

MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1783

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO990

VHR Registration

February 25, 1999

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - July 1, 1999

What is significant?

The Blackjack Road railway precinct forms part of the Murray Valley Railway (Melbourne to Echuca line). Opened in five stages from February 1859 to September 1864, the Murray Valley Railway was the largest of the Colony's first two main trunk lines. The inability of the line's original private promoters - Melbourne, Mount Alexander and Murray River Company - to raise sufficient funds to construct the line, led to the government purchasing the company and embracing a public railway system. The Government's decision to construct the line in 1856 was accompanied by the formation of the Victorian Railways Department. The building of the line during the early 1860s reflected the strategic economic issues of the day: servicing the important goldfields of Castlemaine and Bendigo, and capturing the Murray River and Riverina trade for the Port of Melbourne. With a labour force of more than 6,000 men, the Melbourne to Echuca line was the Colony's largest capital works project of its time. The line is still used today for public transport and freight services and comprises a very large number of structures and facilities of varying ages, conditions and degrees of operational and business significance.

How is it significant?

The Blackjack Road railway precinct is of historical and scientific importance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Blackjack Road railway precinct (comprising the Blackjack Road rail-overbridge, road culvert, large granite culvert and associated embankment) is historically and scientifically significant as an integral part of the railway line and is an important representative sample of one of the earliest and grandest capital works projects in Victorian history. The identified features comprising the precinct are all substantially intact and provide a crucial reminder of the adoption of English engineering and architectural standards and the role of the Victorian Railway Department in developing the Colony's engineering expertise.

The Blackjack Road railway bridge illustrates the characteristic solid granite type of bridge which was used on the Harcourt section of the line. The use of local granite (from quarries on nearby Mount Alexander) on the line was a pioneering force behind the development of Harcourt's quarrying industry.

The Blackjack Road railway precinct makes an important contribution in defining the character of the Victorian railway network.

Permit Exemptions

General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must **notify** the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

Specific Exemptions:

General Conditions:

1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.
2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.
5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

Rail-track: repairs to and replace of track and sleepers are permit exempt

Signalling Equipment: repairs to, replacement of, renewal of and alterations to any electric or electronic signalling equipment along the track is permit exempt.

Tunnels & Culverts: Repairs to the existing structure where material is replaced like for like is permit exempt.

Emergency work occasioned by collapse, flooding or collision is permit exempt provided that the work reinstates to the pre incident condition.

(Note; The re-lining of culverts and tunnels by cementing is not permit exempt)

Construction dates 1859,

Heritage Act Categories Registered place,

Hermes Number 5598

Property Number

Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended in that the Heritage Register Number 1783 in the category as a Heritage Place:

Blackjack Road Railway Precinct (Murray Valley Railway, Melbourne to Echuca) , Blackjack Road, Harcourt, Mt Alexander Shire.

EXTENT:

1. All of the railway engineering works:

- . B-1, Blackjack Road rail-overbridge, map reference 7723-549001,
- . C-1, brick road culvert, 7723-549001,
- . C-2, granite semi-circular culvert, 7723-550002, and
- . associated railway embankment shown on Diagram Number 608471 held by the Executive Director.

2. All of the land 100 metres south and 200 metres north of Blackjack Road Bridge marked L-1 on diagram number 608471 held by the Executive Director, being parts of Crown land parcels P122510 and P129665 vested in the Public Transport Corporation.

Dated: 4 February 1999

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette G 8 25 February 1999 p.503]

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/>