
Russells Bridge over Moorabool River

Location

Russells Bridge Road,, RUSSELLS BRIDGE VIC 3331 - Property No B7211

Municipality

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

Level of significance

Regional

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 10, 2005

What is significant? Russells Bridge is a substantial bluestone and riveted steel girder bridge with concrete encased steel piers located in a picturesque setting in the Moorabool River Valley. It is near the former Clyde Flour Mill and on a road originally connecting several local settlements on either side of the River. The bridge comprises elements from at least two phases, bluestone abutments from the c1857 former timber pile stringer bridge, and steel girders and piers from the reconstructed bridge of 1920.

How is it significant? Russells Bridge is significant for aesthetic/architectural, historic, and technical reasons at a Regional level.

Why is it significant? Russells Bridge is of historical significance as an important local crossing place associated with the development of agriculture in the Geelong area in the formative years of the Port Phillip District and Colony of Victoria. The earlier bluestone and timber beam bridge of 1859, represented by the surviving bluestone abutments, was one of the earliest substantial bridges in the district and was a key link between the farms, the adjacent Clyde Flour Mill, and the town of Geelong. It may also reflect the role played by the Central Roads Board in the 1850s in establishing the basis for higher standards of road and bridge construction although the responsible authority for the original bridge's construction cannot be proven as yet.

The bridge is also important for the connection, through the early bluestone fabric and the continuing name, with George Russell of the Clyde Company's Golf Hill station.

The 1920s reconstructed bridge is of significance as one of the most substantial public works undertakings of the Shire of Bannockburn in the early twentieth century and reflects the general prosperity of the area in the interwar period. It also demonstrates the resources and skills of both the Shire of Bannockburn engineer E T M Garlick, and local construction contractors Lockyer & Dawson. It was also evidently of sufficient political importance at the time, for it to be opened by the Hon Francis Clarke MLC, Minister of Public Works 1919-23.

Russells Bridge is of technical significance as a relatively intact example of early twentieth century riveted steel road bridge. It has a relatively long main span at 15.2 metres and is among the 10% of longest riveted plate road bridges with only three longer bridges of this type dating to 1920 or earlier. The use of steel piers encased in

concrete is a rare technical detail, possibly related to attempts to reinforce the structure, or to provide fire protection in the event of bushfires. The bridge is also one of a small group which demonstrate the varied means for adapting earlier timber bridges to the more permanent structural form able to carry greater loadings using metal girders and original masonry substructures.

Russells Bridge is of aesthetic significance for its generally harmonious design and attractive rural setting. This setting, the bridge, together with its curved, tree lined road approaches, and the adjacent bluestone Clyde Flour Mill constitute a significant early rural cultural landscape. The combination of bluestone abutments and heavy metal girder provides the bridge with a strong presence.

Classified: 06/10/2003

Other Names Russells Road Bridge,

Hermes Number 67981

Property Number

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/>