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# BELL RAILWAY STATION ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRECINCT

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## Location

363/363A BELL STREET, PRESTON VIC 3072

## Municipality

DAREBIN CITY

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7822-2387

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - July 16, 2020

The site of the former Oakover Road gatehouse is of historical importance for its association with the former Whittlesea Railway Line. This railway line was introduced in the late 1880s and the gatehouse was one of a number of buildings constructed to support railway operations on the line.

Interpretation of Site	The Oakover Road gatehouse was constructed by 1909 on the north-east corner of the Oakover Road level crossing, at this time comprising an irregular shaped building form with a small timber portico facing the railway line, associated boundary fence and pan closet (Figure 1). By 1945, the building had been altered or replaced to a rectangular building form, and the adjacent building had been constructed (Figure 2). This form is maintained throughout the mid twentieth century (Figure 3). The gatehouse and adjacent structures were demolished between 1984 (Figure 4) and 2009 (Figure 5). The location of the gatehouse appears to have remained undeveloped since this time, but has been variously disturbed by the installation of automatic boom gates, pedestrian level crossing gates/fencing and associated infrastructure, utility installations and alterations to the sidings to the north of the gatehouse. An additional structure is shown on the west side of railway line, on the Oakover Road level crossing, on the 1945 and 1984 aerial images (although a building in this location is not indicated on the 1963 plan at Figure 3). This building had also been removed by 2009, although the location of this building has been entirely disturbed by the installation of boom and pedestrian level crossing gates.
Other Names	FORMER OAKOVER ROAD GATEHOUSE,
Hermes Number	206411
Property Number	

## History

Despite the construction of railway lines in other parts of Melbourne and regional Victoria from the 1850s, a railway line to Preston was not constructed until the late 1880s. Support for the construction of a railway line to Preston first commenced in the mid-nineteenth century, continuing into the 1880s when meetings were held demanding a line to the area. The lack of a rail service had hindered development in Preston until this time, although it has been stated that there was an increased interest in the 'possibilities of Preston as residential land in the prosperous 1880s, despite its poor transport connections with Melbourne'. A route to Whittlesea via Royal Park, North Fitzroy, Thornbury, Preston and Reservoir was finally proposed, and the 'Fitzroy and Whittlesea Line' was constructed in the late 1880s, opening on 23 December 1889. The 'Collingwood loop' was subsequently constructed in 1904, providing a direct line for passengers from Whittlesea and Preston into the city. The gatehouse to the north of Oakover Road was constructed by 1909 with associated outbuildings, pan closet and boundary fencing. By 1945, the gatehouse had been modified or replaced, and a small structure had been constructed on the site, adjacent to the gatehouse to the north. The gatehouse and adjacent small structure were removed between 1984 and 2009.

*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/>*