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## Former Cavendish Rail Bridge



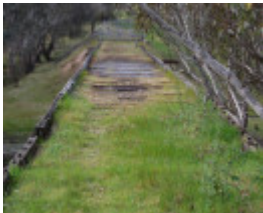
B6912 Rail Bridge



B6912 Rail Bridge Girders



B6912 Rail Bridge



B6912 Rail Bridge Deck



B6912 Rail Bridge

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### Location

Henty Highway (adjacent),, CAVENDISH VIC 3314 - Property No B6912

### Municipality

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

### Level of significance

State

### Heritage Listing

National Trust

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 31, 2004

What is significant? The Cavendish Railway Bridge, built in 1920 for the final stage of the Hamilton-East Natimuk Railway, is a single-track timber and wrought-iron rail-over-river bridge. The bridge has seven timber-beam

approach spans of twenty feet (6.1 metres), and three principal spans each of 42 feet (12.8 metres) with wrought-iron plate girders, giving a total transverse-timber deck length of 246 feet (seventy-five metres).

The line closed in 1979.

How is it significant? The Cavendish Railway Bridge is technically, historically and aesthetically significant to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant? The Cavendish Railway Bridge is technically significant. It has an unusual combination of span lengths and materials; the timber piers are unusually varied and range from simple two-pile piers to complex eight-pile double-pile piers at the main river channel. These latter piers were used because of the loading requirements of the wrought-iron girder principal spans.

The iron girders are historic technological artifacts that had originally been used for a bridge on the North East Railway in the early 1870's, but were recycled to Cavendish.

It is unusual to find a twentieth-century Victorian railway bridge that uses big conventional timber-beam approach spans and timber-pile piers in conjunction with lengthy wrought-iron plate-girder principal spans, and Cavendish Railway Bridge is the only substantial example in Western Victoria.

The Cavendish Railway Bridge is historically significant as one of very few surviving substantial remnants of the north-south link-line built in the early twentieth century. The construction of this bridge was the engineering feat that created what became known as the Hamilton-East Natimuk Railway, linking a series of earlier local north-south lines. This line was built to carry wheat from the western Wimmera and Mallee south to the deep sea port at Portland, and was the outcome of intense lobbying from Portland interests.

The Cavendish Railway Bridge is aesthetically significant with its tall, complex timber piers presenting a handsome profile against a backdrop of broad river flats dotted with river red gums. Situated adjacent to the Henty Highway, this impressive bridge is the most accessible and readily visible of the very few surviving substantial bridges on the historic Hamilton-East Natimuk Railway.

Classified: 06/07/1998

Hermes Number 69675

Property Number

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## Physical Description 1

Single-track rail bridge with seven timber-beam approach spans of 6.1 metres (twenty feet), and three principal spans each of 12.8 metres (42 feet) using wrought-iron plate girders, giving a total transverse-timber deck length of seventy-five metres (246 feet). The substructure consists of timber piers that are unusually variable, ranging from simple two-pile piers to double-pile piers consisting of eight timber piles, under the plate-girder sections.

### Context

The Cavendish Railway Bridge stands within the town of Cavendish adjacent to the Henty Highway, and the Wannon River valley dotted with river red gum trees provides an open and attractive setting. An historical walk, the "Settlers Walk", passes along the river banks on either side of the bridge. The bridge is now an isolated railway artifact, the railway station buildings having been removed.

### Intactness:

The main structure appears generally sound, but the timber decking is deteriorating.

### Assessment against Criteria:

importance to the course or pattern of Victoria's cultural history:

The Cavendish Railway Bridge was part of a significant north-south rail link-line for Western Victoria, allowing freight to travel between the Wimmera and the port of Portland. The line ended up carrying far less traffic than had been expected. The Cavendish Railway Bridge is one of the very few surviving substantial remnants of this line.

*d. importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or objects:*

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

The Cavendish Railway Bridge presents a handsome profile against a backdrop of broad river flats dotted with river red gums. Situated adjacent to the Henty Highway and with a walking track passing, this impressive bridge is the most accessible and readily visible of the very few surviving substantial bridges on the historic Hamilton-East Natimuk Railway.

*f. importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period:*

The Cavendish Railway Bridge is an unusual combination of timber, metal and recycled materials from the North East line. The bridge needed to withstand floods, and the recycling reflects the economies of the time.

It is very unusual to find a large 20th century rail bridge in Western Victoria combining conventional timber-beam approach spans with lengthy wrought-iron plate-girder spans, the latter being more commonly used in the nineteenth-century. Along with an unusually complex timber-pier system (two-pile to eight-pile piers), this bridge is distinctive in Western Victoria.

## **Usage/Former Usage**

former rail bridge, no longer in use

## **Intactness**

intact

*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/>*