

Building:	Chandler Highway Bridge	Significance:	A
Address:	Chandler Highway, Alphington	Melway Map Ref:	31 12B
Building Type:	Bridge	Construction Date:	1890
Architect:	Sir John Monash (engineer)	Builder:	Graham and Wadick



Intactness:		Condition:	
G[x] F[] P[]		G[x] F[] P[]	
Existing Heritage Listings:		Recommended Heritage Listings:	
Victorian Heritage Register	[]	Victorian Heritage Register	[x]
Register of the National Estate	[]	Register of the National Estate	[x]
National Trust	[]	Heritage Overlay Controls	[x]

History

The Chandler Highway Bridge was originally part of the controversial Outer Circle Railway line, which linked the Clifton Hill-Heidelberg line with the Springvale line via Fairfield Park and East Camberwell stations. While the line was a long time in the planning it operated only for a relatively short period. Only the APM paper mill siding and the Camberwell to Alamein electrified line survive from the original 10.5 miles of line.¹ Tenders for the construction of the Outer Circle Railway were first called in 1887 and almost a year later a contract was awarded to Graham and Wadick for £125,016, about £14,000 over the estimate. Graham and Wadick's supervising engineer was John Monash, later Sir John Monash. The contract was completed in May 1891, almost two years after the estimated time of completion and £11,000 over budget. Graham and Wadick sub-contracted the bridgework to engineers, Robison Brothers Campbell & Sloss.

The railway bridge over the Yarra River was started in February 1889 but not completed until November 1890, threatening the timing of the whole project.² An etching of the period shows the rural banks of the Yarra, with gums and timber fences, littered with building materials and an old timber crane at work in the foreground.³

Once complete, the railway was considered the most extravagant ever built by the Government. The first station south of Fairfield Park Station was Fulham Grange which opened in 1891: a double platform station only 25 chains from the last. Severe losses were incurred during the running of the line,⁴ and the Fulham Grange station closed in 1893.⁵

Willmere, East Kew, Deepdene, Shenley, Canterbury Junction, Riversdale, Hartwell, Ashburton, Waverley Road and Oakleigh Stations followed.⁶ Other stations were added prior to the total closure of the line in 1927.⁷ The line was generally dismantled by 1946, the 1919 siding to the Australian Paper Mills being one of two small sections of line remaining.⁸

The bridge was converted to road traffic in 1930,⁹ and was reputedly widened in the 1950s using similar construction.¹⁰

Graeme Butler. *Northcote Urban Conservation Study*. 1982.

Description

The Chandler Highway Bridge is a four-span iron box girder and brick bridge crossing the Yarra River, connecting Alphington and Kew. The red brick piers taper as they rise, and have moulded bluestone cappings. Pairs of red brick piers mark the approaches, and have heavy moulded bluestone cappings. The girders are diagonally braced, with original wrought iron lattice balustrading. The bridge has a cantilevered walkway along the west side.¹¹

Comparative Examples

Hawthorn Bridge, Bridge Road, Yarra River Richmond/Hawthorn.

Significance

The Chandler Highway Bridge is of state historical significance. Constructed in 1891, the bridge is one of the most significant remnants of the Outer Circle Line, the most extravagant railway line developed by the Victorian Government in the 19th century. Construction of the bridge and the railway line is associated with the rapid growth of Melbourne during the Boom period, intended to facilitate suburban expansion. The bridge is also one of the few 19th century bridges remaining in the metropolitan area. The bridge is a local landmark, being substantially intact and a prominent element in the area, notable for its impressive red brick piers.

Original Source

Graeme Butler. *Northcote Urban Conservation Study*. 1982.

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- 1 Beardswell and Herbert, *The Outer Circle, A History of the Oakleigh to Fairfield Railway*, (Vic. 1979), p1
 - 2 Beardswell and Herbert, *The Outer Circle, A History of the Oakleigh to Fairfield Railway*, (Vic. 1979), p32f.
 - 3 *ibid.* p38 cites Australasian Sketcher
 - 4 *ibid.*
 - 5 *ibid.*
 - 6 *op.cit.*, p.86f
 - 7 *op.cit.*, p.85f
 - 8 *op.cit.*, p.72
 - 9 Lemon, Ch.10, p.27
 - 10 *ibid.*
 - 11 *op.cit.*, p.85 old photo