
Rochester Bridge

Location

Kyabram-Rochester Road,, ROCHESTER VIC 3561 - Property No B4734

Municipality

CAMPASPE SHIRE

Level of significance

State

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 10, 2008

What is significant?

Rochester Bridge is a reinforced concrete road bridge with concrete girders. It was designed by W. T. Chaplin and was built for Country Roads Board/Shire of Rochester in 1916.

How is it significant?

Rochester Bridge is significant for Scientific (Technical), Historic, Social and Aesthetic reasons at a State level.

Why is it Sinificant?

Rochester Bridge is significant at the State Level as a large and early reinforced concrete T girder bridge, with distinctive tapered and curved piers, haunched girders and cross heads. It is of technical significance as one of the earliest surviving examples of the standard T girder bridges erected by the CRB, in its first years of modernising and upgrading the state road system. Designed by the local shire engineer W. T. Chaplin, it never the less, follows CRB standard drawings and so shows the relationship between the central planning function of the CRB and the local roads board engineers. It is located on an important overland route which developed to link the Murray Valley and Riverina to the Victorian rail and commerce network, on a river crossing site originally used from the squatting days. It is also located in a picturesque setting with mature red gums framing the approaches and parkland river flats.

HISTORY:A small settlement known as "Rowes Camp" (named for Dr John P. Rowe of the 1852 "Restdown Plains" run) grew up around "O'Dea's Inn" (from Patrick O'Dea of the earlier "Cornelia Creek" run) on the eastern bank of the Campaspe River near the boundary of the two runs. Traffic through the area increased dramatically with the Central Victorian Gold Rushes. The Coach Road and Stock Route from Hopwoods and Maidens Punts across the Murray River at Echuca & Moama passed by "ODea's Inn", which was the second point for changing the Coach Horses after Strathallan. During a visit to "Restdown Plains", Governor Hotham named the settlement "Rowechester", a Latinised version of "Rowes Camp". When the settlement was made official on October 24th 1855 a government clerical error led to the proclamation of Rochester.In 1864 the Melbourne to Echuca Railway reached Rochester with the station being on the west bank of the river, which led to the focus of the town to shift

from the eastern side of the Campaspe to where it remains today. The coming of the Railway also led to the breaking up of the large pastoral leases and the advent of cropping on smaller holdings. In 1864 the Echuca Roads Board was established including the Rochester district and on May 26 1871 it was proclaimed a Shire. On 27th November 1909 after years of heated debate the separate Shire of Rochester was proclaimed. The availability of a reliable water supply from the Waranga- Mallee Channel (completed in 1909) led to a rapid expansion of farming activities including horticulture and cropping. After the Second World War dairying and tomato growing prospered with the Rochester Co-operative Butter & Canning Co. having built a cheese factory in the town in 1914. The first bridge at Rochester was built by the roads board but had become inadequate by the turn of the century. A new bridge was constructed between 1916 and 1917 and was one of the earliest large concrete bridges erected by the Country Roads Board. In the 1917 Annual Report, the bridge was described as the "largest of its kind yet undertaken by the Board". It was designed by and erected under the supervision of Mr W. T. Chaplin, Shire Engineer, and was erected for the cost of 7,000 pounds. (Annual Report 1917-18 page 5). It replaced a timber pile and stringer bridge that had become worn out and unsafe. The new bridge was opened to much fanfare on 12 September 1917. Among the locals depicted in a contemporary photograph, were a large contingent of servicemen, reflecting both the wartime circumstances of the bridge's construction and the forthcoming importance of the soldier settlement schemes that developed around Rochester in the 1920s. How is it significant? Rochester Bridge is significant for Scientific (Technical), Historic, Social and Aesthetic reasons at a State level.

Classified: 26/06/2007

Hermes Number 71761

Property Number

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/>