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# MORDIALLOC STATION PRECINCT

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## Location

70 ALBERT STREET MORDIALLOC, KINGSTON CITY

## Municipality

KINGSTON CITY

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7921-0135

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 22, 2024

### What is significant?

The Mordialloc Railways Station Precinct is historically and archaeologically significant to the state of Victoria, and it also includes the architecturally significant Mordialloc Railway Water Tower, H2441. The original features of the Mordialloc Railway Station complex were constructed between 1881 and 1885 with additional features constructed between 1885 and 1930. There are numerous features of demolished railway infrastructure and buildings that make up the station archaeological precinct including turntable, sidings, platforms, buildings.

Furthermore, the Mordialloc Station Complex includes the McDonald Street interlocking gates, the McDonald Street Gatekeepers Cottage, the Bear Street Interlocking gates and the Bear Street Gatekeepers Cottage. These four features were constructed in the late 19th to early 20th centuries and were demolished at various times during the 20th century.

While surface features associated with the historical fabric of the Mordialloc Railway Station Precinct have been removed, subsurface components exceeding 75 years old are potentially present below the ground surface.

### How is it significant?

There are numerous features of demolished railway infrastructure and buildings that make up the station archaeological precinct including turntable, sidings, platforms, buildings and the historically and architecturally significant Mordialloc Railway Water Tower, H2441 on the state register.

### Why is it significant?



The Mordialloc Railway Station Precinct is associated with both the development of the Mordialloc area, ‘the boom years’ of the Victorian Railways, and the evolution of Victorian Railway technology. The precinct is related to the theme of Linking Victorians by Rail (3.3) as set out in Victoria’s Framework of Historical Themes. Features present within the Railway Station Precinct have the potential to inform on the development and evolution of early rail in Victoria and the domestic and working lives of Victoria’s railway workers.

Interpretation of Site	<p>The Mordialloc Station opened in 1881 with just a passenger platform and siding, then with a station building in 1882. Various additions and expansions occurred in 1887-1888 and 1910-1920 including sidings, a downside passenger platform and platform building, level crossing interlocking gates and gatekeeper’s cottages, duplications of the rail lines, installation of a turntable, water towers, engine shed, goods platform and shed, signal box and various other infrastructure elements. These features are all more than 75 years of age and there is potential for archaeological deposits and remains to be present that would require archaeological methods to investigate them, therefore, they meet the definition of an archaeological site under the Heritage Act 2017. See Table 1 below with details about the various features identified within the station precinct from archival plans from the Department of Transport and Planning Drawing Management System (DTP DMS) and archival maps and aerial photographs. Table 1 below lists all of the features identified from archival documents, and provides construction and demolition dates, if the feature is extant or demolished, as well as a description of the feature and what the likely archaeological potential and features may be. Each feature has been identified and labelled on site extent maps (Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4). Together, the features comprise the remains of the late 19th and early 20th century railway station. The historical background research and spatial analysis of the site indicates that although the extant buildings and structures have been modified and upgraded, they have not been substantially redeveloped and have been in place since at least the 1910s-1920s, and some since the 1880s. Most of the rail infrastructure and buildings that have been demolished now lie below surface carparks or roadways and have not been significantly disturbed by major redevelopment. The main disturbances appear to have been from the installation of subsurface utilities and services. As it was typical of the Victorian Railways to reuse and relocate timber buildings, rails, turntables and other infrastructure, this may mean that substantial remains of some of the demolished features may not be present. However, the overall assessment of the site is that there is moderate to high potential for archaeological remains of the early station complex and level crossings to be preserved within the site. As it has been demonstrated via documentary evidence that it is likely that the site contains archaeological remains and it meets the definition of an archaeological site the site meets Threshold A of Heritage Victoria’s (HV’s) policy for determining archaeological value. The site is also likely to evidence an association with a historical event, phase, period, process, function, tradition, movement, custom or way of life, being associated with both the development of the Mordialloc area, ‘the boom years’ of the Victorian Railways, and the evolution of Victorian Railway technology. The Mordialloc Railway Station Precinct is related to the theme of Linking Victorians by Rail (3.3) as set out in Victoria’s Framework of Historical Themes. Features present within the Railway Station Precinct have the potential to inform on the development and evolution of early rail in Victoria and the domestic and working lives of Victoria’s railway workers. Therefore, the site meets both Thresholds A and B of HV’s policy and has archaeological value.</p>
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Hermes Number	212182
Property Number	

