

Railway Goods Sheds (Queensland)

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Introduction

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Introduction

In the decades before containerisation, super-freight trains and a general rationalisation of freight services, almost every station included some form of goods handling facility. Depending on the size and importance of the station, these facilities ranged from small, simple structures such as a cream shed to large buildings that incorporated a number of tracks and associated freight handling equipment catering for both inwards and outwards consignments.

The scale and complexity of the latter place them beyond the range of this paper (and most modelling projects) but the smaller and more common sheds are within the scope of most modellers and layouts.

Whilst in the eyes of the general public passenger services always played an important role, the conveyance of freight formed the backbone of a railway's business. The infrastructure associated with goods traffic was usually utilitarian if not Spartan.

Consequently most goods sheds were by and large simple, albeit soundly built, structures. Most were timber framed, rectangular in plan and with a gabled corrugated iron roof. They were provided with a loading platform on the track side, and sometimes another dock at the rear to facilitate loading or unloading road vehicles. The trackside platform could be extended to accommodate extra wagons, and an additional loading bank might be provided as required by the type of goods handled.

A yard crane was provided at the busier yards to handle heavy loads. It could be positioned towards the end of the extended platform (requiring an independent footing, depending on its size) or it could be sited free-standing beside the goods loop(s). The lifting capacity of the crane was dependant on the type of freight handled.

'Standard' sheds appear to have been of three sizes: 22' x 14', 30' x 20' and 40' x 30'. The wall cladding was either timber (weatherboards or chamfer-boards) or vertical corrugated galvanised iron. The roof was extended to partly cover the loading platform, and sometimes it projected over the roadside dock as well.

A few were designed as 'through' sheds, with the building extending over the track and the platform(s) located inside, but these were not very common.

However in some of the more important yards, such as in the larger provincial cities, individually designed through sheds were provided to handle the greater volume of inwards and outgoing freight.

There were various non-standard sheds as well, with modified plans and elevations. Some smaller examples were built with skillion roofs, and a few were roofed with asbestos-cement 'shingles' rather than the traditional corrugated iron.

Although not officially designated as 'goods' sheds, many station complexes at least incorporated a Cream Shed, which despite its nomenclature often doubled as a small general purpose shed, particularly in the declining years of a branch or yard. In some instances the cream shed would be the only remaining building at a designated station in its latter years, particularly if the rail traffic was 'goods only'.

As well as general goods sheds, numerous freight facilities were provided for (or by) private enterprise, being served by one or more government or private sidings. Coverage of this aspect is a study all by itself, and is generally beyond the scope of this paper, but further research into these types of sheds could provide the modeller with additional modelling opportunities with respect to size, shape, built form and signage.

For the modeller, constructing a Queensland goods shed should be a straightforward scratch-building exercise (unless you are dead keen to replicate a facility such as at Warwick, or Toowoomba, or the former Roma Street complex).

This series of articles highlights some standard and non-standard sheds.

Acknowledgements

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Additional photos and some plans are available on the CaneSIG web site (www.zelmeroz.com/canesig) and on Queensland's rail heritage web site (QldRailHeritage.com).



Rail tractor for shunting goods wagons at Thallon, 1996. Jim Hutchinson, photographer.



Manypeaks cream shed, 1996. Jim Hutchinson, photographer. This shed has been restored at the Bundaberg Station Museum.



Combined goods and cream shed, The Summit, 1996. Jim Hutchinson, photographer.



The yard at Cheepie with a standard 22' x 14' corrugated iron shed with a yard crane, 30,000 gallon water tank and barracks nearby, 1996. Jim Hutchinson, photographer.



The large non-standard freight shed at Normanton, 1996. Jim Hutchinson, photographer.