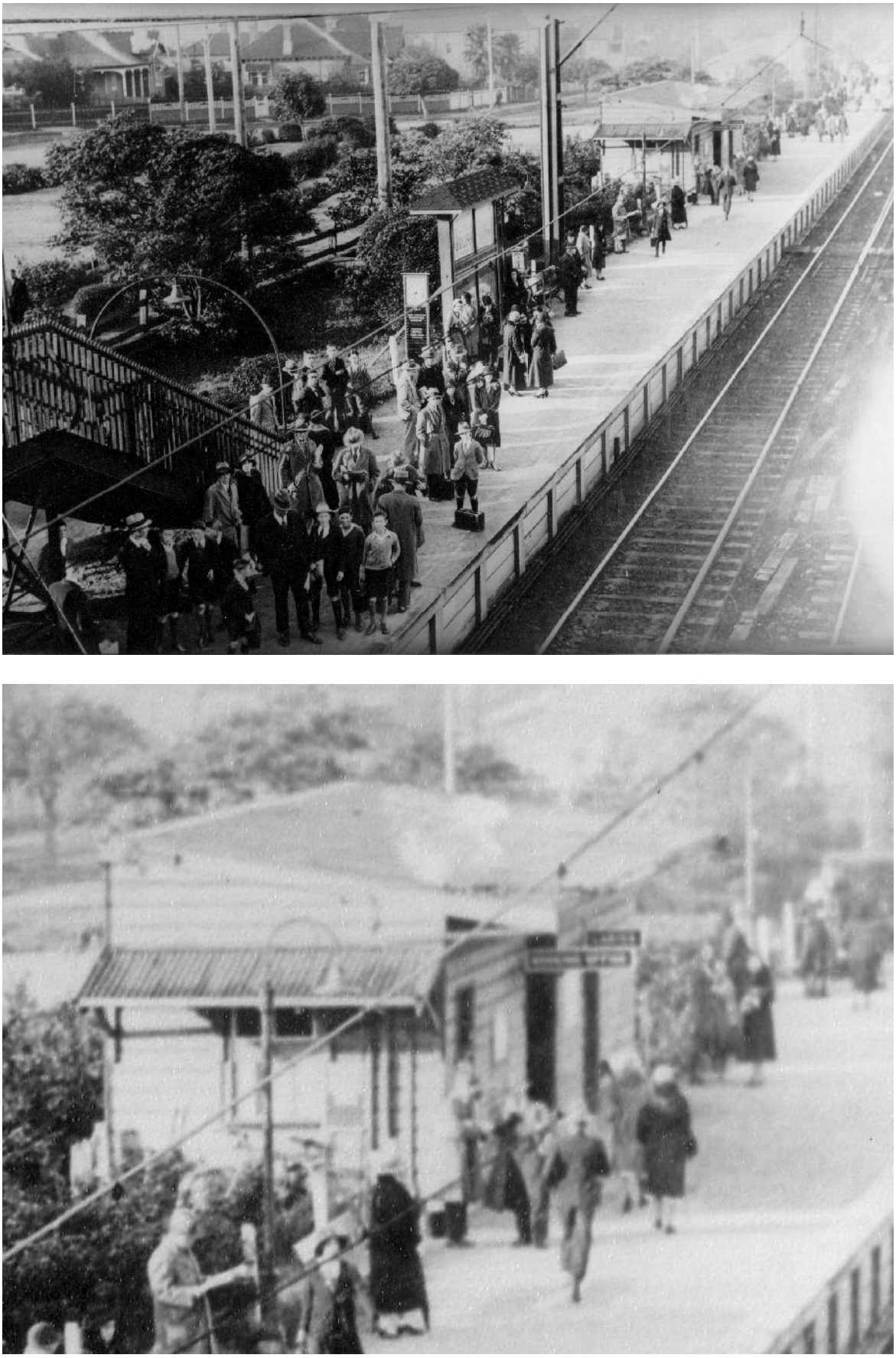

Figure 3.14 View of Concord West Railway Station, Platform 1, 16 June 1933, with detail of waiting shed below. (City of Canada Bay)

In 1911, a Down relief line was opened between the North Strathfield Junction and Concord West Station, and a signal box was installed on the Down platform. In 1912, the Down relief line was extended to Rhodes, and an Up relief line was also constructed between Concord West Station and the North Strathfield Junction (Singleton 1965:101.)

As rail traffic became more frequent along the Main North Line, NSW Railways began to construct pedestrian footbridges at its metropolitan railway stations, to provide safe pedestrian access to station platforms. Between 1914 and 1916, plans were prepared for an overhead footbridge at Concord West Station, to replace the Victoria Avenue level crossing that had originally provided access to the platforms. An underbridge would also be constructed at nearby Station Street to accommodate motor vehicle traffic (Figure 3.15).

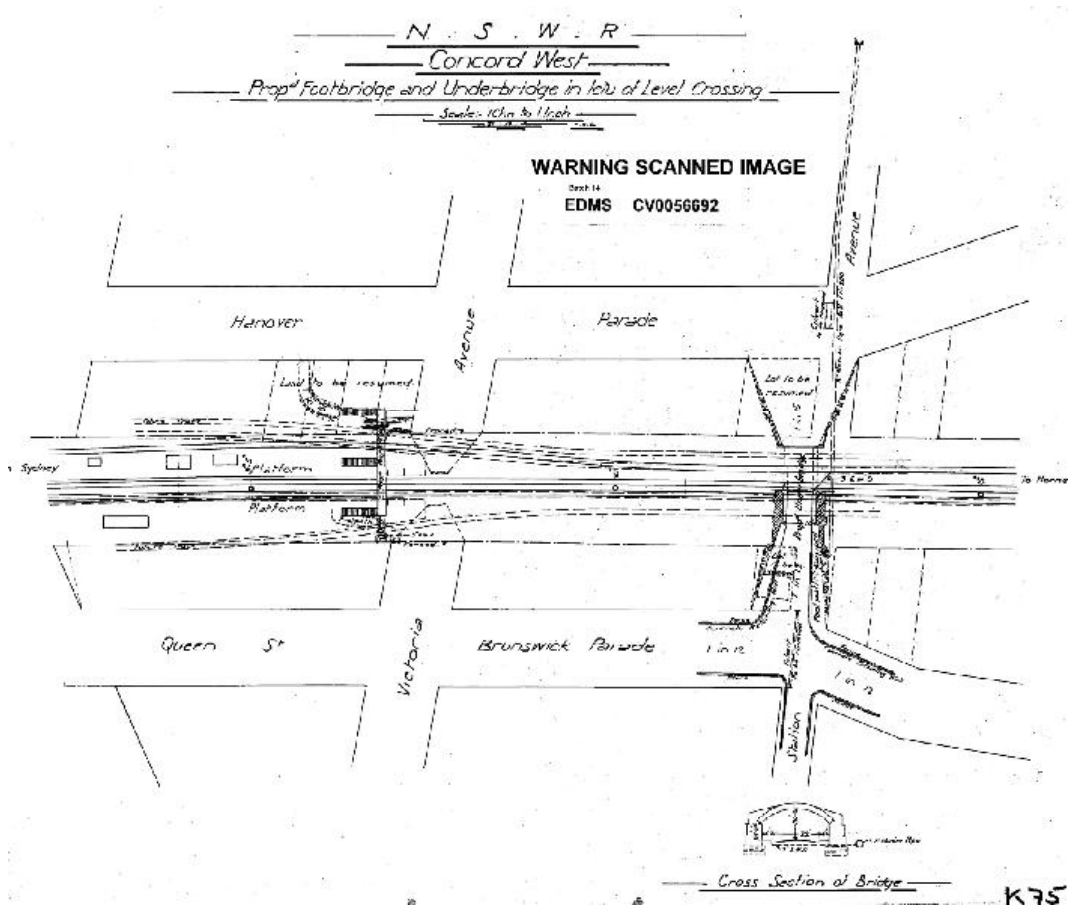

Figure 3.15 Schematic plan of proposed Footbridge and Underbridge in lieu of Level Crossing at Concord West, 1914. (RailCorp Plan, Ref: 0056692)

The overhead footbridge had steel beams, with a timber deck and an iron palisade fence. Two sets of stairs connected the bridge to the platforms, and two additional stairs connected the bridge to the streets on either side of the railway (Figure 3.16). The 'tapered haunched beam' construction allowed for extra vertical clearance, leaving room for the future installation of overhead electric wires, with minimum depth of deck (Fraser 1996:27). The steelwork was provided by Dorman Long and Co., of Middlesbrough, England. Dorman Long and Co. was later well known for providing the steel for the Sydney Harbour Bridge. An 1918 photograph of the newly completed bridge indicates that lighting was also provided along the deck and stairways (Figure 3.17).