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## History

Mordialloc Railway Station, a vital link connecting Melbourne city centre with its southeastern suburbs, emerged from a community demand for improved transportation structure. The rail line from Mordialloc to Caulfield was



opened in 1881, with the Mordialloc to Frankston line soon following in 1882 (Coleman, Webb and Jarman 2024; Ward 1988). The rail line was duplicated in 1888 (Caulfield – Mordialloc) and 1910 (Mordialloc – Frankston) and was electrified in 1922 (VicSig 2023). Mordialloc Railway Station was categorised in Ward and Donnelly's 1982 Victoria's Railway Stations as one of the 'Cheltenham' group, a small group of five buildings on the Frankston line: Cheltenham, Frankston, Glenhuntly, Highett and Mordialloc. Mordialloc Railway Station is one of two remaining stations identified in the 'Cheltenham' style in the Victoria's Railway Stations study, the other is Highett Railway Station (Lovell Chen 2023; Victoria's Railway Stations, 1982). (See an early photograph of the station, Figure 5.)

The establishment of Mordialloc Railway Station in 1881 marked a pivotal moment in the region's development, driven by the persistent advocacy of local residents. As reported by The Age in 1880, community members had long deemed a railway extension to Mordialloc "absolutely necessary," with promises of construction dating back to the 1860s (Age, 3 September 1880, p. 4).

On 19 December 1881, amidst much anticipation and celebration, Mordialloc Station was officially opened to the public. The Argus newspaper highlighted the station's significance, describing its "particularly fine and spacious platform" and the impressive scale of its structure, surpassing stations along the Shepperton line (Argus, 20 December 1881, p.4). However, the construction process was not without its challenges. A dispute over the quality of locally sourced ballast led to delays and financial concerns for labourers. Engineer-in-chief J. P. Madden criticised the ballast as "most inferior" due to "large quantities of loam ... were mixed with the gravel that [was] carted from the small paddock of the north road on the east side of the line", resulting in works being halted in September 1881 and many labourers being sent away without pay (Argus, 12 May 1882, p.6).

To inaugurate the station, politicians, dignitaries, and esteemed guests of the Shire of Moorabbin embarked on a ceremonial journey to Mordialloc aboard a specially chartered steam train departing from Princes Bridge Station. The train made stops at various stations including South Yarra, Hawksburn, Caulfield, and East Brighton, before arriving at its destination (Bentleigh, South Brighton, and Cheltenham were also noted stops). Among the notable passengers accompanying Thomas Bent, the Minister of Railways and later the Victorian Premier from 1904-1909, were the Solicitor General, the Minister of Agriculture, and Sir John O'Shanassy, a former Premier (1857). Additionally, John Keys, a local representative, Mr Bray, Premier of South Australia, and Mr Gregory, Survey General of Queensland and a renowned explorer, were in attendance. An earlier train departing Melbourne at thirty-five minutes past ten carried four hundred school children from East Brighton, South Brighton, and Cheltenham, free of charge, to partake in the welcoming festivities for the officials and guests at Mordialloc (Whitehead 2018).

The station's opening ceremony was a festive affair, with local school children welcoming the crowd with The National Anthem. The President of the Shire of Moorabbin, Mr. William Ward, delivered a speech praising Thomas Bent for the successful completion of the station. The banner adorning the Mordialloc Bridge at the station's opening, bearing the words "Peace, Progress, and Prosperity," underscored the profound impact the railway would have on the township's growth (Argus, 20 December 1881, p. 4). In his speech, Bent echoed the banner's sentiment, assuring the crowd "this line of railway will be of benefit to the citizens of Melbourne and its other localities" (Sheehy 1970). Festivities continued with a banquet at the Bridge Hotel (Figure 6), attended by around 200 people (Argus, 20 December 1881, p. 4).

Due to Thomas Bent's insistence that the railway line be opened for Christmas 1881, several elements of the station were not completed in time for the inauguration. When Mordialloc Railway Station was opened, it included only a temporary office and a carriage dock leading from the platform (McGuire 1985). The construction of Mordialloc Creek Bridge continued into 1882 during which a wagon derailed and resulted in the death of Thomas Homes, a labourer (Kingston City Council 2017; Figure 7). During this time, it is possible that ganger's sheds were used to keep workers' tools and equipment at the station. Review of archival aerial imagery indicates that the ganger's sheds at Mordialloc were present from the early 20th century (possibly earlier) until c. 1940.

