
Dandenong Peace Memorial Bridge



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Location

168-170 Princes Highway DANDENONG, Greater Dandenong City

Municipality

GREATER DANDENONG CITY

Level of significance

-

Heritage Overlay Numbers

Heritage Listing

Vic. War Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

The Peace Memorial Bridge is significant to the City of Greater Dandenong:

as one of only a few known 'Peace Memorial Bridges' in the State, comparing with a similar status given to a preexisting bridge over the Dandenong Creek at Mordialloc by the same Shire, plus the Omeo 'Peace Memorial Bridge', a narrower three span all concrete bridge. (Criteria B. 2)

as an example of the work of shire engineer, Robert Woodcock (1881-1951) who is also associated with significant buildings in Dandenong, such as Laurel Lodge and probably also the engineer responsible for the

notable concrete foot bridge over Dandenong Creek near the end of Wedge Street, Dandenong. (Criteria H. 1)

as an example of the few surviving engineering works constructed during the First World War using composite materials and fabrication techniques no longer practised. (Criteria F. 1)

as a substantial demonstration of the local community feeling for those who served in WW1 (Criteria A.4)

for its decorative parapet wall and plaque and the view of the bridge from the south, as a contribution to the aesthetics of this creek crossing, and an opportunity for appreciation and interpretation of this historic bridge by passing foot and vehicle traffic. (Criteria E. 1)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Greater Dandenong - City of Greater Dandenong Heritage Study, 2000, Nadia Gasparetto, Architect (Revised from 1998 Study by Graeme Butler & Associates), Nadia Gasparetto, 2000;
Construction dates	1919,
Hermes Number	125802
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The Peace Memorial Bridge is a single span, rolled steel or wrought iron "I" beam bridge, with vertical concrete abutments, concrete deck and decorative concrete parapet walls.

The seven original fabricated "I" beams are riveted, and have vertical riveted web stiffeners.

The vertical in-situ concrete abutment walls include five vertical columns with recessed walls between, capped by a cross head on which the girders are seated. The outer columns are extended to the underside of the deck, and all cast corners have heavy chamfers, typical of concrete work of that period.

Originally the bridge had two traffic lanes (one in each direction) and two footways, but now it has three west bound lanes and foot traffic on the south side of the highway is accommodated on a separate footbridge. Two welded steel beams have been added under the southern footway to accommodate increased traffic loads when the footpath was removed.

The northern parapet wall has been removed when the abutting northern bridges were constructed, so only the original decorative parapet wall on the south side, and the plaque, provide a sense of age to the passing motorist. Pedestrians on the separate adjacent footbridge can gain a greater appreciation of this historic structure.

Intactness

The Peace Memorial Bridge is not intact, although appearing to be in excellent condition. The northern parapet wall has been removed and other minor changes carried out.

Historical Australian Themes

8. 5 Honouring, remembering, commemorating

Veterans Description for Public

The Dandenong Peace Memorial Bridge is a single span, fabricated steel beam structure, with vertical concrete abutments, concrete deck and decorative concrete parapet walls. It was completed in August 1919. Engraved in a granite plaque mounted in the south concrete parapet wall is the dedication *"In honor of the brave men who gave their lives to save CIVILISATION and to commemorate the declaration of peace June 1919"*

By 1919, the large Shire of Dandenong was just beginning to focus on post war programs, especially repatriation programs for returning soldiers. This was also the time when the whole of Victoria was suffering a massive epidemic of pneumonic influenza, and floods and poor drainage plagued the Dandenong settlement.

The Peace Memorial Bridge was designed by Robert Hopper Woodcock (1881-1951). His wife Mary Nellie Woodcock (nee Davidson) died in 1971 at Dandenong (aged 82), the shire engineer, (who lived at historic Laurel Lodge from 1912) was 'considered one of the best engineers in Victoria' and under his supervision, the work was carried out by the contractors Messrs Reilly Bros. When the old stone bridge was being demolished, documents in a bottle were recovered from under it. These were then redeposited, together with contemporary documents within the new bridge. Completion of the new bridge was delayed in May 1919, when an embankment collapsed damaging one of the wing walls, which had to be demolished and re-built.

In the first week in July 1919, the news of the signing of the Peace Treaty on Sunday 29 June 1919 was announced in the local paper, and the Shire began planning Peace Celebrations. The next week the local paper reported under the heading "Peace Celebrations in Dandenong" that "On Sunday evening, the usual visit of inspection was paid, by Dandenong residents to the new bridge across the creek on the Main Road - which has been the practice since the work was first put in hand. The concrete walls are finished and the iron girders are now in position, and span the stream".

On July 31st 1919 the local paper reported the Dandenong Shire Council meeting when Cr Groves suggested that a marble tablet should be placed on Mordialloc Bridge, in memory of local fallen heroes in the great war. He was prepared to have the work done at his own expense and the offer was accepted with thanks. "On motion of Crs Harris and Coleman, the matter of having a similar tablet placed on the bridge on the Main road at Dandenong, was left in the hands of the Centre riding members". Beautification programs were also proposed, including street tree planting along Lonsdale Street, near the new bridge, and in the surrounding parkland.

On Friday 29th August 1919, surrounded by a crowd of about one thousand people, the bridge was declared open by the Premier of Victoria, Mr Lawson, who stood in for Mr Robinson, Minister of Public Works, who was prevented from attending owing to a severe attack of pneumonic influenza. The ribbon was cut by the Shire President's wife Mrs Abbot and 'the Premier, Cr Abbot and Mrs Abbot then motored over the bridge amidst hearty cheers'. Cr Groves MLA then unveiled the tablet on the bridge which had been provided to perpetuate the memory of fallen heroes at the war. This was followed by a moments silence and bowed heads. Mr Calder, Chairman of the Country Roads Board was also present and spoke at the opening. Councillors from the Shires of Berwick and Ferntree Gully were also present, but apologies were received from the Shire of Cranbourne.

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/>