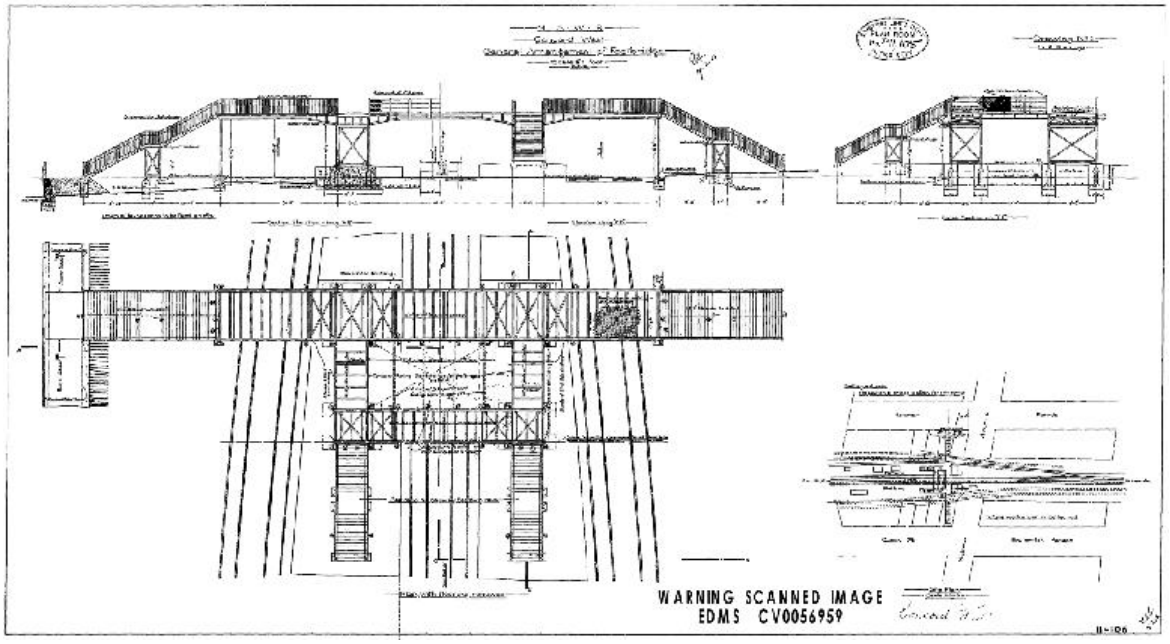

Figure 3.16 Plan of the Concord West overhead footbridge, 1916. (RailCorp Plan, Ref: 0056959)

Figure 3.17 Detail of panorama of Concord West, taken from the overhead footbridge, c1918. (City of Canada Bay)

In the 1920s, the Down platform buildings were upgraded, and a new bookings and parcels office was constructed between the weatherboard signal office and waiting shed. Plans show the new section of building was constructed of fibro cement, with a corrugated iron gable roof and an awning facing the platform (Figure 3.18). The Down platform buildings were replaced in approximately 1994, when a new overhead booking office was constructed at the east end of the footbridge. Metal gable awnings were also installed on the overhead footbridge and on the Down platform around this time (Figure 3.20).

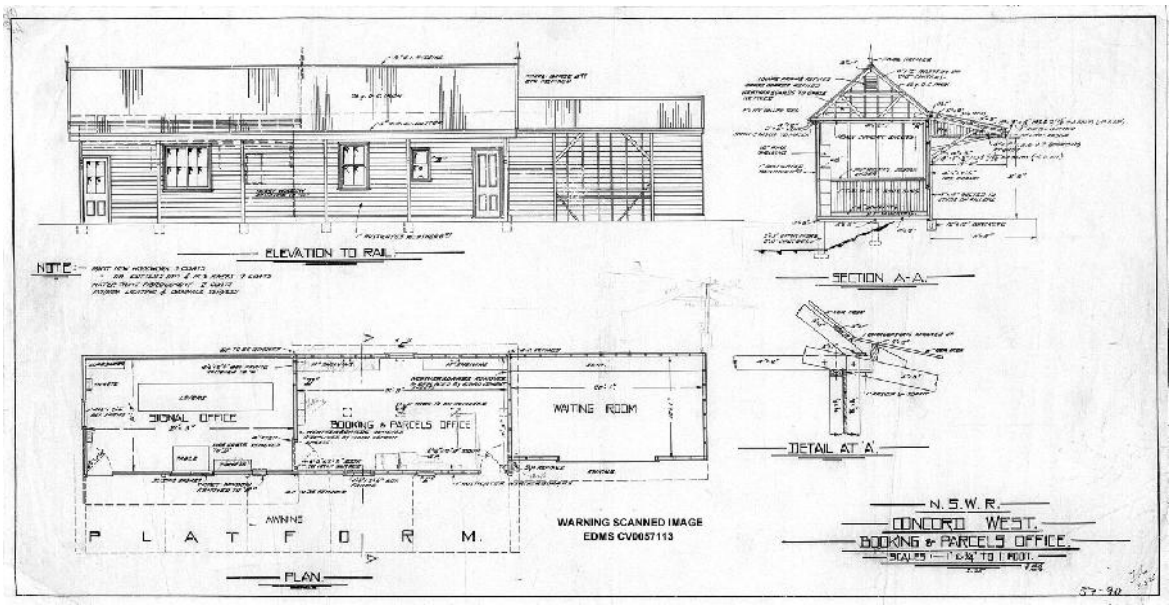

Figure 3.18 Plan of proposed bookings & parcels office on the Down platform, Concord West Station, 1925. (RailCorp Plan, Ref: 0057113)

Figure 3.19 View of the Down platform buildings, c1990, prior to the renovation of the pedestrian footbridge. (SHI, http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/images/shi/480/concordwb6.jpg)

