
FORMER BEAUFORT STATION MASTER'S RESIDENCE

Location

24 PRATT STREET BEAUFORT, PYRENEES SHIRE

Municipality

PYRENEES SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7523-0099

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 6, 2021

The ash pits are associated with the use of the Beaufort Railway Station during the steam locomotive age. Due to the function of an ash pit, they tended to be utilised at the end of a line due to the time it takes to clean and re-stock a locomotive engine before re-use. It is therefore considered likely that these ash pits were constructed when Beaufort was the end of the line extension from Ballarat, before it was extended further to Ararat. This dates the construction of the ash pits to 1874, with the Ararat terminus being constructed the following year.

The ash pits meet the threshold for an archaeological site under the Heritage Act as it contains archaeological features which are older than 75 years old, which provide information about the original layout and use of the station. The site meets the threshold for place history as they link to the period when the rail system in Victoria was expanding at a fast pace to cover the rural network. The railway station was in continuous use until 1994 and has been modified to carry diesel and electric trains. Extraneous buildings and additional train lines have been removed from the rail yard in the intervening years, including the Station Master's Residence. The turntable, which would have related to the use of the station as the end of the line was removed in 1921. The carriage dock, which was infrastructure relating to the storage of train carriages was removed in 1963. Additional sheds relating to the rail yard and the

The Beaufort Railway Station site is considered to have archaeological value in a local context under the 'linking

Victorians by rail' and 'building Victoria's industries and workforce' framework in Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes (Heritage Council 2010).

Interpretation
of Site

Ash pits (otherwise known as de-ashing pits) were located at train stations in order to collect ashes which have been cleaned from locomotives fireboxes. Ash pits tend to be located within locomotive sheds where locomotives return for cleaning or dropping of fire. They can also be located at stations in places where the locomotives collected water for de-ashing. Typical ash pits were to be rectangular in shape and be as long as required for the particular locomotive to remove the ash. Figure 3 1 is an example of an ash pit in use in the United States, form and function did not vary significantly between countries. De-ashing involved clearing the fire grate and smoke box to clear all the ash from the grate into the pits. At this time any fuel still burning in the firebox was removed and thrown by the side of the track to cool (known as fire dropping). The still burning coals may have been placed into a small wagon or extra pit to the side of the track. It is typical that locomotives were de-ashed at the end of a day, before they were cleaned and returned to service for the next day. In addition to the ash pits, a number of other demolished features were identified within a 1923 plan of Beaufort Station. This plan shows the location of the turntable, which would have been associated with the station when it was situated at the end of the line from Melbourne. Additional features associated with the use of Beaufort Station have also been recorded. A construction date for the Station Master's Residence is not known. It may be associated with the original construction of the Station in the 1870s. If this is the case, there is potential for the remains (if they are present) to contain additional information of what it was like to live within a station in rural Victoria. The location of additional features such as the turntable, while important to understanding the layout of the site, can be discerned from plans. Additional ad-hoc feature may be present at the site, such as work shed constructed from wood or galvanised iron, but the ephemeral nature of these structures would likely suggest archaeological signature is low or shallow.

Hermes
Number

208215

Property
Number

History

Beaufort Railway Station was constructed in 1874 to be included on the North Ballarat junction line which terminated at Beaufort. An extension to the line was constructed in 1875 to Ararat. The station was closed in 1994 before being rebuilt in 2004 and brought back into service as a commuter line between Ararat and Ballarat. Between the lines opening and the original decommissioning of the station, a number of features of the original train station have been removed, including a turntable.

The Ararat line was established as a steam locomotive line, and remained serviced by steam locomotives for approximately a century. The Victorian fleet of locomotives reached their peak in 1918 with 817 steam locomotives. Diesel locomotives were introduced in the early 1950s, which lead to the gradual retiring of all steam locomotive engines from service. By 1965 there were 220 steam locomotives operated by VicRail. The last two steam locomotives were withdrawn from regular service in April 1972.

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/>