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# ROCKBANK STATION AND WARD'S CHAFFMILL SITE

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## Location

LEAKES ROAD ROCKBANK, MELTON CITY

## Municipality

MELTON CITY

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7822-2360

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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Interpretation of Site	The former railway, residential, and industrial complex is from a period when the railway was critical to the local community. Steam trains were required to stop regularly to replenish water and goods platforms were used to transport local produce. The chaff mill was the major local employer.
Archaeological Significance	<p>Archaeological significance lies in the detailed layout of the former buildings including station structures, stationmaster's residence(s), weighbridge and office and chaff mill. Other domestic refuse is likely to be associated with rubbish dumps and toilet pits.</p> <p>Rubbish fill in the water reservoir is likely to be of less significance.</p>

Historical Significance	Historical significance lies in the role of the site as a community focus providing transportation and employment. It is also significant for its association with the completion of the direct rail link to Ballarat and the history of Rockbank Township and the surrounding farms.
Hermes Number	200426
Property Number	

## History

The North Western Railway was constructed linking Sunshine to Ballarat through Melton and Bacchus Marsh in the 1880s and on to Serviceton and South Australia. This meant the creation of a railway reserve, through the existing Crown Allotments and eventually forcing the realignment of the eastern end of Greigs Road to avoid an extra level crossing. Rockbank Station opened as Mount Atkinson Station on 2 April 1884 and was renamed Rockbank in 1889. The station was provided with waiting sheds, staff residences, a signal box and later more substantial station building. There was also a crossing loop for trains, which still exists. By 1914 the station yard had three roads (i.e. main track loop and siding), a passenger platform on the southern track, a goods platform on the northern track, and an interlocked signal box (Figure 1). The station served the local Rockbank farming community, a recreation reserve, and chaff mill.

The crossing loop was extended in 1960 to 730 metres and a further short platform was built on the loop road. In 1986 the yard was rationalised to main line and crossing loop, and in 1990 the mechanical signals and points were removed and replaced by remotely controlled signaling operated from the Bacchus Marsh signal box. The current northern platform was not added until more recently, replacing the former short platform.

Three roads (the main rail track and two loop sidings) were provided, with the chaff siding running north off No 3 Road (H7822-0717).

The Rockbank chaffmill was built in 1908 by the Barrie Brothers opposite the railway station (Figure 2). Its machinery was brought from Melton by horse and dray. Hill and Reid, chaff-millers who operated from King Street Melbourne in 1915, had an interest in the mill at some stage although when and how they were involved is not known. H.S.K. Ward trading as Glover Onians and Co. also bought this mill around the same time as the Melton mill and constructed a siding in 1914, which was extended in 1915. The manager at this time was Archie McEachern.

By 1955 the mill appears to have been out of action as Victorian Railways were using the siding and waived the annual maintenance charge. In 1959 the siding was purchased by the railways. By the 1970s, the mill siding was disused and the station building was demolished circa 1985.

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*