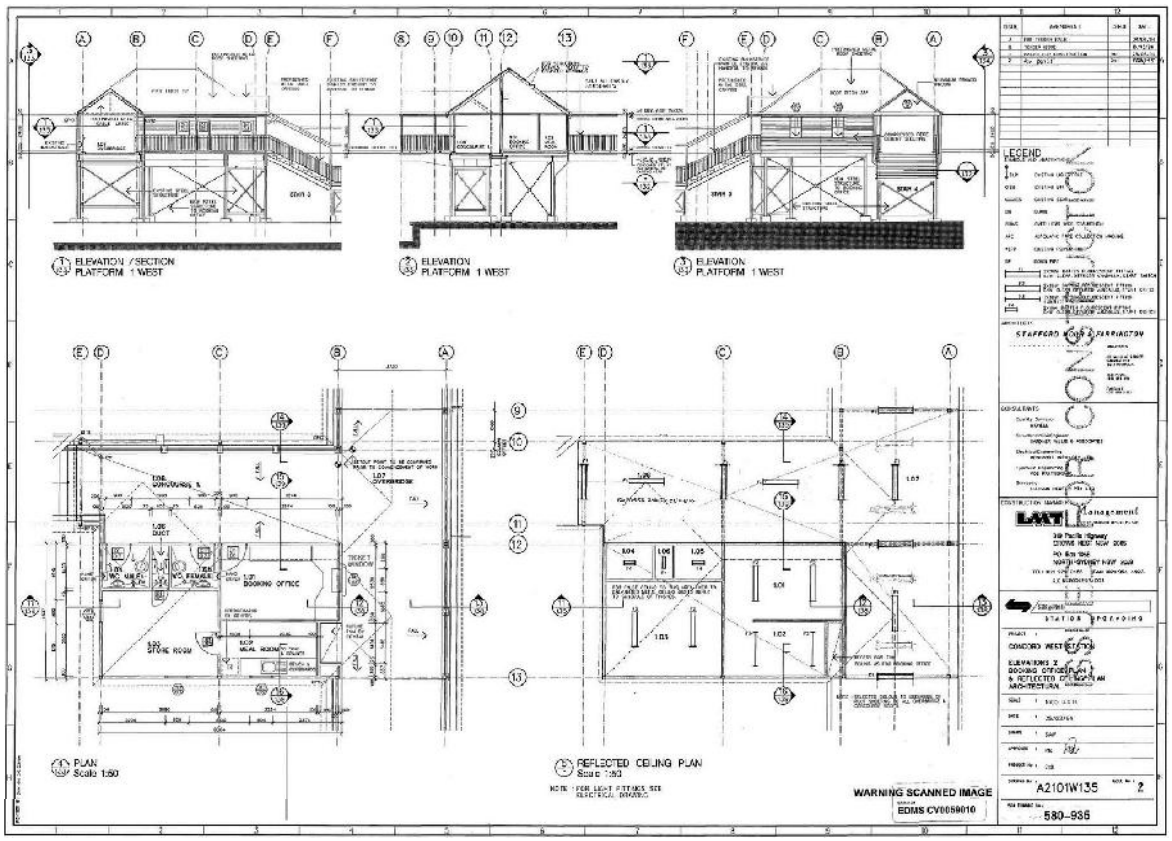

Figure 3.20 Plan of new overhead booking office, Concord West Station, 1994. (RailCorp Plan, Ref: 0059010)

A formal garden was laid out on east side of the station in the 1920s-1930s, with a diagonal path leading from the base of the footbridge to Queen Street. Shrubs and flowering plants were likely supplied by the Railway Garden Nursery, established at nearby Homebush Station in 1923. A 1933 photograph of Concord West Station shows a timber post and rail fence between the platform and the garden, and small shrubs lining the path (see Figure 3.14 above). By 1943, a row of trees had been planted along the east side of the park, parallel to Queen Street. These are likely Brush Box trees, which are extant in the park today (Figure 3.21). It is possible that these trees were planted in the park as part of a Depression era work-relief project.

Figure 3.21 Aerial photograph of Concord West Railway Station, 1943. (NSW Land and Property Information; Ausimage © Sinclair Knight Merz 2007 from RTA photography)

3.4.4 North Strathfield Railway Station

When the Main North Line opened in 1886, the first station north of Redmyre (now Strathfield) was Rhodes. Concord Station (now Concord West) was established in 1887, one year after the line became operational. However, despite petitions from Concord Council and local residents, it would be another 30 years before a station was built at North Strathfield (Coupe 1983:139).

When North Strathfield Station opened on 9 June 1918, it had a central island platform with a single linear platform building, and a footbridge providing access to the platform from Queen Street (Figure 3.22) (Singleton 1965:95). The building was constructed to a standard design, Type 11, commonly used in the metropolitan area in the 1910s-20s (Figure 3.23). It housed all the station functions under one roof, including station master's office, booking office, general waiting room, ladies room, and lavatories. Constructed in brick, the design featured a gabled metal roof with awnings supported on pre-fabricated brackets, and a timber valance at the ends of the awnings.

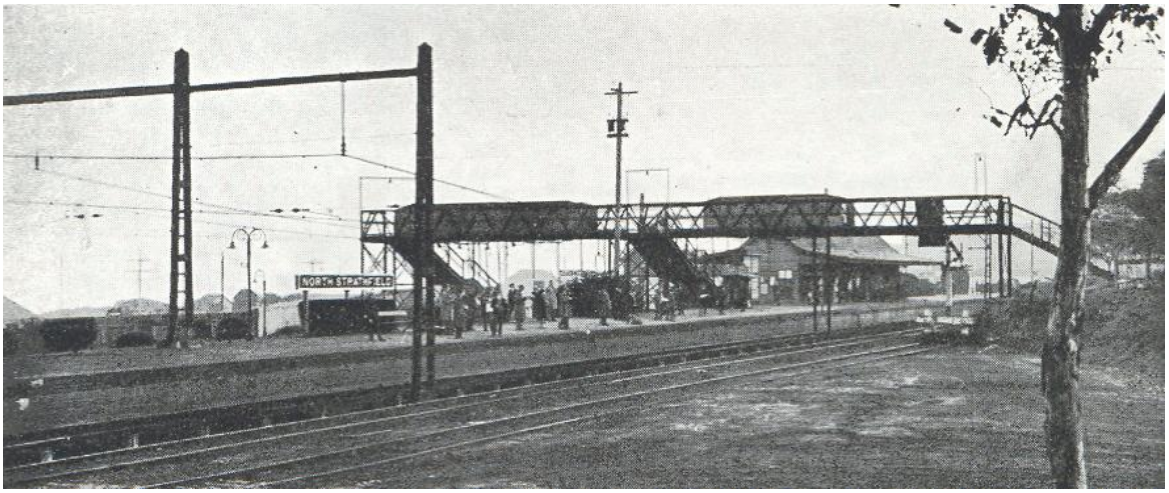

Figure 3.22 View of North Strathfield Railway Station, c1933. (City of Canada Bay)

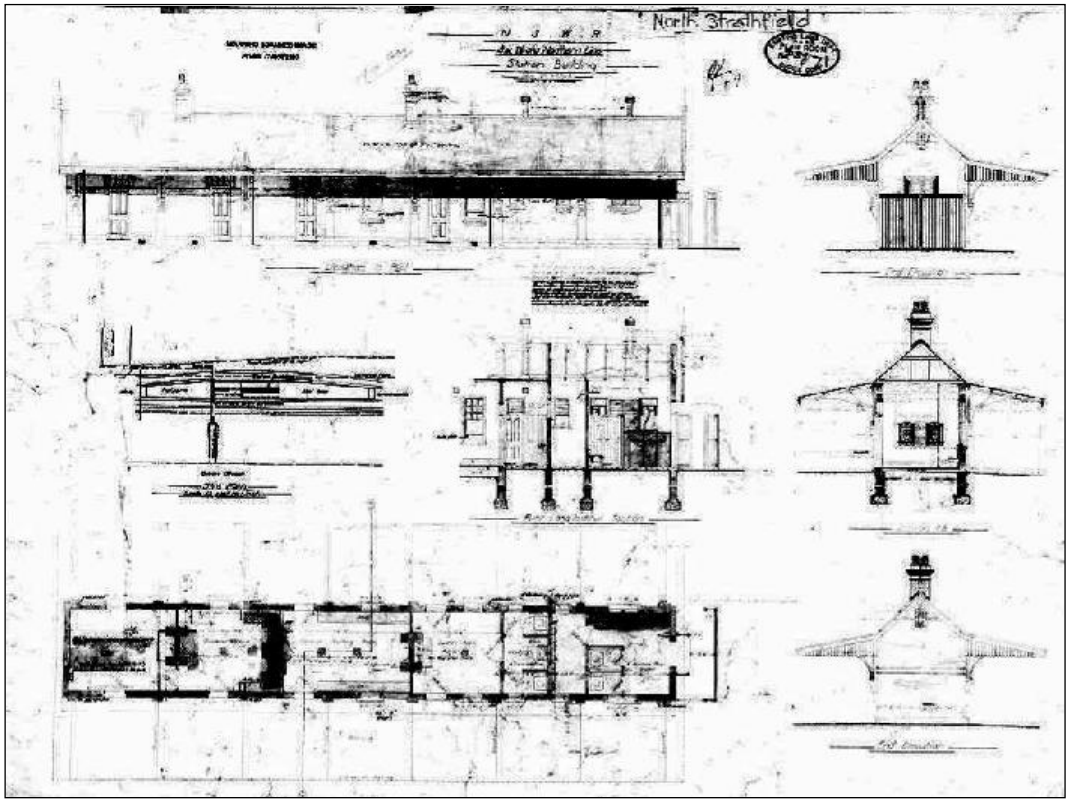

Figure 3.23 Plan for North Strathfield Station, 1917. (RailCorp Plan, Ref: 0363207)