The contract for the construction of Mordialloc's Railway Station building was not let until February 1882 and the building did not open until later that year. The original station building was located on the upside of the line, completed by builder William Chaffer for the sum of £749 15 shillings (Australasian, 21 January 1882, p. 19). In 1882 the upside station building was a simple, long, rectangular weatherboard structure with a corrugated steel sheet gabled roof (Lovell Chen 2023). The station also boasted a 300 ft passenger platform. Two gatekeeper's cottages were erected at McDonald Street and Bear Street (which was Bean Street at that time) in 1882-1885. The gatekeeper's cottages corresponded with two level crossings that were built at McDonald Street and Bear Street, where manually operated hand gates were also installed.

The extension of the line to Frankston occurred in July 1882, and was opened to the public in August. By December 1882 trains were running through from Melbourne to Frankston, and at least one locomotive and carriage set was stabling at Mordialloc overnight. At that time, the station was operating for both public and goods traffic (Waugh 2010). In 1882, the station building included a station masters office with booking hall and a porter's room (later converted to a bicycle shed). The railway station house is representative of the 'garden



cottage' style in which all the 1880's station houses along the line were built (McGuire 1985; Living Histories 2000). It is one of two extant railway station houses built in this style, the other located at Highett Railway Station. A turntable was established on the east side of Mordialloc Station in 1885, to the rear of the Gatekeepers Cottage on McDonald Street. In January 1883, the Traffic Branch noted that trains at Mordialloc had to run tender first in one direction on the line as no turntable had been provided. As a result, Thomas Bent approved the provision of a turntable at Mordialloc, however it was not provided (Waugh 2010). At the beginning of March 1885, a turntable was relocated from Berwick to Mordialloc (Waugh 2010). On at least one occasion, the turntable caused a serious injury. In 1909, the McDonald Street gatekeeper, "Mrs Curtis", suffered a painful accident while on duty by "slipping into the pit of the turntable" (Brighton Southern Cross, 15 May 1909, p. 4). Between c.1910 to 1920, the turntable was relocated to the southern end of the sidings, adjacent to Mordialloc Creek. In December 1916, the turntable was recorded to have been 53 ft in size (Waugh 2010). The turntable was later demolished during the 1960s (Lovell Chen 2023).

In 1882, the Locomotive Superintendent had requested the provision of a coal stage and ash pit at Mordialloc. He was told that the additions would cost £150 and require Ministerial approval (Waugh 2010). Three years later in 1885, a coal stage was constructed at the southern end of the site. Waugh (2010) suggests that the coal stage was dismantled and relocated to Flinders Street in May 1887.

Following the duplication of the Caulfield to Mordialloc line in 1888, a railway siding was added to the east and a downside station structure was built. Duplication resulted in the addition of train services to Mordialloc: by August 1890 there were 17 passenger trains to Mordialloc, of which 9 continued to Frankston, as well as two goods trains. Despite the addition of services, there were still no trains scheduled to stable at Mordialloc overnight (Waugh 2010).

The opening of Mordialloc Railway Station and its duplication in 1888 transformed Mordialloc into a bustling holiday destination, with thousands flocking to its shores during the summer months. One article from the Brighton Southern Cross details that "the number of persons who travelled here by rail exceeded 5000" in January of 1907, exclaiming that "the railway carriages were packed almost to suffocation" by people who wished to enjoy the seaside (Brighton Southern Cross, 5 January 1907, p. 8).

While many of the users of the railway were weekend and summer campers, by the 1920s the district began to be settled with permanent residences and commercial operations sprang up in earnest (Living Histories 2000). Use of the railway grew from 113,197 passengers in 1904/5 to 324,209 passengers in 1913/14 (Living Histories 2000). The annual Mordialloc Carnival, starting in 1923, became a beloved tradition, attracting tourists and locals alike (Gamble 2011). The railway line also provided effective transportation of local produce to markets in Melbourne. For many years, Mordialloc had provided a steady supply of fish for Melbourne, and local fisherman turned to the rail to transport their catch once the line opened.

