
FLINDER'S STREET THOROUGHFARE (AT BATMANS HILL)

Location

27-31 SPENCER STREET, DOCKLANDS VIC 3008

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7822-2392

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - October 26, 2020

What is significant?

The bluestone carriageway and underlying deposits are of significance.

How is it significant?

The site is historically and archaeologically significant to the City of Melbourne.

Why is it significant?

The site is of historical significance as it represents a commercial carriageway between the former Spencer Street

railway goods sheds and Melbourne's CBD and is a tangible link to late 19th century commercial rail activity in city.

The site has potential to contain archaeological deposits relating to its commercial and industrial use during the 19th century are of archaeological significance. In particular, the bluestone cobbles are of significance as they are tangible remains of the carriageway which connected the railway to the city. The site also has potential to yield archaeological remains associated with the railway signal houses which may have been present on the site in the 1890s.

Additionally, at depth, the site has potential to contain deposits associated with the early development of Melbourne. In particular, these deposits may yield information unavailable from other sources pertaining to the levelling of Batman's Hill which was removed in the mid 19th century for the construction of Spencer Street Station.

Any archaeological evidence that may be obtained from the site would have some potential to add to the overall understanding and insight into the commercial development of Melbourne City from post-European contact onwards.

Interpretation of Site	The site represents a carriageway between Melbourne City and the goods sheds formerly located in the Spencer Street rail yard (north-east of site) and possible remains of the early development of Melbourne (prior to 1880).
Hermes Number	206950
Property Number	

History

The site appeared to be mostly undeveloped until the 1880s or 1890s. The 1855 Kearny, 1864 Cox and 1882 Cooke plans depict a few small structures near the corner of Spencer Street and Flinders Street (plans below as not included with submitted site card). Prior to this, photographs show that the site was uneven and undulating landform. The site is also in proximity to the Yarra docks as shown in the isometrical drawing from 1866 and may have been informally used until its development during the late 19th century. It is likely that there was considerable levelling and earthworks within the site during the removal of Batman's Hill in advance of the construction of Spencer Street Station in the mid 19th century. Once Batman's Hill was removed for the development of the Spencer Street railway Station, the site became a key thoroughfare for the transport of goods to and from the Spencer Street railyard. An illustration from 1889 depicts the primary purpose of the site where horse and carriage can be seen moving to and from the goods sheds within the Spencer Street railyard, under the viaduct of the active railway. This access was facilitated by a nearby retaining wall built in 1890 (see HO651 /

VHR H0932) which allowed for the extension of Flinders street on level ground which the carriageway followed an upward slope to the railyard. During this time, the site also contained temporary infrastructure for the expansion of the overhead railway including cranes used to transport construction material from the ground surface to the tracks. The site may have also contained a signal station for the overhead railway. Historical evidence indicates that the site was continually used for access to the railways into the early 20th century. Once this part of the city was developed in the latter half of the 20th century, the site became pedestrian access with a small greenspace installed containing an upright tram carriage art installation fronting the intersection of Spencer and Flinders Street.

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/>