In 1920, a public goods siding was opened on the east side of the North Strathfield Station (Singleton 1965:095). In 1928, a side platform was added to the west Down side of the station, now known as Platform 3. Plans of the platform show a new, timber waiting shed with an iron gable roof and awning (Figure 3.14). They also indicate the location of a siding for postal purposes on the northwest side of the station, and a changed forecourt entrance on the east side of the station.

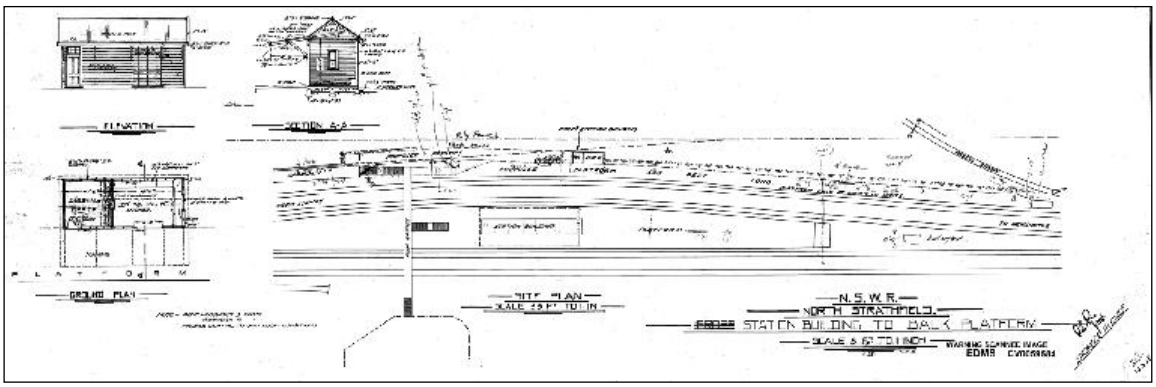

Figure 3.24 Plan for new platform and platform building at North Strathfield, 1928. (RailCorp Plan, Ref: 0059584)

The layout of the North Strathfield Station forecourt in 1928 matches that seen on a 1943 aerial photograph of the site (Figure 3.25). The aerial photographs shows a formal, fan-shaped garden established in the forecourt, and a double row of trees lining a path leading south from the forecourt beside Queen Street. The general form and fan-shaped layout of the station garden is extant, as is the row of Box Brush trees beside Queen Street.

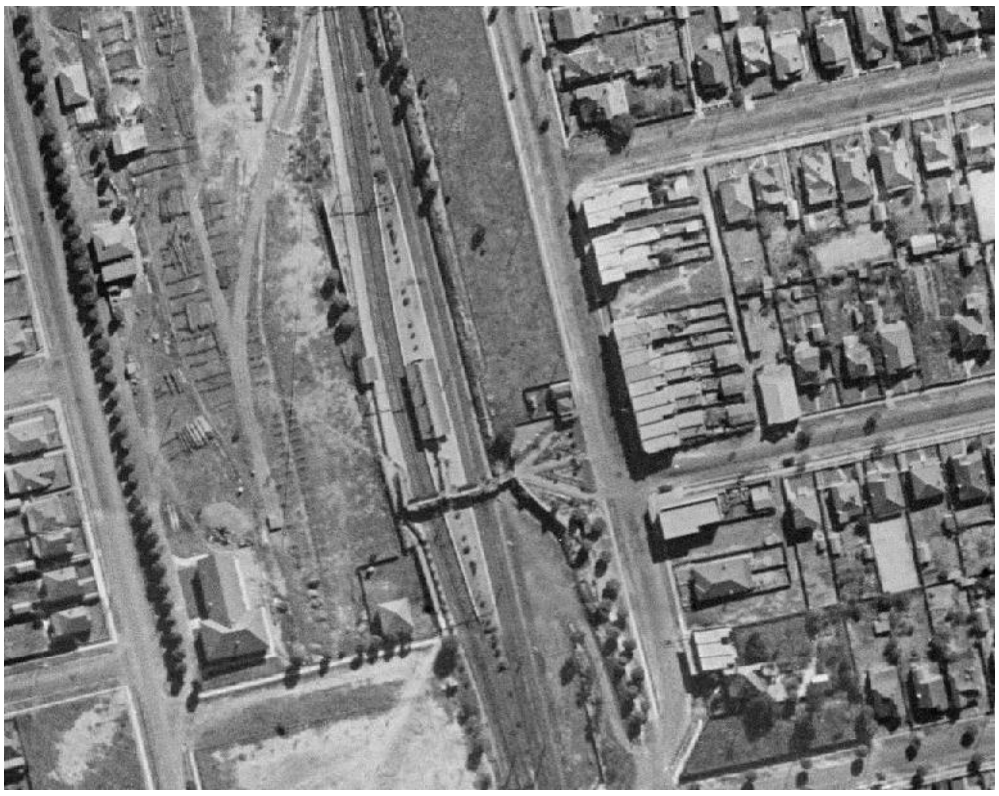

Figure 3.25 Aerial photograph of North Strathfield Station, 1943. (NSW Land and Property Information; Ausimage © Sinclair Knight Merz 2007 from RTA photography)

It is likely that the garden was initially established in the 1920s, around the same time that the land facing the station was subdivided and sold for a row of shops. This is consistent with the period when a Railway Garden Nursery was established for station gardens at nearby Homebush Station. The Nursery supplied metropolitan stations with a range shrubs and flowering plants to improve their appearance. The Nursery also provided advice on establishing gardens, and materials, such as used sleepers and locomotive ash. Railway garden competitions, initiated by the Eddy administration in the 1890s, generated rivalry between stations and depots, and the high standard of gardens helped to build a positive public image for the railways. The Homebush Nursery closed in 1974 and garden

competitions were abandoned, as responsibility for maintaining gardens was shifted to the local community (David Sheedy Pty Ltd 2002:6; McKillop 2009:88-89).

North Strathfield Station was again upgraded in the 1990s. The original footbridge was replaced with a prestressed concrete beam footbridge in 1992, and the waiting shed on Platform 3 was replaced with modern metal shelter shed.

3.4.5 Parramatta Road Underbridge

The capacity of the Main North Line between Strathfield and Parramatta River was gradually improved during the early decades of the twentieth century, partially in response to the development of new industries and urban subdivisions along the line. In 1914, a level crossing at the intersection of Parramatta Road and the Main North Line was removed by grading the road beneath the tracks, and constructing three steel double-track webplate-girder bridges, with brick abutments and wingwalls (Figure 3.26-Figure 3.27) (Fraser 1995:86).

