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# BELL STREET BRIDGE



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Bell st bridge (7).JPG

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## Location

Bell Street COBURG, MORELAND CITY

## Municipality

MERRI-BEK CITY

## Level of significance

Recommended for Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO529

## Heritage Listing

Merri-bek City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 3, 2003

#### What is significant?

The site of the Bell Street bridge and the wrought iron lattice girder trusses of the 1880 bridge designed according to British engineering by Evander Mclver, is significant. The bridge superstructure, pre-cast concrete trusses and concrete abutments are not significant.

#### How is it significant?

Bell Street bridge is of local historic, technical and social significance to the City of Moreland. It also has rarity value and the potential to reveal both historic and Aboriginal archaeological aspects of Moreland's history.

#### Why is it significant?

The Merri Creek, which includes the site of the Bell Street Coburg bridge, is historically significant to the Traditional Owners, the Woiwurung; as part of the Merri Creek cultural landscape.

The Bell Street bridge crossing the Merri Creek at Coburg is historically significant for the evidence it provides of the 1880 bridge designed by engineer and architect Evander Mclver. Mclver (1834-1902) provided consulting engineering services to Brunswick and Coburg (amongst other municipalities) whilst continuing to serve as secretary and engineer to the Shire of Broadmeadows. The wrought iron lattice girder trusses are historically significant as they demonstrate the original width of Bell Street prior to the widening of its lanes in 1954, as indicated by the adjacent pre-cast concrete trusses. (Criterion A)

The Bell Street bridge provides evidence of a bridge building technology that is considered quite rare in Victoria. Derived from British colonial engineering technology, the bridge design was first used in Victoria in 1861 to cross the Yarra at Bridge Road in Hawthorn. Later instances in several locations in regional Victoria including the State-listed Mia Mia bridge at Redesdale. The Chandler Highway bridge, also State-listed, is a later example than the Bell Street bridge but also less intact. (Criterion B)

The Merri Creek environs including the site of the Bell Street bridge has the potential for Aboriginal sites, as the Merri Creek was an important food resource, camping place and travelling route. Whilst the approaches to the bridge have been rebuilt in the twentieth century, and the ground disturbed, there is still the potential for sites which are most likely to be artefact scatters. The site also has the potential to reveal historic archaeological evidence of the former bluestone abutments, although this may be low given the amount of ground disturbance due to later construction. (Criterion C)

The Bell Street bridge is technically significant as it retains evidence of six wrought iron lattice girder trusses, originally derived from British engineering with the technology imported to the colonies during the 1860s. Whilst other elements of the Bridge are not intact, it is the trusses that illustrate this bridge building technology. (Criterion F)

The Merri Creek corridor is of local significance for its social value as an important Aboriginal cultural landscape. The Merri Creek was a rich source of food as well as a focus for ceremony and camping (Goulding, 2006, 195) (Criterion G)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Moreland - Moreland Heritage Gaps Study 2017, Context Pty Ltd, 2017; Moreland - Moreland City Council: Local Heritage Places Review, Context Pty Ltd, 2004;
Construction dates	1880,
Architect/Designer	Mclver, Evander,
Hermes Number	59188
Property Number	

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## Physical Description 1

The first timber bridge over the creek at Bell Street was replaced by Coburg Council (Roads Board?) with a wrought iron, single span bridge on basalt pylons. The bridge was rebuilt in 1954, but parts of the basalt footings

and abutments remain.

1993 Study code: CB16

## **Physical Conditions**

Good

## **Integrity**

Major Alterations

## **Physical Description 2**

The Bell Street bridge over the Merri Creek retains six wrought iron lattice girder trusses that were erected in 1880. The approaches on the Darebin and Coburg sides have been replaced with concrete abutments and none of the bluestone abutments remain visible. The widening of the bridge is evident in the additional lanes supported by pre-cast concrete trusses adjacent to the lattice trusses. The deck and all superstructure has been replaced with concrete and modern guardrails. As a bridge crossing dating from 1880 there may be potential for archaeological deposits relating to earlier crossings of the creek or its approaches.

*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/>*