

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

RESEARCH REPORT AND ASSESSMENT

Prepared for : KwaZulu Natal – AMAFA and Research Institute

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1. BACKGROUND, HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NATAL MAIN LINE

The first passenger railway line in South Africa, and the 2nd on the continent, was from the Point to Durban- and was first operational in 1860. The section of the line that has been identified by PRASA to upgrade and make operational was classified as District no. 1. (Durban to Pinetown) of what was called the original 'Natal Main Line' or 'Old Main Line' and was opened in 1878.

The Resident Engineer's "Report upon Progress of the Works on the Natal Government Railways" for the year ended June 1878 stated that "The first Section of the Railway between Durban and Pinetown is finished, with the exception of the station buildings... in every other respect this section is ready for opening for Public traffic." A map of the original 'Old Main Line' (unknown date) shows the following stations on the original line, and the team rail timetable for December 1880 showed the train stopped at these stations the following number of times per day:

| Name of Stations on original line | Number of trips per day |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bellair | Eight times (four times up and four down) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Malvern | Four times |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Northdene | Four times on the way up and 3 times on the way down to Durban |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pinetown | Four times going up to and three times going down to Durban |

Key historical events in which the railway line and in particular Northdene Station, Bellair Station, and Malvern Station, were used include Anglo-Boer or South African wars. The 1st Anglo-Boer War 1880-81 led to passengers being prioritised for transportation over goods on parts of the line, however the Durban- Pinetown district remained available for transportation of both goods and passengers. In the 2nd Boer War 1899-1902 "many thousands of troops, Concentration Camp inmates and prisoners passed through [these] stations" (quoted from a plaque on the building commemorating the Centenary of the Anglo Boer War).

In 1936 it was recorded that the first electrified goods train operated between Congella and Cato Ridge, along this line, indicating that the infrastructure related to the electrification was installed by then.

The original station buildings were generally wood and iron, Victorian style buildings built in the late 1800s with double pitched roofs, gable walls, wide, overhanging corrugated-iron verandas supported by timber posts to shield passengers from the hot Durban sun and inclement weather. These buildings were later replaced with masonry buildings. Escombe Station has the last remaining original wood and iron building from this period on this line which makes it extremely significant in terms of heritage.

Bellair Railway station was one of the first masonry stations commissioned by the Natal Govt. Railways and was built in 1900. It is one of the most architecturally significant stations on the lines due to the unique design, generous, civic proportions and fine, Victorian details. The roof element is dominant and light being corrugated iron. Pinetown Station was the next masonry station to be built in 1919. This building is also significant, in that it is unique, and has noteworthy steel bracket details, sash windows and brickwork detailing. The style is generally heavier, with a tiled roof and more-human-scaled proportions.

Thereafter, date unknown but we estimate between 1920 and 1930, Malvern and Northdene Stations were built using similar styles – corbelled gables and tiled roofs with integrated verandas and facebrick double-columns on plastered, single bases. These buildings are significant in terms of their place in history and their style.

Hillary Station is similar to Northdene and Malvern but more plain in detail with both gable and hipped roofs and probably constructed closer to 1940.

Sarnia Station is the simplest of the facebrick stations, with a single, hipped roof, projected for the verandas with no piers, steel windows and recessed plaster element from lintol height. We estimate construction between 1960 and 1970. The building doesn't have much significance, but the station context does.

There is very little remaining of the original buildings at Seaview station, unfortunately. The bridge was most likely constructed around the turn of the century, or a little later, with heavy steel structure. The bridge is the most significant element of the Station and is in fairly good condition.

There are also no heritage buildings at Poet's Corner, only the bridge remains and one small recent building is present. The bridge may have elements of structure over 60 years old – e.g. the heavy steel columns and tapered beam – but the precast concrete balustrade wall is definitely not original. The significance of Poet's Corner as a station has been difficult to establish as it does not appear to have been on the original line.

Similarly, Glen Park station does not have any heritage buildings.

Moseley station did not appear on the original line, there are 2 minor structures (entrance and seating area) that appear to have been more recently constructed.

Reference: Campbell E.D “ The Birth and Development of the Natal Railways”, Shuter and Shooter, Pietermaritzburg, 1951

2. METHODS

Amanda Lead is an architect with extensive experience in heritage projects, since 2003 (Howard College Building). She has previous experience in designing for protected buildings and assessing heritage infrastructure. The properties were inspected by Amanda Lead on 12 September 2023. An in person meeting was held with Lindsay Napier, an architect experienced in assessment of protected buildings in KZN to discuss and agree on heritage value and approach.

Additional sources were consulted in the assessment of these stations including:

- Campbell E.D “ The Birth and Development of the Natal Railways”, Shuter and Shooter, Pietermaritzburg, 1951
- “Heritage Survey: Queensburgh, eThekweni West. Buildings of Architectural and/ or Historical Interest” Prepared for Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali by Prof Walter Peters, 2010

3. ASSESSMENT AND GRADING PROPOSAL

Criteria 1-11 used in the table below for the assessment of architectural significance of the railways stations that form part of our application were developed by Prof.B.Kearney and adopted by Durban City Council in 1984.

| | 1. Intrinsic Design Quality | 2. Notable example of building type | 3. Notable example of style of period | 4. Portions of details of significance | 5. Building technology of local interest | 6. Association with prominent Architect/ engineer | 7. Intactness of form | 8. Intactness of detail | 9. Structural and Material Condition | 10. Environmental and contextual – City/group/immediate context | 11. Historical and Cultural – association with the development of the area/ with a person or event/ with public sentiment | Recommendation for grading |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|----------------------------|
| Glen Park | | | | | | | | | | | X | NCW |
| Moseley | | | | | | | | | | | X | NCW |
| Poet's Corner | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Buildings | | | | | | | | | | | X | NCW |
| Bridge | | | | | | | | | | | X | IIIC |
| Sea View | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Buildings | | | | | | | | | | | X | NCW |
| Bridge | | | | X | X | | X | X | X | | X | IIIB |
| Sarnia | | | | | | | | | | | X | NCW |
| Hillary | X | | | X | | | X | | X | | X | IIIB |
| Northdene | X | | | X | | | X | X | X | | X | IIIB |
| Pinetown | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | IIIB |
| Malvern | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | IIIA |

KEY TO HERITAGE GRADING TABLE

Grade I (National Heritage Resources)

Grade II (KZN Provincial Landmarks and Heritage Landmarks)

Listed in Schedule 2 of the KZN Amafa and Research Institute Act 2018.

Grade IIIA On a Heritage Register (listed in the Ethekewini Town Planning Scheme)

Grade IIIB Generally protected by age (over 60 years of age)

Grade IIIC Generally protected by age (over 60 years of age) (Chapter 8. Clause 37) with contextual significance

(Grade) NCW : Not Conservation Worthy

X - applicable