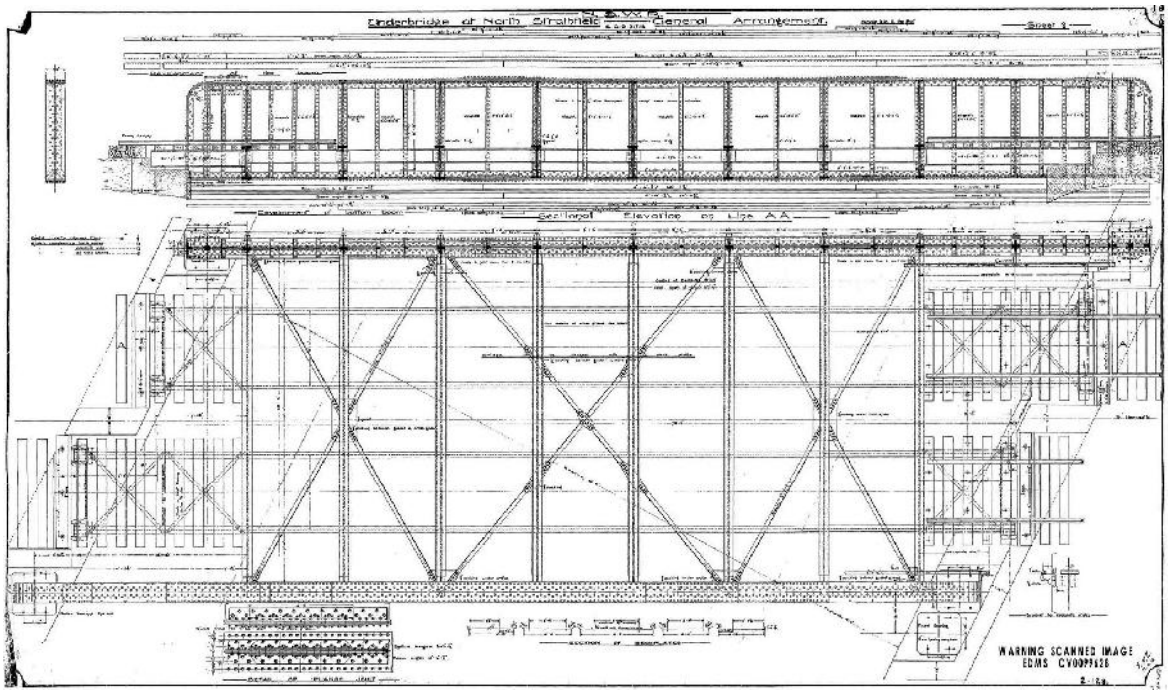

Figure 3.26 Plan of webplate girders for Parramatta Road Underbridge, North Strathfield. (RailCorp Plan, Ref: 0099628)

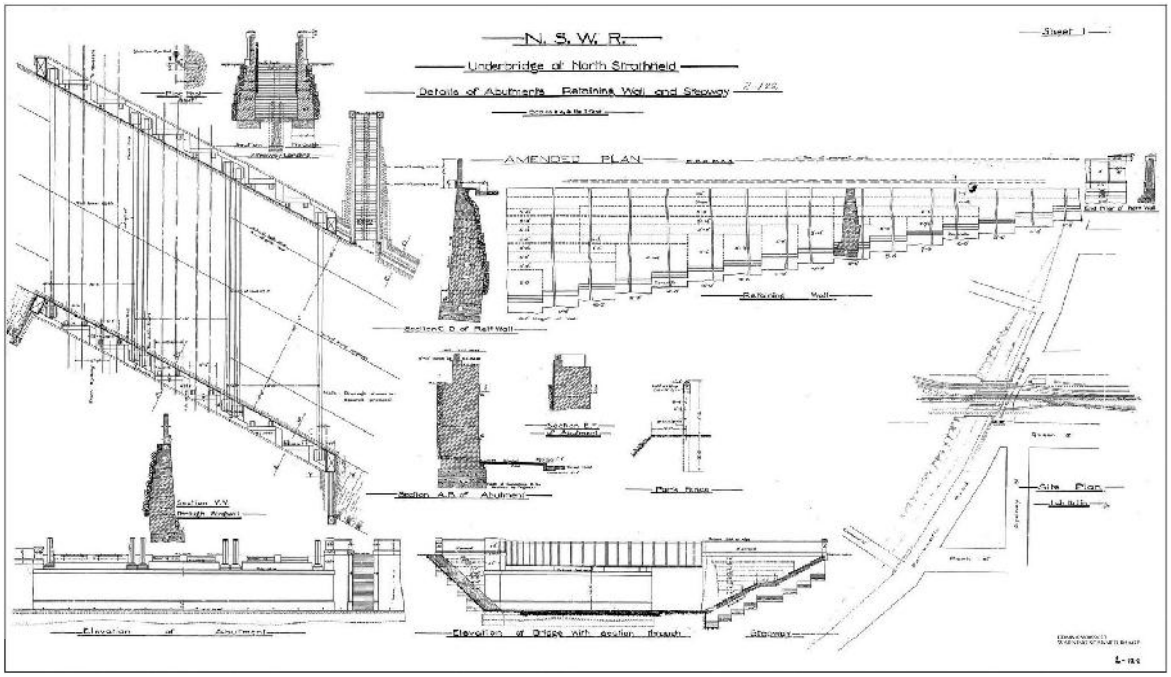

Figure 3.27 Plan of abutments and wingwalls for the Parramatta Road Underbridge, nd. (RailCorp Plan, Ref: 0099627)

From the 1930s, these bridges became well known for carrying advertisements for the nearby Arnott's Biscuits factory, located to the north of the bridge (Figure 3.28-Figure 3.29).

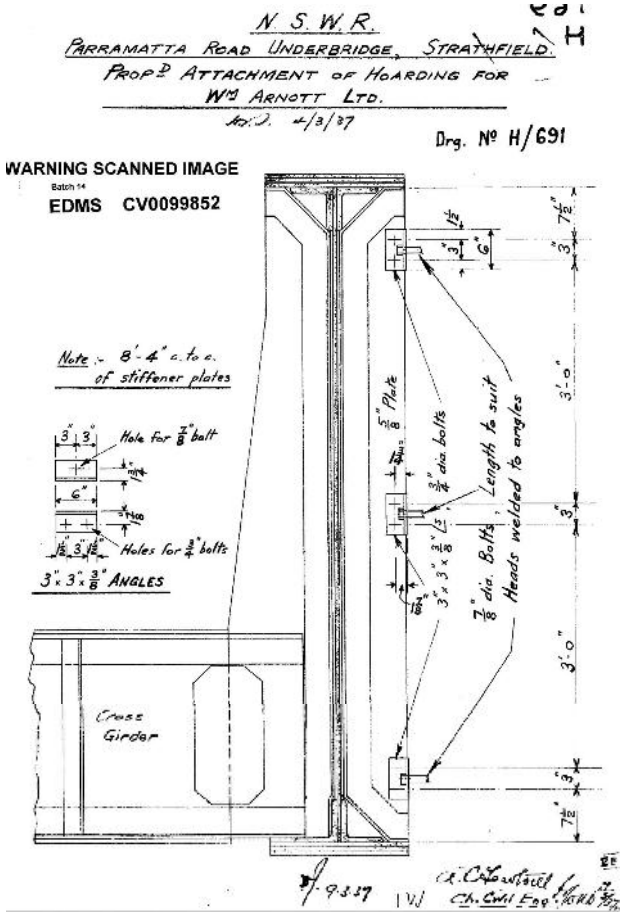

Figure 3.28 Parramatta Road Underbridge, plan of proposed attachment of hoarding for William Arnott Ltd, 1937. (RailCorp Plan, Ref: 0099852)

