
HO54 - Bridge over Kororoit Creek



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DCP_0461.JPG



Bridge over the Kororoit
Creek



Bridge

Location

Melton Highway PLUMPTON, MELTON SHIRE

Municipality

MELTON CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO54

Heritage Listing

Melton City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

The bridge over the Kororoit Creek, Melton Highway, Melton, is significant as one of few nineteenth century stone road bridges in the Melton Shire, as one of the few early round arch road bridges in Victoria, for its combination of an arch and a girder span, and for its likely early date. Probably built c.1860, it had a girder span added in 1870, with some interesting and rare design features. In the 1950s and 60s the parapets and original timber superstructure of the girder span were replaced with a concrete superstructure, and the masonry parts of the bridge may also have been sympathetically widened. It is moderately intact.

The bridge over the Kororoit Creek, Melton Highway, is historically and scientifically significant at a LOCAL level (AHC A.4, F.1). It illustrates a contextually rare form of stone bridge construction, being one of few nineteenth century stone road bridges in the Melton Shire. It is associated with one of Victoria's primary early roads from Melbourne to Portland, with the original Ballarat goldrush road, and was the main coach road between Melbourne and Ballarat until replaced by the railway in 1889. It is a scarce and probably very early example of a round or Roman arch bridge in Victoria. It is unusual within Victoria for having both an arch and a girder span, which demonstrates the event of the 1870 superflood, which devastated bridges throughout Victoria, and prompted a significant review of bridge design in the colony. The different spans are also likely to express the funding of the original bridge by the colonial government in the gold-era, and the funding of the new span by local government in the farming era. While modifications to its superstructure have compromised the ability of the girder span to demonstrate these changes, the rare shaped bluestone corbels and bluestone paved floor contribute especially interesting and illustrative feature with research potential.

Overall, the bridge over the Kororoit Creek is of LOCAL significance.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Melton - Shire of Melton Heritage Study phase 2, David Maloney, David Rowe, Pamela Jellie, Sera Jane Peters, 2007;
Construction dates	1859, 1870, 1955,
Other Names	Melton Highway crossing of Kororoit Creek (at 37 km post), Plumpton.,
Hermes Number	30050
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

Physical Description -

The bridge over the Kororoit Creek, Melton Highway, Melton, has a large round arched (barrel vault) and side opening that was formerly spanned by a timber superstructure. The bridge is constructed of coursed random rubble bluestone and has an introduced concrete superstructure. Other early features include the projecting bluestone corbels that support the superstructure above, large bluestone cutwater wall, and cobbled bluestone creek floor.

The bridge was constructed in two stages. It is likely that the arched section of the bridge over the main watercourse was constructed first, and the girder section, and perhaps the massive cutwater, were added after the 1870 flood had washed away the bridge's embankments. The stonework on the arched span is coursed, but much less regularly than that in the girder span section, and its stone is also of an overall lighter hue, with many distinctly reddish stones.

The projecting stone corbels on the girder span are a highly unusual and probably rare (and perhaps even unique) feature of the bridge. Many nineteenth century bridges with bluestone abutments and timber girders contain small niches inserted into the abutments for the girders themselves, and sometimes nicely worked 'shoes' or housings for timber struts (or springing points for timber arches) to rest in the wall a metre or so below the top of the pier or abutment, but not projecting stone corbels. The shaping of the corbels - in a manner that is a direct copy of many timber corbels in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries - is even more interesting.

The concrete deck of the bridge was added in 1955.

Presumably the 1968 widening refers to the carriageway, but it is not clear whether stonework was added, or whether the widening was the cantilevered concrete deck (supported by large new concrete crossheads/abutments) on the upstream side. The carriageway width of the stone portions of the bridge appears wide for a nineteenth century bridge, so it is quite likely that they were widened. Such widening was common CRB practice for stone bridges at the time, enabling many historic bridges to be preserved in operational condition. If so it was undertaken in a typically sympathetic and successful manner. The evidence of non-original mortar pointing may be associated with these alterations.

Historical Australian Themes

Shire of Melton Historical Theme: Transport

Integrity

Integrity - Moderately intact

Physical Conditions

Physical Condition - Good

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.

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