However, the station faced its share of challenges over the years. Complaints about train services frequency and high fares persisted, reflecting ongoing concerns about transportation accessibility and affordability. An 1884 Argus report stated that "a number of persons would live in Mordialloc or the district if better travelling facilities were accorded" (Argus, 22 July 1884, p.2). In 1888, one disgruntled ticket holder complained to the Herald of the "disgraceful manner in which the trains are overcrowded on the Mordialloc line" (Herald, 23 November 1888, p. 3). Complaints continued about the infrequencies of trains on the Mordialloc line which would "retard the development of Mordialloc", and deter shoppers and workers alike (The Age, 14 March 1916, p. 8). In 1901, grievances regarding high ticket fares on the Frankston line were aired at a public meeting of the Moorabbin Shire in Cheltenham's Mechanics' Hall (The Caulfield and Elsternwick Leader, 17 August 1901, p. 3). One Mordialloc resident, Mr. Somers, stated that "as a father of a family ... the railway fares so high that he could rent a good house near the city for the same money" (The Caulfield and Elsternwick Leader, 1901).

Operational and safety issues also arose, including instances of robbery, accidents, and storm damage. In a notable incident on 6 May 1890, reported by The Age, the station's safe was plundered from its "flimsy building of weatherboard," left unprotected overnight due to the absence of on-site personnel (Age, 6 May 1890, p. 5). The accusatory tone of the article suggests negligence on the part of station attendants. Similarly, in 1921, a collision between a passenger train and a goods train prompted a formal inquiry within the Railway Department (Argus, 11 August 1921, p. 5). The station also endured weather damage, as evidenced by a severe storm in 1937 described as "like an earthquake," causing extensive damage and flooding (Age, 3 March 1937, p. 11). This storm disrupted services for over 2000 passengers and resulted in the collapse of 600 ft of overhead electric gear (Age 1937). Subsequent newspaper articles lamented the inadequate maintenance of trains during inclement weather, with carriages left exposed to rain, rendering them unusable (Age, 12 June 1941, p. 10). Several accidents occurred at the Bear Street and McDonald Street level crossings, detailed further below.

Significant infrastructure improved the functioning of the station during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Several alterations to the station were undertaken in 1887. In response to complaints from the Traffic Branch that nothing had been done at Mordialloc to accommodate increasing holiday traffic, an additional siding came into service in February 1887 (Waugh 2010). The siding was most likely located along the downside of the



station. In June 1887, a contract was awarded to S. Young for additions to the station buildings; a further contract was awarded to J. Bacon for the erection of a permanent station masters house in August (Waugh 2010). Figure 8 is a photograph of the upside station building in 1902. Two years later in 1889, the original carriage dock was removed to allow for the extension of the platform (Waugh 2010).

During the early twentieth century, additions included a goods platform and goods shed, an engine shed, new signal boxes, a subway (Lovell Chen 2023) and a concrete pipe sewer (Argus, 30 May 1903, p. 16). At the southern end of the rail, a platform was constructed in 1901 within the sidings that would later hold the goods shed. In August 1901, the Acting Railway Commissioner received a deputation from Mr. Bent and Mr. Keast requesting that the Mordialloc Railway Station goods platform be increased in length, and that "a shed should be constructed for the purpose of sheltering produce" on the platform (Age, 16 August 1901, p.3). It was also recommended that an engine shed be built at the station (Age 1901). While the Acting Commissioner accepted that the platform should be extended, he questioned the high expense of the goods shed and engine shed (Age 1901). In 1908, a goods shed was constructed on a new goods platform within the sidings to the south of Bear Street (Argus, 2 June 1908, p. 3). Originally, the goods shed was proposed to be located on the downside platform, however, this never eventuated. Complaints about the small size of the goods shed persisted over the following years. At a Moorabbin Council meeting in June 1908, the adequacy of the goods shed was discussed; Councillor Mills, the manager of the "Mordialloc Closer Settlement", noted that "it was a very small shed, and, when the produce began to arrive at the platform from the estate a very much larger one would be required" (Argus 1908). In June the following year, the Railway Commissioners visited Mordialloc Station, where they were met by "prominent townspeople" who explained their wants for the station (Western Champion, 4 June 1909, p. 7). A larger goods shed was amongst the main additions demanded by townspeople, "as at present the small structure ... [is] twice too small, goods having to be left outside forming an inducement for thieves and also liable to damage from the weather" (Western Champion, 1909).

In May 1910, approval was given to erect a portion of the old Williamstown floating goods platform at Mordialloc and this work was completed by 1 August 1910 (Waugh 2010). The goods shed was demolished alongside the platform in 1945 (Lovell Chen 2023).

