
BALLAN RAILWAY WATER TANK

Location

705 OLD MELBOURNE ROAD BALLAN, MOORABOOL SHIRE

Municipality

MOORABOOL SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7722-0079

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 1, 1900

The site is significant to the Ballan region as it marks a time of pivotal change throughout the state. The Gold Rush and immediate post-Gold Rush period was a time of massive growth and expansion development of infrastructure, like the Melbourne to Ballarat railway line. There are records of water tanks used to supply steam trains with water (see Context 2007: 10-11 for examples). However, the available photographs indicate that these tanks were above ground and very square in shape. This is in contrast to the curved water tank identified at Ballan. It is difficult to tell without further investigation whether this structure was initially built above ground or intended to be partially below ground as it is at present. The Ballan water tank is also far more crudely made and basic than some of the previously recorded examples. This structure is therefore significant, as no comparable example of this style of water tank has yet been recorded in Victoria.

The site is located along the northern side of this railway line and likely marks a stopping point for steam trains looking to refill their tanks

(or 'tender car,' which would store the water) from a reserve of water kept on the side of the railway line. These water reserves were initially known as a 'Track Pan' in America and a 'Water Trough' in Britain, though the shape of the recorded feature suggests that the site is more likely simply a railway 'water tank'.

Interpretation
of Site

There are no known homesteads or houses associated with the structure. The date of the structure is unknown and it is not shown on early parish maps. The manufacturing technique used to make the bricks appears to be

'wire-cut' (extruded). They have small quartz inclusions, thin striations, no frogs (the impressed top of a brick, often with manufacturers name) and are heavy. This style of brick is typical of those manufactured between 1870 and 1900, though this extended to 1940 in rural areas of Australia, like Ballan. This fits in with the dates of the railway line (1889), and the tank's close proximity to the tracks suggests that it was built purposely for the rail. The surrounding artefacts included machine-made bottles (approx. 1880-present) and fragments of blue and black transfer printed ceramics(1805-present). These items may have been left/disposed of by the people re-filling the train, or even building the 'water tank' or railway line.

Hermes
Number

206184

Property
Number

History

The site is located west of Ballan, approximately 3km from the town centre. Ballan was first settled in the mid 1830s and was so named in 1836 after a town in Northern Ireland, the birthplace of Robert von Stieglitz, who was one of the first inhabitants of the area. This region was dramatically affected by the Victorian Gold Rush, the epicentre of which was Ballarat (30km west of Ballan). Because Ballan was located on the road from Melbourne to the gold fields, the high level of traffic allowed the town to grow and develop. This development ground to a halt in 1889 when the railway from Melbourne to Ballarat was completed, meaning Ballan was no longer an essential throughfair.

No history specific to the water tank could be located.

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/>