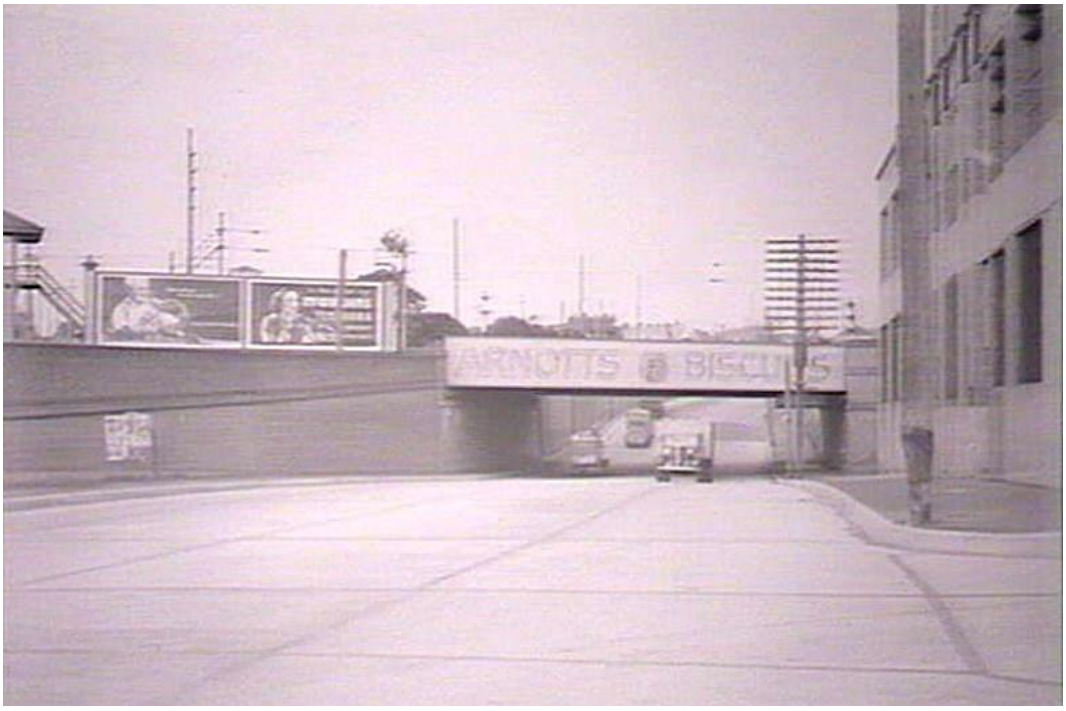

Figure 3.29 The Parramatta Road Underbridge with its well-known advertisement for Arnott's Biscuits, 1939. (State Library of NSW, Ref: Government Printing Office 1 - 26982).

3.4.6 Railway Electrification

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the growth of the suburban population began to place substantial pressure on the existing rail network. In 1915, a design for a new city and suburban electric railway scheme was submitted to the NSW Legislative Assembly by JCC Bradfield, Chief Engineer for Metropolitan Railway Construction (Figure 3.30). The design included a new Central terminal, an underground city rail network, with two lines to pass over a new Harbour Bridge into North Sydney, and five city train stations at Town Hall, Wynyard Square, Circular Quay, St James, and Liverpool Street. It also included a graduated plan for converting the existing suburban railways from steam to electric power. Bradfield had researched various conversions from steam to electric systems overseas: he reported that electric traction was more economical than steam traction in a suburban context, which required short intervals between stations and trains. Electrification also enabled underground railway construction, because steam locomotives could not operate for extended distances underground due to inadequate ventilation (Gunn 1989:278-279.) Despite the disruptions caused by World War I, the Government voted to begin work on the new city railway scheme and the Harbour Bridge in 1916. However, work on the suburban scheme was stopped in July 1917 and was not restarted until 1923 (Fraser 1926:14; Gunn 1989:307-313).

The conversion from steam to electric traction required a range of civil engineering works, including: requirements for signalling, new rolling stock, and the provision and reticulation of electric power. This included additional capacity at existing electric power stations, the construction of new substations at key points along the lines, and the installation of overhead wires to supply the trains themselves. The total cost, not including the construction of the Harbour Bridge, was estimated at £21,736,000 (Fraser 1926:17-21).

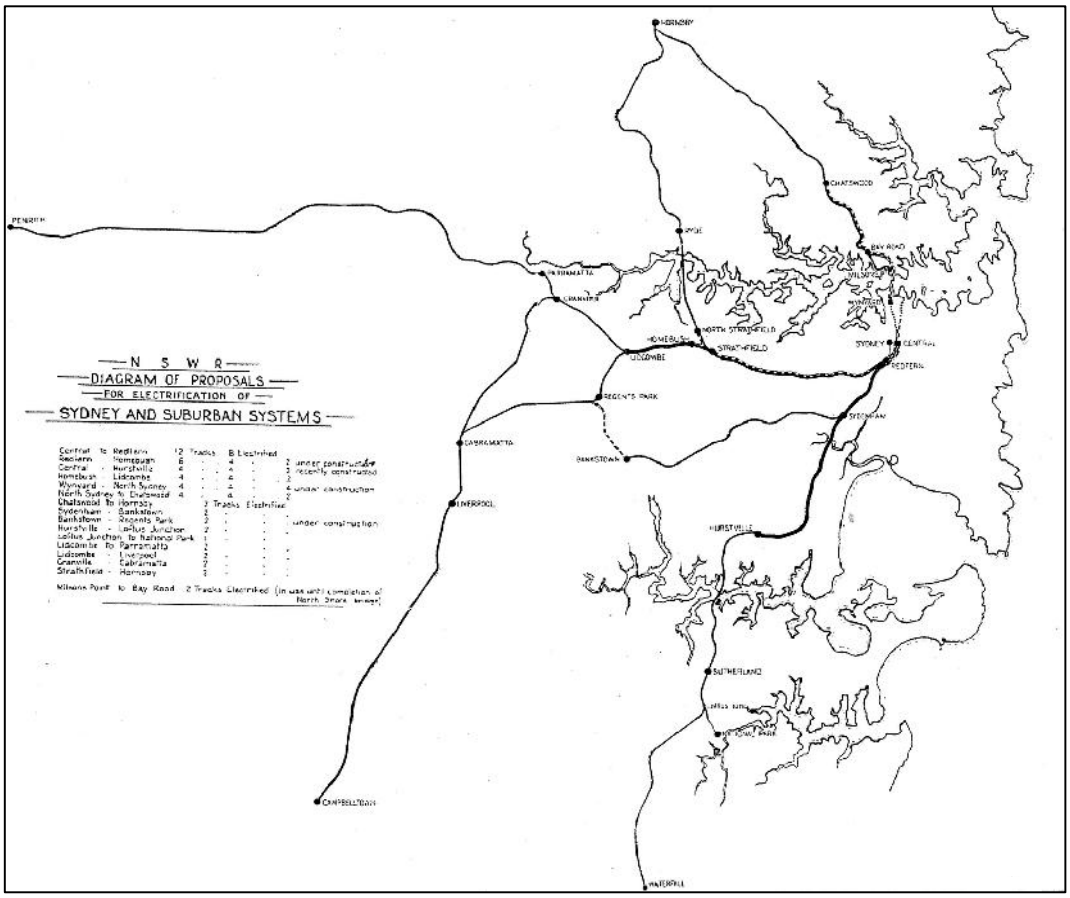

Figure 3.30 Diagram of Proposals for Electrification of Sydney and Suburban Systems, 1926. (Fraser 1926:Fig 2).

The electrification of the line from Central to Homebush was begun in 1926, at 1500 volt direct current (V DC), following the Bradfield plan. Electrification of the Main North Line between Strathfield and Hornsby was completed in 1929 (Singleton 1965:106, 109.)