Requests for an engine shed at Mordialloc came as early as 1885, when the Locomotive Branch recommended its addition at an estimated cost of £200 (Waugh 2010). On 21 August 1907, an engine shed was provided. The shed was originally erected at Traralgon in 1884 and was removed to Briagolong near Maffra in Gippsland in 1902 when the new radial shed was erected (Waugh 2010). The engine shed was brought to the Mordialloc Railway Station by contractors Wilson and Sly at the cost of £213 (McGuire 1985; Waugh 2010). The engine shed was erected at the northern end of the line, to the rear of the McDonald Street Gatekeeper's Cottage. The building was rectangular in shape, with a projecting bay to either side, a pitched roof with gable ends, a chimney and large timber doors (Lovell Chen 2023). Along with the turntable, the engine shed was relocated between 1910 and 1920 to the south of Bear Street within the sidings, adjacent to the relocated turntable. It appears to have also been removed in the c. 1960s (Lovell Chen 2023).

On 1 December 1910, the railway line between Mordialloc and Frankston was duplicated, prompting the reconstruction and expansion of the station. On 22 April 1910, the Railway Commissioners approved a budget of £14,932 for various alterations and additions, including tracks, signals, station buildings, and the relocation of the engine shed (Waugh 2010). Between 1910 and 1920 an island platform 125m in length was constructed on the downside of the station, alongside a new station building with a booking office and lobby, a shelter shed, passenger platform, a double-storey signal box, additional rail sidings, an additional horse platform and ramp, a new water tower, and an underground tank.

The additional platform for horses was constructed in 1910 to the east of the station, with a ramp at the southern end. The additional horse platform perhaps functioned to service Mordialloc's horse racing industry. From the 1880s Mordialloc was home to two prominent racecourses, Richfield and Epsom (Hahn 2018). Richfield, operated by A.F. Bradshaw, saw its heyday in the 1880s, hosting up to six meetings a year according to the Australasian Turf Register. Epsom Racecourse, built by James Smith Jenkins in 1886, garnered praise for its elegance and amenities, with its grandstand likened to the Flemington Racecourse (Hahn 2018). The inaugural Mordialloc Cup took place at Epsom each year, attracting hundreds of spectators. Epsom closed in 1938, marking the end of an era for Mordialloc's racing community (Hahn 2018). During the early 20th century, trains increasingly accommodated the transport of horses. In 1934, a "cattle truck and horse box" was installed at Mordialloc Railway Station to enable Wheriko, "the tallest racehorse in training", to "fulfil future engagements" (Sun News- Pictorial, 9 August 1934, p. 20). The platform was demolished in 1988 and the area was converted to the current carpark (Lovell Chen 2023).

In 1910, instructions were issued to reduce the length of the passenger platform to 466 ft – most likely to provide room to erect the new signal box at the Down end of the station adjacent to Bear St, however this did not eventuate (Waugh 2010). Instead, a new elevated signal box was provided on 5 January 1911, containing a 57 level A pattern tappet frame (Waugh 2010). The new signal box worked one and a half sets of interlocked gates



across Bear Street (Waugh 2010). Early images indicate that the signal box was two-storey, rectangular and had a hipped roof. The signal box was demolished in 1988 (Lovell Chen 2023). East of the downside platform, and north of the subway, and underground tank was constructed between 1910 and 1920. It is visible on plans dated to 1969. The size of the tank not mentioned on the plans. It was removed in the 1970s when the carpark was expanded (Lovell Chen 2023).

Prior to the electrification of the line in 1922, steam-powered trains ran along the rail which required both water and coal to function. A reliable water supply was required for the maintenance and running of the steam trains, which led to the construction of three water towers (Lovell Chen 2023). The first two water towers were constructed using wrought iron. A third water tower was installed in on 1 March 1911 by contractor James Younger and is located on the downside of the rail line. The water tower is a reinforced concrete and brick tower capable of holding 20,000 gallons (Waugh 2010; McGuire 1985). The tower itself is associated with the development of the railway network and the original steam-powered locomotives that travelled through the area prior to the electrification of the line. While the earlier wrought iron tanks were removed by 1942, the concrete water tower stands as a remnant of the steam train days (). It is the last remaining example from a small group of Edwardian towers of this design, with the last other known example demolished in 1964 at Dandenong (Bryce Raworth 2001; National Trust Database 2023). The removal of the engine shed and engine turntable left the water tower as the sole reminder of Mordialloc Station's steam era (McGuire 1985). The Mordialloc Railway Water Tower is now registered on the VHR as place H2441.

