Heritage Inventory Sheet

Item Name	Auburn Signal Box		
Recommended Name	Auburn Railway Signal Box		
Site Image			
Address	Rawson Street, opposite Karrabah Road, Auburn NSW 2144		
Lot/Section/DP	Part Lot 3803	-	1168594
Current LEP ID	A01023 (Cumberland LEP)		
Former LEP ID	A01023 (Auburn LEP)		
Heritage Conservation Area	Not included		
Date Updated	March 2020		
Significance Level	STATE		
Site Type	Level 1	Built	
	Level 2	Transport - Rail	
Ownership	Transport Asset Holding Entity Of NSW		

Curtilage Map

Revised curtilage recommended- refer below.

Statement of Significance

The Auburn Railway Signal Box is of State significance for its historic, associative, aesthetic, social and representative values. It is significant as the first of a series of four elevated power signal boxes needed for track amplification works from Auburn to Blacktown during the 1950s, designed as a cohesive group in a Post-World War Two period functionalist style. This Signal Box is a good example of the last group of signal boxes to be built to a standard railway design in NSW that remained in operation until 2009. It has a high degree of intactness and retains its original operational equipment including the CTC panel, desk and illuminated wall diagram.

Criteria Assessment	
a) Historic	The Auburn Railway Signal Box is of historic significance as the oldest building remaining in the Auburn railway precinct. It is further significant as the first of four signal boxes constructed in 1954 to assist traffic management between Auburn and Granville when the number of main lines was increased from three to five as part of the rebuilding of the Main Western line after 1948.
b) Associative	The signal relays are reported to be made by well-known international signalling firm McKenzie & Holland who began supplying interlocking machines and signalling equipment to the NSW Railways in 1881 and continued until 1927.
c) Aesthetic/Technical	The Signal Box is aesthetically a good example of post-World War Two period functionalist style railway architecture demonstrating key elements of the style including brick banding, ribbon windows and curved cantilevered awnings. The Signal Box has technical significance as it retains much of its original equipment including its

	original toggle switch control panel, desk and illuminated wall diagram and some original equipment in the downstairs relay room.
d) Social	The place has the potential to contribute to the local community's sense of place and can provide a connection to the local community's history.
e) Scientific	The item does not meet this criterion.
f) Rarity	The item does not meet this criterion.
g) Representativeness	The Signal Box is representative of the four signal boxes built between Auburn and Blacktown after World War Two in the functionalist style, the others being Granville, Clyde and Blacktown.

Physical Description

The following physical description has been quoted from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage State Heritage Register listing sheet for 'Auburn Railway Signal Box', dated 2010. As the description features a comprehensive physical description, no amendment has been made to the physical description.

SIGNAL BOX (1954)
External: Auburn Railway Signal Box is an 'S' type post war version of the elevated power boxes. Others of this type are Clyde, Granville and Blacktown. The signal box operates by relaying interlocking machines and features 90 Kellogg Keys levers.

Constructed of polychromatic face brick, it is a two-storey electric power signal box with a single storey relay wing and designed in the Functionalist style. The massing reflects a dominant entrance/ amenities tower contrasting with curved walls of the signal box. Windows are shaded by a cantilevered concrete awning. Upper-level ribbon windows are timber framed, as are doors, however the ground floor signal room windows have been replaced with aluminium fixed or double hung types. The flat roof is concealed behind the brick parapet.

Internal: Internally, a two-flight staircase leads to the operating (or upper level) signal room that contains the original toggle switch control panel, desk and illuminated wall diagram (paper based, dated 3/6/52). Staff toilet facilities are on the first floor. The ground floor relay room still operates with some original equipment such as the main control panel. A brick single storey relay room annex with flat metal tray roof has been added to the east end. Original doors, and wall and ceiling linings are also evident.

MOVEABLE ITEMS
The only moveable items observed were the original desks and equipment.

The Signal Box is in good condition.

Condition	**Good**	Fair	Poor

Alterations and Additions

- 1981: Air conditioning installed in Signal Box upper level
- c1985: Some of the Signal Box window frames removed and replaced with modern materials and brick relay room annex added to Signal Box

The building has a high degree of integrity.

Integrity	**High**	Moderate	Low

** element detracts from the overall cultural significance of the place*

Historical Notes	
Construction years	1954

The following history has been quoted from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage State Heritage Register listing sheet for 'Auburn Railway Signal Box'.

A single railway track was opened through Auburn in 1855, and the line was duplicated in 1856. The original station was opened at this location in 1876. Nothing is known of the original buildings, but they were replaced with a standard, second class set featuring a substantial main brick station building, approved by George Cowdery, Engineer for Existing Lines, in 1886.

In 1909 the NSWGR approved the demolition of the two original side platforms (slightly staggered) and they were replaced between 1909 and 1913 with an island platform and a standard Federation style building. There were 2 subways provided under the platform, with a ticket booking office on the platform between them, and an on-platform parcels office is shown in a 1938 plan. Plans also show a goods lift was installed on the platform c1950.

With the 1954 quadruplication of the line, the station was almost completely rebuilt, at which time the former c1913 platform building was demolished, and a new simple canopy structure built. A second island platform was also built which featured simple steel canopies with small control rooms. Access to the platforms was provided by subway.