3.4.7 Strathfield Substation and Substation No. 265

Following the submission of Bradfield's plan for the electrification of the Sydney and Suburban rail network in 1915, the Strathfield Triangle was earmarked as the site of one of 15 electrical substations built in the Sydney Metropolitan area between 1926 and 1932. . Construction of new roadworks and sewerage systems during the mid-1920s prepared the site for this development (Figure 3.31).

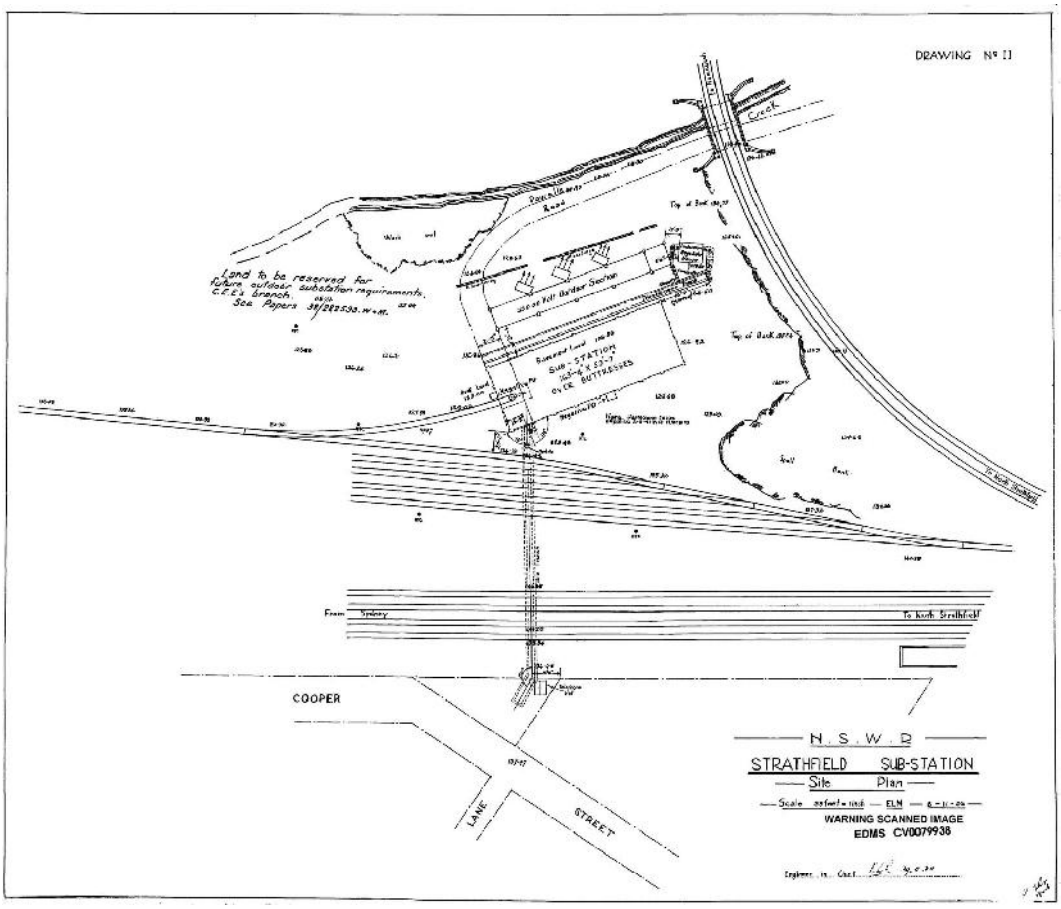

Figure 3.31 Site plan for the proposed Strathfield Substation, 1926. (RailCorp Plan, Ref: 0079938)

The Strathfield Substation was constructed in 1927-28 to accommodate all the equipment 'under one roof'. It was one of the largest suburban substations, originally designed to be fed by 11,000 volt 50 cycle AC from the White Bay Power Station (Myers 1926:238, 243). The transformers were located in brick-walled yard to the side of the building. The substation came into use on 27 August 1928, and remained in operation until 1990, when it was converted into a fabrication workshop for signalling equipment (b cubed 2005:6-9). It is an Inter-War Stripped Classical building, reflecting the prevailing urban architecture, and features a hipped, tiled roof with a gabled clerestory (Figure 3.32).

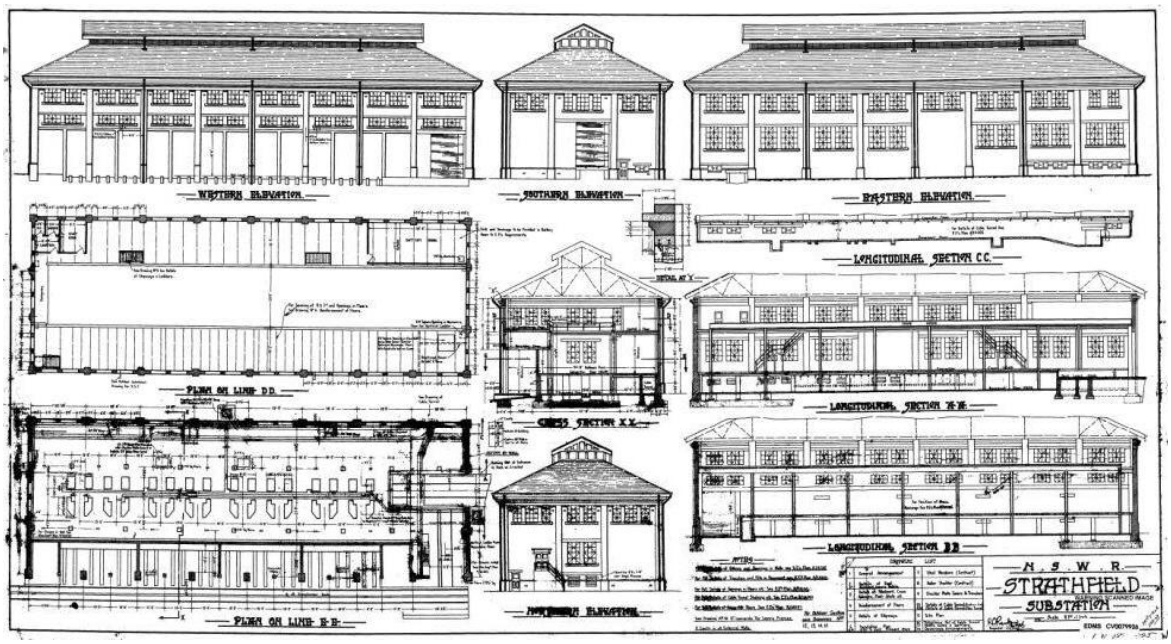

Figure 3.32 Plans for the Strathfield Substation, 1927. (RailCorp Plan, Ref: 0079926)

The remainder of the land within the Strathfield Triangle was reserved for future outdoor substation requirements; however, the land on the west side of the creek remained vacant until the late 1940s, when plans were developed for a new electrical maintenance depot, including buildings for workshops, staff accommodation, storage and garages (Figure 3.33).