The electrification of the Mordialloc Station rail line in 1922 ushered in a new era of transportation technology, enhancing connectivity and efficiency in railway operations (Living Histories 2000). The iconic 'Red Rattler' or Tait trains were introduced to Victoria in 1910 and converted into electric traction from 1919. The trains became more common in the 1950s until around the early 1980s. To cater for the new trains, the platforms were extended to accommodate seven carriages. The original upside station building was also extended to the south in the 1920s to include a ladies' waiting room and a guard's room alongside renovations to the existing station masters building. Passengers readily welcomed electrification, with its advantages of improved travel time: one Frankston resident wrote to the Frankston and Somerville Standard in 1922 that "Melbourne to Frankston in 62 Minutes! Our dreams have at last come true" (Frankston and Somerville Standard, 25 August 1922, p. 1). However, electrification had its negative effects, including the overcrowding of trains. Letters to the Editor of The Argus in 1922 reported that the "the Mordialloc electric service is in some respects disappointing" as it is "literally packed with people" (Argus, 9 June 1922, p. 8).

Residential and commercial development was spurred by the development of the rail through Mordialloc. Recent aerial imagery shows that almost the entirety of the investigation area has been highly developed throughout the twentieth century, with major infrastructure including rail, roads, utilities, housing and commercial facilities. The major roads that traverse the investigation area, including Albert Street, McDonald Street, Bear Street, Station Street, and the Nepean Highway, have played crucial roles in the region's transportation history. The Nepean Highway is one of the earliest tracks in the Melbourne settlement and is shown on maps as early as 1841. The road was maintained by the Moorabbin Road Board from 1862 and The Country Road Board from 1924 (Living Histories 2000). The highway was duplicated in 1960. For the highway to be effectively used over the Mordialloc Creek, a timber bridge was constructed in 1853 that was later replaced by a new bridge in 1919 (Living Histories 2000).

Several features associated with the Mordialloc Railway Station have been assessed as having archaeological potential. These features include the Mordialloc Railway Station Complex, the McDonald Street and Bear Street Level Crossing Interlocking Gates, the Mordialloc Railway Water Tower, the McDonald Street and Bear Street Gatekeepers Cottages, as well as numerous demolished features within the station precinct, such as the former turntable, engine shed, and goods shed.

#### McDonald Street Level Crossing and Gatekeeper's Cottage

The construction of the railway to Mordialloc in 1881 necessitated the establishment of 22 level crossings across the Frankston Line (Lovell Chen 2023). The McDonald Street Level Crossing was constructed in conjunction with the railway line in 1881, alongside a Gatekeepers Cottage (Figure 25). Manually operated hand gates were first installed at the level crossing. The hand gates are visible on an aerial image from c.1925-1940, which also depict the interlocking gates installed at the Bear Street Level Crossing (c. 1911) (Figure 25). During an inspection of Mordialloc Railway Station in December 1896, the Railway Commissioners proposed a replacement of the existing interlocking frame in the station building with a new signal box at McDonald Street that would work interlocked gates, however this did not occur (Waugh 2010). In the 1930s, the hand gates at McDonald Street were replaced by interlocking gates, as indicated by a VR plan from 1930, which were eventually superseded by boom gates that were installed in 1987 (VicSig 2023). The interlocking gate systems from the 1930s likely consisted of four columns, located at the corners of the level crossing, supporting the gates which could be oriented to close either the rail corridor or the road as required. Both the gate and columns were removed by 1987 and replaced by electronic boom gates. However, control mechanisms were located in recessed wells



below ground level. Therefore, anticipated archaeological features that may remain would be related to the substructures associated with the interlocking gates.

Each level crossing was equipped with gatekeeper's cottages. The gatekeeper's cottages played a crucial role in railway operations, as they housed gatekeepers responsible for manually operating the interlocking gates at level crossings. Gatekeepers were tasked with ensuring the safe passage of road traffic over the railway tracks, contributing to both the efficiency of train operations and public safety. Gatekeepers were remunerated with an annual wage of £80, along with provided accommodation in the adjacent cottages (Argus, December 1881, p. 4) (Figure #). These cottages were common fixtures at railway stations across Victoria during the 19th and early 20th centuries, providing essential accommodation for railway workers and their families.

