

MOUNT LAWLEY RAILWAY BRIDGE, MOUNT LAWLEY



PLACE INFORMATION	
Place name	Mount Lawley Railway Bridge
Other names	Mount Lawley Subway
Place type	Other Structure

HERITAGE LISTING	
inHerit ID:	18011
State Heritage Register:	
Other Listing:	Municipal Inventory Adopted 12 Sep 2006

SITE LOCATION	
Street address	Guildford Rd
Locality	Mount Lawley
Survey	
Vol/folio	
Reserve	—

SIGNIFICANCE	
Level of significance	<p>Considerable Very important to the heritage of the locality. High degree of integrity/ authenticity.</p>
Management category	<p>Category 2 Conservation of the place is highly desirable. Any alterations or extensions should reinforce the significance of the place.</p>
Statement of significance	<p>The place has aesthetic value as it demonstrates a simple industrial form which dates from 1939 and is a prominent landmark in the streetscape.</p> <p>The place is an integral element of the Perth-Midland railway line established in 1881, which spans the main road from Perth-Guildford. It demonstrates the commitment by all levels of government to the provision of rail services within the city, state and the nation.</p> <p>The subway has historic value for its association with the development of Mount Lawley and adjacent suburbs in the early 20th century.</p> <p>This place is valued by the community for the continuity of its presence in the streetscape which contributes to the community sense of place.</p>

PLACE USE

Original use	Transport/Communication: Rail - Other
Current use	Transport/Communication: Rail - Other
Other use	

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

Construction date	1907; 1939; 1968; 2003
Walls	Steel, Concrete
Roof	N/A
Architectural Style	N/A
Physical description	Steel trussed railway bridge spanning Guildford Road, between concrete abutments. The abutments define the road width which rise to form piers at each end of the trusses. Above a major road between close intersections.
Condition	Good
Integrity	High
Authenticity	High

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The Fremantle to Guildford railway line was opened in 1881, and extended to York and Northam. By 1900 the other major railway lines in the state had been constructed, including the South West line to Bunbury, the Great Southern line to Albany and the Eastern Goldfields line to Kalgoorlie (connecting with the eastern states through Adelaide). The rail traffic from Perth to Guildford and beyond all passed the intersection of Guildford Road and East Parade, which was known as Fenian's Crossing because it was a very dangerous intersection. To facilitate the traffic movement, a bridge was constructed to carry the railway tracks over the Guildford Road/East Parade intersection and the road level dropped.

The Mount Lawley subway was opened on 10 April 1907. This proved to be of advantage to both vehicular and pedestrian traffic and the small shopping area which was beginning to develop on the Lord Street side in spite of the dangers. Early shops there included two butchers, a confectioner, fancy goods and draper, news and bank agency, tobacconist, fish & chip shop, and a green grocer. Unfortunately a number of pedestrians used to take a short cut, crossing the line through the shunting yards rather than using the subway, and one resident recalled one very close escape from a moving train when she was a young girl. The same resident also recalled a small boy being run over by a track, laden with cement or superphosphate, after he ran down the subway embankment and straight out onto the road. Another accident occurred when a train that was being shunted tipped off the line and down among the palm trees that were dotted along there. She remembered it hanging there quite precariously for some time before it was hauled back up onto the line.

In 1924, a single track extension was constructed from an existing tram terminus on the corner of Lord and Lincoln streets in Highgate along Lord Street and via the Mount Lawley Subway to Maylands.

In 1939, this line was duplicated and the subway was widened to accommodate the two sets of tracks. It is probable that this was the impetus for the insertion of the steel frame grid structure which still dominates above the bridge structure. An item in the local press in November 1940 refers to the reconstruction of the Mt Lawley subway.

Further alterations in 1968 involved strengthening the bridge and extending the concrete abutments to accommodate the new standard gauge line, which terminated at the East Perth Station.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

An undated photograph in the WAGR file shows the words 'PEACE VIETNAM AUSTRALIA OUT' painted on one of the abutments. In more recent times the protective fencing along its length on the railway line level has been used to display advertisements. Private car ownership was increased from the 1960s onwards and Lord Street/Guildford Road and East Parade became popular arteries in and out of Perth, carrying heavy loads of traffic each day.

In 1974, the subway was the subject of a road study, as the traffic bottleneck had become 'the city's No 1 late-for-work excuse'. Traffic lights and restrictions on right-hand turns (East Parade into Guildford Road) became necessary as the volumes of traffic increased.

Aerial photographs from the mid 20th century onward show the aforementioned bridge renovation in 1968 and the variation of infrastructure on and around the bridge throughout the last 70 years including the addition of a bicycle and pedestrian pathway running parallel to the railway tracks c2003.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Historic theme	Infrastructure: Transport and Communications Peopling WA: Demographic development	
Associations		
Sources	Municipal Heritage Inventory 2006 Landgate Aerial photographs 1953-2024. The Daily News, 22 November 1940, p. 6.	

ARCHIVAL IMAGES



Mount Lawley Subway c1907. Courtesy SLWA



Mount Lawley Subway, c1940. Courtesy City of Stirling



Mount Lawley Subway, c1940. Courtesy City of



Mount Lawley Subway, 1960s. Courtesy City of Stirling