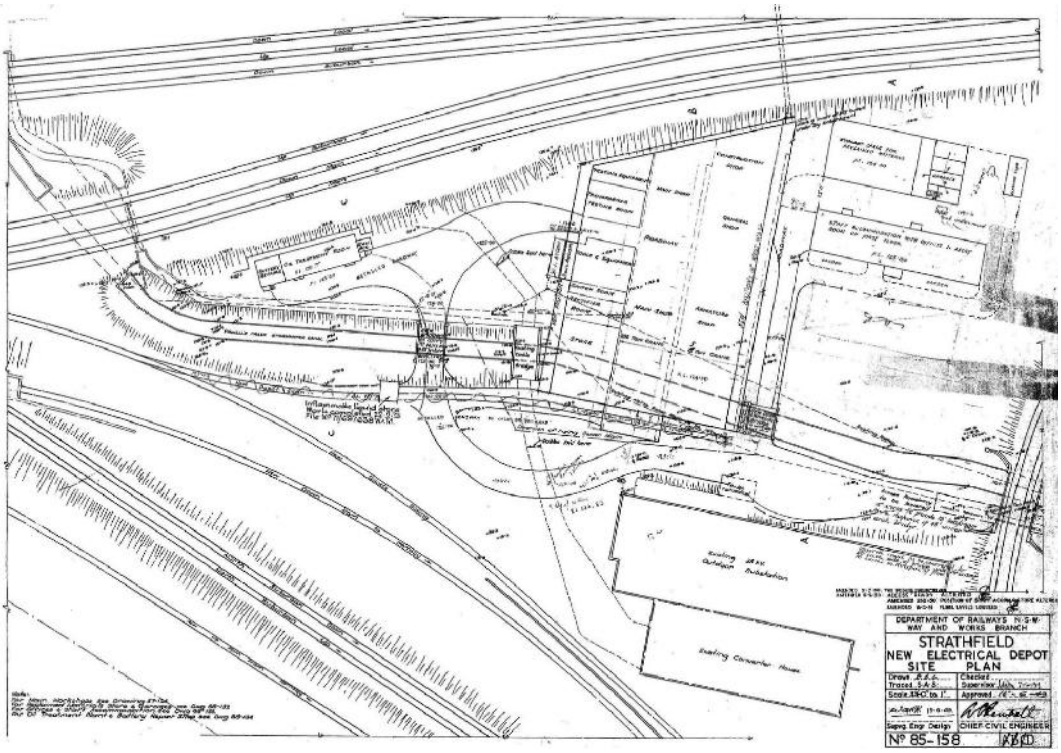

Figure 3.33 Plans for a new railways electrical maintenance depot in the Strathfield Triangle, 1949-1950. (RailCorp Plan, Ref: 0076688).

In 1949-50, a series of new electrical maintenance workshops were constructed in the centre of the triangle, over the Powell's Creek canal.

Although Electrical Substation 265 at 197 Railway Street, was not constructed to provide power to the railway or tramway system, it reflects the transition away from the focus on generating power for transportation to the general electrification of Sydney. From 1904 until 1935, the Municipal Council of Sydney (MCS) constructed hundreds of small electrical substations throughout Sydney. Substation 265 was constructed in 1928, a period of intense building activity to address the increased demands for electrical power from the 1920s (Wilkenfeld and Spearitt 2004:18-22).

The substations were generally modest 1–2 storey buildings, of which No. 265 is an example, and designs would often reflect the local domestic architecture, where this was deemed appropriate. Substation 265 is a simple Inter-War Stripped Classical design with symmetrical breakfront façade with little in the way of ornamentation, other than a partially gabled parapet. It is set back from the street behind a brick fence. The fence and substation are face brick in stretcher bond with reinforced concrete or steel arch-bars and soldier coursed brickwork over the lintels and windows flanking the arch.

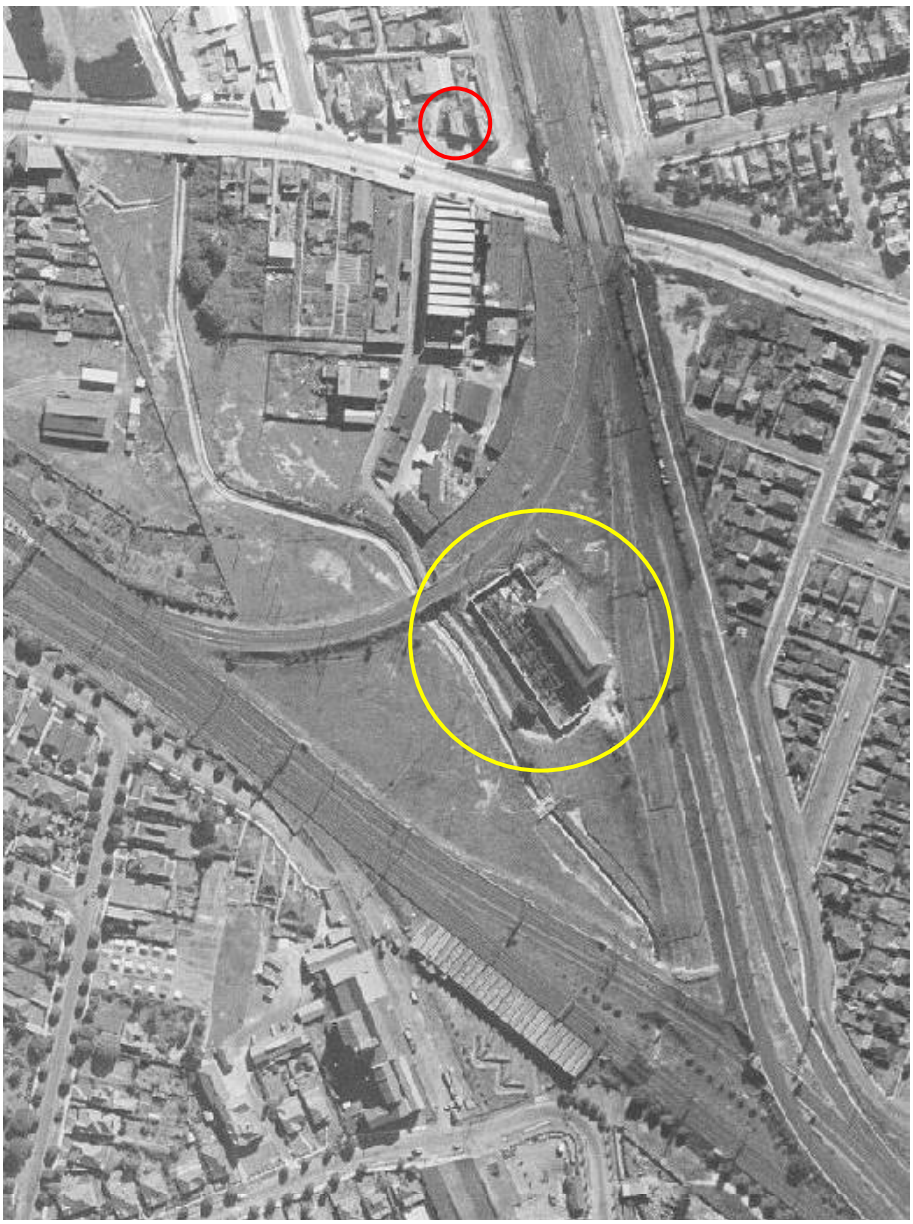

Figure 3.34 Aerial view of the Strathfield Substation (circled in yellow) and Substation 263 (circled in red), 1943. (NSW Land and Property Information; Ausimage © Sinclair Knight Merz 2007 from RTA photography)

Figure 3.35 Aerial view of the Strathfield Former Substation and Substation 263 in 2008, showing changes in the development of the local environment. The electrical maintenance workshops, which fill the centre of the Strathfield Triangle, have now been demolished. (NSW Land and Property Information; Ausimage © Sinclair Knight Merz)

3.5 Local Industries

3.5.1 Homebush Racecourse

Horse racing was a popular pastime during the nineteenth century, particularly among the upper classes. D'Arcy Wentworth and his son, William Charles Wentworth, were both interested in the sport, and William Wentworth is believed to have been instrumental in the creation of Homebush Racecourse on the Homebush Estate. William Wentworth agreed to lay down a course, build fenced enclosures and a stand for the racecourse on his land. The course opened in March 1841 and soon became the premier horse racing facility in the country (Figure 3.36). It was the home of the Australian Jockey Club, founded in 1842, which oversaw the rules of racing. It continued in operation until 1859, and in 1860 a new racecourse established in Randwick (Jones 1985:19-23; Jones 2005b). The railway station at Homebush was established in 1855 in order to service the racecourse.