Among the gatekeeper's cottages erected along the Frankston line at Mordialloc Railway Station was the McDonald Street Gatekeeper's Cottage, constructed between 1882 and 1885. The McDonald Street Gatekeepers Cottage was constructed on the downside of the rail near the McDonald Street gates. It appears on an early Victorian Railways VR plan from 1885 as an 'L' shaped building with a wing projecting to the rear (Lovell Chen 2023). The construction of these cottages was characterised by both durability and cost-effectiveness, with each cottage reportedly costing £120 (Argus, 8 October 1881, p. 13).

Despite efforts to complete the construction of gatekeeper's cottages by December 1881, some remained unfinished. During a visit to Mordialloc by the Minister of Railways, Thomas Bent (who later became Premier of Victoria from 1904 to 1909) in December 1881, it was noted that certain cottages required completion before the railway line's public opening on the 19th of December (Age, 2 December 1881, p. 2). This directive underscores the possibility that both the McDonald Street and Bear Street Gatekeeper's Cottages were constructed at Mordialloc Railway Station around 1881 or 1882.

Over time, a succession of gatekeepers occupied the site, including several notable instances of female gatekeepers. The 1890 Sands and McDougall Directory records "Mrs. McDiamond" as the gatekeeper for McDonald Street, reflecting the diverse workforce that manned the railway gates (Sands & McDougall Directory, 1895, State Library of Victoria). In 1895, Benjamin Beazley assumed the role of gatekeeper, a position corroborated by contemporary newspaper reports (Age, 22 February 1897, p. 1). By 1909, newspaper accounts mentioned "Mrs. Curtis" as the gatekeeper of the railway gates at McDonald Street, who suffered a painful accident while on duty by "slipping into the pit of the turntable" (Brighton Southern Cross, 15 May 1909, p. 4).

Accidents persisted under the gatekeepers' watch over the decades. In 1939, the McDonald Street level crossing became the site of two fatal accidents. Eight-year-old Frank Anderson was fatally injured while crossing the tracks on his way to Mordialloc State School, and Isabella Smith, aged 74, was struck by an express passenger train while attempting to navigate the crossing (Figure 26; Sun News Pictorial, 5 April 1939, p. 18; Age, 6 January 1939, p. 12). Such accidents underscored the dangers inherent in manually operated crossings.

Gatekeeper's cottages served as more than just stations for managing railway crossings; they were also sites of domestic life. In 1932, incidents of domestic violence came to light at the McDonald Street gatekeeper's cottage, where Violet Adeline Hart, the gatekeeper, endured assault from her husband. He was subsequently sentenced to 14 days imprisonment for his actions (Herald, 06 October 1932, p. 6).

Architectural plans from Victorian Railways in 1885, 1890, 1930 and 1957 indicate changes to the structure and orientation of the Gatekeepers cottage. The Gatekeeper's Cottage is visible in a photograph from 1925 - 1940 (Figure 27) and at this time, it is a rectangular weatherboard structure with a front gable, hipped roof and two chimneys projecting above the roof line (Lovell Chen 2023). The later VR plans and an MMBW plan from 1940 indicate the presence of two outbuildings behind the Gatekeepers Cottage, one of which is a small weatherboard structure, possibly a water closet.

On the 1957 VR plan, a Gatekeepers Cabin is also shown along McDonald Street, just beside the original Gatekeepers Cottage (Figure 23). The cabin can be identified as early as 1945 on an aerial photograph. The cabin and cottage are both present on later 1969 VR 'plan for the commuter car park', next to a car park of 24 spaces (Figure 15). In the following decade, the Gatekeeper's Cottage had been replaced by a Departmental Residence (D.R.), with a VR 'Concept plan for car parking' from 1976 indicating that the "gate house" (likely the Gatekeeper's Cabin) and D.R. are to be removed to allow for additional carparking spaces. An aerial photograph from 1977 indicates the D.R. building and gate house are still extant at this time, and it appears to be the same building as that depicted in earlier aerials from 1963.

The D.R. (Gatekeeper's Cottage) was demolished sometime between 1986 and 1991 to make way for the extended station car park on the downside. The cottage, its outbuildings and associated cabin have been demolished and removed. The area is now a paved carpark for the Mordialloc Railway Station.

