarding office** is the only example of this type of facility still existing in Victoria. From here busy freight operations of the yard were directed.

**4.** Nearby is the rectangular metal rim of the **south weighbridge**, set in the asphalt. This weighbridge was used for weighing road vehicles.

**5. Ballarat West 1863 Goods Shed.** This magnificent bluestone shed originally with a slate roof, has massive internal platforms supported on timber columns, was built by the local contracting firm, Irving and Glover. Walk northwards around the building to its west, appreciating the stonemason's art in the ashlar bluestone construction. Note particularly the beautiful circular vents set high on the gable ends. This is the largest and most intact historic goods shed inside and out, in Victoria.

**6.** The **north weighbridge** retains the intact 1901 mechanism and metal bridge made in London. The timber cabin that protected the mechanism and operator, burnt down in 2014. This weighbridge was used for weighing loaded rail wagons and for checking their tare weight.

**7.** Retrace your path back around the goods shed to the rendered buildings on the north side of the passenger station. These buildings were the **original 1862 station buildings** used by passengers with the opening of the line in 1862. Pass through the central doorway and walk through the former booking hall to the original platform.



**2.** The **1885 gates** are the last remaining operational gates in Australia and among a very select group in the world. In the 1990s there was a successful community campaign to retain the gates and signals, when it was proposed to install boom gates. Cross the road via the lights, to the north side of the railway line.