



Case Study 19

Watergardens Railway Station

Sydenham VIC

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Watergardens Railway Station

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The Golden Age in railway station design probably ended in 1939. Until then major stations took on aspects of cathedral architecture with majestic entrances and massive clear spans. Smaller stations were distinctly residential, complete with fireplaces and carefully-tended gardens.

Today designing a railway station is an unusual brief for any architect and a very different challenge. The new Watergardens station services Sydenham, a growth area in Melbourne's booming outer north-west.

The station is fed by three towers – each with a hydraulic lift – linked by an elevated walkway. To the west, the walkway straddles a busy road and leads to the station carpark. Ticket sales and vending machines are located around the central tower, sitting over the platform-level facilities block.

The design and project architect for SKM Design (part of Sinclair Knight Merz) was Julian Scanlan who has since left the company. We spoke to his successor, Tony Parker, who came late to the project and designed the brick graphics "and other tiny aspects."



" You see bricks everywhere but obviously the



The massing of the walkway and central block is a little forbidding if unavoidable because of the steel structure and necessary clearances. Introducing brickwork was a way of imparting a human scale. "I think Julian went for the grain of brickwork because it has a sense of familiarity but also because you can get quite abstract masses," Parker explains. "Brickwork is always really sharp without being a bit 'alien' like precast."

Different bond patterns were used to differentiate between area functions. Stack bonding creates a static arrangement at vending machines and the ticket office. The slight offset of three-quarter running bond wraps the towers in spirals of seemingly-continuous angled lines.

This bond was also used in the lower facilities block which is emblazoned on both sides with the word 'SYDENHAM' in glazed black bricks. The bond's slight offset italicised the brick graphics without the pixelation inherent in conventional half bonding.

Tony Parker is full of praise for the bricklayer who went well beyond the brief to prepare his own detailed drawings for the brick graphics and executed some very fine cuts to create these distinctive murals.

"You see bricks everywhere," Tony concludes, "but obviously the possibilities still aren't exhausted."

A large, three-dimensional sign for 'Watergardens TOWN CENTRE' is mounted on the top of a brick tower. The sign is a vibrant pink color with the text in white. 'Watergardens' is in a large, bold, sans-serif font, and 'TOWN CENTRE' is in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font below it.

Watergardens
TOWN CENTRE



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Above: The structure comprises three towers linked by an elevated walkway, leading to the centralised facilities and three platforms.

Top: The locale name SYDENHAM is picked out in glazed black bricks on both sides of the service block, albeit punctuated by doors on the east face.

Left: The SYDENHAM brick graphic is repeated on the west face. The lower third of the graphic is 'submerged' below platform level.

Far left: A closer examination of the brick graphic (in this case the corner S) shows the precise cutting and laying.

Right: The station's lift towers are wrapped in brickwork laid in three-quarter running bond, the perpend creating a web of spiralling lines.

Inset: The static arrangement of stack-bonded brickwork is used to advantage at service points such as the ticket office and vending machines.



Client:
Department of Infrastructure

Architect:
SKM Design

Construction:
Thiess Constructions

Bricklayer:
Knowles Bricklaying

Photographer:
Roger du Bulsson