**Bear Street Level Crossing and Gatekeeper's Cottage**

The Bear Street (formerly Bean Street) Level Crossing was constructed in 1882 along with a Gatekeeper's Cottage. Similar to the interlocking gates at McDonald Street, interlocking gates were also present at the siding adjacent to the main Bear Street level crossing. This siding was constructed in 1910 to accommodate the horse loading platform and ramp. The gates and siding are present on plans from c.1920-30 onwards. The gates and



siding were removed c.1990 when the carpark was established on the downside of the rail. The Bear Street gates were established earlier than the McDonald Street ones, during 1911. Both the gate and columns were removed by 1987 and were replaced by electronic boom gates. Anticipated archaeological features that may remain would be related to the substructures associated with the interlocking gates.

A Gatekeeper's Cottage was also located on the south-eastern side of the train line, to the south of Bear Street. The Cottage appears to have been constructed between 1882 and 1885, as it appears on an 1885 VR plan alongside the McDonald Street Gatekeepers Cottage. The weatherboard cottage had a rectangular form with a central projecting bay facing the train tracks (Lovell Chen 2023) (Figure 22; Figure 24). There are no further details of this cottage, however, it is no longer present in the plans from c. 1910 and appears to have been demolished by this time (Figure 11).

In 1901, newspaper reports highlight James Nunan's grievances as the gatekeeper at Bear Street in Mordialloc, who expressed concerns about the unpleasant odor and dampness caused by soakage from stables erected adjacent to the gatehouse (Brighton Southern Cross, 25 May 1901, p. 2). Subsequent accounts suggest a deterioration in the condition of the Bear Street Gatekeeper's Cottage over time. By 1909, Railway Commissioners visited Mordialloc Railway Station in response to community demands for a footway across the railway line, particularly for the safety of State-school children (Brighton Southern Cross, 5 June 1901, p. 6). During this inspection, the 'dangerous position of the gatehouse at the Bear Street crossing was also pointed out', underscoring the cottage's uninhabitable condition (Brighton Southern Cross, 5 June 1909, p. 6). This sequence of events suggests that the demolition of the gatehouse occurred between 1909 and 1910 and was prompted by its deteriorating condition and dangerous positioning.

The Bear Street Level Crossing witnessed at least one fatal accident during the twentieth century. In 1937, Margaret Jane Connolly, a 63-year-old resident of Mordialloc, lost her life when she was struck by an electric train headed towards Frankston while on her commute to work in the city (Herald, 9 April 1937, p. 4; Argus, 9 April 1937, p. 4).

A review of archival MMBW and VR plans and aerial photographs post-1910 was undertaken in order to assess possible past ground disturbance of this location. MMBW plan (Figure 42), aerial photographs from the 1920s – c.1940 (Figure 15), 1939 (Figure 50), 1963 (Figure 51) and 1977 (Figure 52) were reviewed. The results show that the land on which the Gatekeepers Cottage was located stayed within the rail reserve and has remained vacant and apparently undeveloped. The 1940 MMBW plan shows that underground services were run through the cottage location (Figure 42). More recent satellite and aerial imagery available online via Nearmap and Google Earth shows some surface rubbish and possibly underground rail infrastructure may have been installed. The former cottage location is now comprised of a bluestone laneway and concrete driveways, and open, grassed, rail reserve that includes a narrow pedestrian pathway. The cottage was a timber structure and most likely had an external cesspit. The archaeological remains of former 1880s-era timber building are likely to be feature such as post holes, floor stump holes/remains, subfloor deposits, brick fireplace hearths and cess pit or refuse deposits. There has been ground disturbing impact to the location of the Gatekeepers Cottage at Bear Street from at least underground utilities and rail services (such as signalling) in a strip along the north-eastern part of the former cottage footprint. This section more recently was stripped for resurfacing and the establishment of a narrow pathway in 2021.

Overall, the site of the former cottage has not been substantially redeveloped since the demolition of the cottage and at least part of the site has remained under a bluestone laneway. The past ground disturbance in the location may have been low in places, but moderate to high in other areas, such as under the bluestone laneway or the south-western strip in the rail reserve. As the extent of previous ground disturbance of this feature within the investigation area cannot be conclusively ascertained at this stage, the location of the Bear Street Gatekeeper's Cottage must be assessed as having archaeological potential.

*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/>*