Improvements to the station were undertaken during the late 1980s and the 1954 station has been almost completely rebuilt.

The present Signal Box was opened on 20 June 1954 to assist in the management of traffic between Auburn and Granville when the number of main line tracks was being increased from three to five. Specifically, the Signal Box controlled access to Clyde down and up yards. It was one part of a much larger scheme to increase the tracks to four main lines between Lidcombe and St. Marys during World War II in order to provide maximum track capacity to the American ammunition and general store built at Ropes Creek. It took over 32 years until all aspects of the quadruplication were completed between Westmead and Blacktown. Quadruplication reached St. Marys in 1978, while the Granville to Westmead section was finally completed in 1986.

When opened in 1954, the Auburn Railway Signal Box was the first of four Functionalist style boxes between Auburn and Blacktown, these being Auburn, Clyde, Granville and Blacktown. The style was only used from Auburn to Granville as the railway system was largely in place by this time. These boxes represented the last time when conventional, elevated signal boxes were built utilising the traditional model of a ground floor relay room and an upper level where the interlocking frame was operated. A subsequent design of elevated boxes was used in the 1960s, but these did not accord to the classic, two-level design with a rectangular footprint.

Recommendations					
Heritage Management		**Existing Built and Landscape Elements**		**Future Development and Planning**	
1. Maintain this item's heritage listing on the LEP.	**X**	**6.** Original fabric is highly significant and should be maintained.	**X**	**12.** Alterations and additions should respond to the existing pattern of development, with careful consideration of the setting (form, scale, bulk, setback and height).	**X**

2. Maintain this item's listing as part of the Heritage Conservation Area.		**7.** Unsympathetic alterations that detract from the cultural significance of the item should be removed.		**13.** New alterations and additions should respect the historic aesthetic/character of the item and area (e.g. paint scheme, materiality, style, landscape elements).	**X**
3. Consider delisting as an individual item from the LEP.		**8.** Maintain heritage landscape elements and schemes.		**14.** Future uses for this item should be compatible with its historical functions/ associations.	**X**
4. Consider additional research to nominate this item for the State Heritage Register.		**9.** Maintain the existing setting of the heritage item, informed by the historic pattern of neighbouring development (form, scale, bulk, setback and height).	**X**		
5. The heritage curtilage for this item should be revised/reduced.		**10.** Maintain the historic aesthetic/character of the item and area (e.g. paint scheme, materiality, style, landscape elements).	**X**		
		11. The condition of this item is poor. Condition and maintenance should be monitored.			

Other recommendations and/or comments:

This listing should be converted from an archaeological item to a built item on the Cumberland LEP.

The former LEP has classified a series of items of an industrial nature, including railway, road and water infrastructure, as 'archaeological' sites. This classification is historical and relates to the former use of the term 'Industrial Archaeology', which refers to the study of industrial and engineering history. The use of the term 'Industrial Archaeology' is no longer used and the term 'Industrial Heritage' is now preferred. Archaeological sites are legally defined as sites *which* contain one or more 'relics' and, in NSW, relics are specifically protected by the Sections 138 -146 of the Heritage Act 1977. The classification of a site as 'archaeological' consequently affects the statutory controls and procedures, including the need for excavation permits and pre-excavation procedures, triggered by Development Applications.

- The item should be renamed to 'Auburn Railway Signal Box' to match the State Heritage Register listing for the item.
- The heritage curtilage should be revised to match the State Heritage Register curtilage for the item, shown below.
- Should the revised curtilage be adopted, this listing sheet does not reflect the current Lot/DP which will need to be altered.

Listings		
Heritage Listing	Listing Title	Listing Number
Heritage Act – State Heritage Register	Auburn Railway Signal Box	01023
Local Environmental Plan	Auburn Railway Signal Box	I01023
Heritage Study	Auburn Railway Signal Box	I01023
National Trust Australia Register	N/A	-

Previous Studies			
Type	Author	Year	Title
Heritage Study	Extent Heritage Pty Ltd	2019	Cumberland LGA Heritage Study
Heritage Review	DPC	2007	Auburn Town Centre Heritage Review
Heritage Study	Neustein & Associates	1996	Auburn Heritage Study
Heritage Study	Terry Kass	1995	Draft Historical Context Report: Auburn Heritage Study

Other References

- NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, State Heritage Register listing sheet for Auburn Railway Signal Box, https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?id=5011925

Limitations

1. Access to all heritage items was limited to a visual inspection from the public domain. The interiors of buildings and inaccessible areas such as rear gardens were not assessed as part of this heritage study.

2. Condition and site modification assessment was limited to a visual inspection undertaken from the public domain.

3. Unless additional research was required, historical research for all heritage items was based on an assessment of previous LGA heritage studies, the Thematic History (prepared by Extent Heritage, 2019) and existing information in former heritage listing sheets.

Additional Images

View to Signal Box from Rawson Street.

View to north-western and north-eastern elevations of Signal Box

Detail of north-western elevation of Signal Box.

Detail to windows as replaced on Signal Box.