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# SOUTH GEELONG RAILWAY STATION

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## Location

221B YARRA STREET, SOUTH GEELONG, 3220

## Municipality

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7721-0548

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - February 7, 2023

### What is significant?

See attached supporting document

### How is it significant?

See attached supporting document

### Why is it significant?

See attached supporting document

Interpretation  
of Site

This site, located south of the Geelong to Warrnambool Railway line at South Geelong Station consists of the land reserved for railway purposes at the time the South Western Railway was constructed to connect Colac to Melbourne through Geelong, first operating in 1877. All of Section 18A south of the railway corridor and that part of Section 17A adjacent to the rail corridor together with connecting land with frontage to Swanston Street was reserved (see Figure 6). The railway station known as South Geelong was not constructed within the reserved land on Section 18A until 1883 when all of the reserved land became used as the station grounds and yards. However, prior to construction of the station, that place during the period 1878 -1879 was used by the contractors building the Geelong to Queenscliff Railway which branched from the Geelong-Colac line a short distance in the down direction from the reserved land. The contractors constructed a horse-drawn narrow gauge tramway to convey broken basalt from quarries situated near the Barwon River in Newtown/Chilwell to a crushing plant located within the reserved land. There the larger broken stone was crushed to a size suitable for use as railway ballast on the permanent way. Other than a statement that four crushing machines were present, we have no information concerning either how the crushing plant was operated or where it was located on the reserve. According to historical sources, the tramway entered the railway reserve from Yarra Street but the entry point is unknown. Contemporary press accounts indicate that some 40,000 cubic metres of basalt was used for ballasting the single track of the Geelong to Queenscliff Railway. Recent excavation of a combined services (CSR) trench within the reserved land in Section 18A has exposed a small part of the 1878 ballast tramway, together with more recent iron pipes and a timber structure that may have been the covering of an unlined drainage ditch that appears to be present on an 1893 plan of the station grounds. These features, which cross the CSR trench in roughly parallel directions approximately perpendicular to the line of the CSR trench are buried beneath 0.3 to 0.5m of compact stony fill. The tramway, where uncovered, is remarkably intact and a service locator, apparently using a combination of an applied electric current and unstated GPR methodology, has traced the buried tramway for some 20m towards the south and approximately 5 m distance towards the north before losing the signal. The southward run of the tramway has been reported as curving toward the east before the signal is lost. Northwards, the tramline appears to head in a straight line towards the existing railway. It is clear that intact archaeological remains of the tramway, pipelines and probable drain structure continue to exist beneath the present car park. The losses of response by the service location devices may be due to local electrical discontinuity, interruption, ground disturbance or total truncation, and at the present time it is not possible to confidently determine the level or extent of preservation of the tramway beyond the extent of the exposure. Until the full extent of these features is known, it should be assumed that remains exist. A similar approach should prevail regarding the possible survival of remains of the footings of buildings and other structures within the station ground. In particular, traces of the stone crushing plant which might be expected to have substantial footings to support the mass of machinery possibly arranged at an elevation allowing broken stone to discharge into hoppers for direct loading of ballast trucks on a broad-gauge siding. Other infrastructure is evident on the existing chronological series of station plans which indicate the changing locations of features from 1893. These include the following railway features: - A station master's residence that was situated in the north west corner of the property in the 1893 plan - Drains - Urinals/closets - Other railway infrastructure

Hermes  
Number

209462

Property  
Number

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## History

This site, located south of the Geelong Railway line within the South Geelong Station grounds, is the remains of a narrow gauge (estimated at 2 foot 8 or 10 inches) tramway consisting of light-weight iron rails with bolted connections, spiked to timber sleepers, resting on a formation consisting of basalt spall ballast. This tramway is

interpreted as being a line constructed by Messrs. Topham, Angus and Smith, the contractors for building the Geelong-Queenscliff Railway in the period 1878 to 1879. The purpose of the tramway was the conveyance of broken basalt railway ballast from Scott's quarry at Chilwell to the main railway line at the subsequent site of South Geelong Station close to the junction of the Queenscliff line from the main line to Colac. The tramway was designed for haulage by horses, which is consistent with the presence, between and on both sides of the iron rails, of longitudinally-laid substantial and closely-butted timber planks which were spiked to the sleepers. The site also includes the remains of a timber structure, possibly the cover over a drain, which consists of short lengths of stout timber planking spiked to sleepers laid on edge. This structure was probably intended to permit covering of the drain with yard fill. Two corroded iron pipes are also present within the site, running essentially parallel with the other features, but stratigraphically later. Possibly these were part of a drainage system intended to replace the earlier drain. A photogrammetric model of these features is included in the supporting documents. In 1883 the South Geelong Station was established at this locality. By 1893 the site includes a Station Master's residence, a station, toilets and a wood storage yard. The station has undergone modernisation in the mid to late twentieth century as is evidenced by the 1928 and 1970s plan (included in supporting information). By 1928 the Station Master's residence had moved to the south west corner of the reserve.

*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/>*