Identification and location

Name of Place: **Bunbury St Bridge & Tunnel**

Other Name

Address Bunbury Street
Footscray

Place Identifier **20229**

Heritage Significance *metropolitan*

Creation date(s): 1928 **Map (Melway)** 42 D5 - E6

Boundary description from the cross-over at McNab Ave. to the eastern abutment of the bridge across Sims Street including the full width and length of Bunbury Street.

Local Government Area: Cities of Maribyrnong and Melbourne

Ownership Type state (PTC)

Description

Site Type: transport

Physical Description

Built as a goods line to link West Footscray to South Kensington and the West Melbourne goods yard, by-passing the Footscray Junction and Station. The works were on a considerable scale involving a cutting on a curve from west of Footscray, going under the Melbourne rail line and into a tunnel under Bunbury Street. This tunnel was constructed by the cut and fill method and lined in concrete. Another smaller cutting where the on the east side runs directly onto a steel bridge across the Maribyrnong. 200,000 cubic yards of rock and soil were removed and 27 thousand tons of concrete poured into the tunnel liner.

The bridge across the Maribyrnong River is a triangulated steel trust structure carrying double tracks, and is supported on mass Concrete pillars. Maribyrnong Street passes under the bridge between the brick-faced embankment and the concrete pier on the west side of the crossing. The east portal features a sloping brick wall with projecting string course and coping to either side of the sloping land at the tunnel entrance, while Bunbury Street splits in two with a narrow road surface of bitumen and bluestone cobbles kerbs passing down either side of the rail lines. A small timber, arrow-ended picket fence protects pedestrians at the Moreland Street crossing above the portal. A separate steel beam footbridge crosses the railway at this point.

Condition

Generally in good condition and well maintained. Some graffiti disfigures the bridge abutments and the picket fences above the east portal are in a dilapidated state.

Integrity

The railway works are substantially intact to their original design, apart from modifications to the safety railing at the Hyde Street end.

Context

The tunnel runs under Bunbury street through a residential area with the western portal in the deep cutting near Footscray Station and the east portal and bridge in the Maribyrnong River industrial area. The rail lines go on to connect with the South Dynon/Melbourne Freight Terminal.

Threats

No apparent threats at present. However redevelopment of the adjoining private land which is underway for apartments, may lead to pressure for street reconstruction or replacement of significant fabric.

History

During the late 1920s major works were carried out on the Victorian Railways to improve the movement of freight and interstate and country passenger trains through Melbourne's suburbs. The principal works were the Albion to Broadmeadows goods line and this, the South Kensington to West Footscray line. The line allowed the bypassing of Footscray Junction and the development of goods yard and shipping sheds south of Dynon Road. Two shifts daily were worked during the construction of the tunnel and bridge with the first sod turned without ceremony in 1918 and the line completed in August 1928.

Thematic context

Australian Principal Theme	Moving goods and people		
PAHT Subtheme:	Moving goods and people by rail	**Local Theme**	Railways

Cultural Significance

The Bunbury tunnel and bridge is of historical and technical significance at the Metropolitan level. The South Kensington to West Footscray goods line was a major construction project considering the amount of basalt which was required to be removed. Excluding the City underground loop it incorporates one of the few railway tunnels in the suburban area and is the largest of these. Construction of the bridge and tunnel involved the first such urban cut and fill tunnelling using an arched concrete lining. The transition from tunnel to bridge in a tight urban context stretched the engineering of the time. Construction of the bridge and tunnel involved the first such urban cut and fill tunnelling using an arched concrete lining. The transition from tunnel to bridge in a tight urban context stretched the engineering of the time. (Criterion F1) As a combined bridge, tunnel and cuttings on various levels, it is a unique engineering construction and cultural landscape, which reflects the advanced state of railway engineering in Victoria in the early 20th century. (Criterion A3)

The construction of the line in conjunction with the Albion to Broadmeadows goods line, reflects the changes to operation of Victorian railways in the early 20th century as greater importance was placed on country railways, particularly the growth of interstate passenger services and the increase in freight traffic between country Victoria and western New South Wales and the Melbourne Ports. (Criterion D2)

Comparative Examples

There is no other site in Victoria which features a rail tunnel which opens immediately to a major bridge. This is a unique engineering construction in Victoria. The bridge span compares with others of the period, including the rebuilt Maribyrnong River Bridge upstream, and the larger crossings at East Keilor.

Recommendations

Heritage Victoria Register	No
Register of the National Estate	Recommended
National Trust Register	Recommended
Other Heritage Listings	WRIHS, O'Connor bridges
Planning Scheme Protection	Recommended
External Paint Controls Apply?	Yes - bridge, brick retaining walls, concrete portals and pedestrian bridge/fence
Internal Alteration Controls Apply?	No
Tree Controls Apply?	No
Included on the Victorian Heritage Register under the Act	No
Are there Outbuildings or Fences not Exempt?	No
Prohibited Uses may be Permitted?	No

Recommendations

Significance and the cited fabric or contributory elements.
To conserve and enhance the significant elements of the place.
To conserve and enhance the public view of these elements.
To conserve and enhance the visual relationships between the contributory elements.
To ensure that new or altered elements within the place are visually recessive and related to the contributory elements.

Australian Heritage Commission Criteria

A3 Importance in exhibiting unusual richness or diversity of flora, fauna, landscape or cultural features.

This is a unique engineering construction and cultural landscape feature reflecting the advanced state of railway engineering in the early 20th century.

D2 Importance in demonstrating the principle characteristics of the range of human activities in the Australian environment (including way of life, custom, process, land-use, function, design or technique).

The bridge and tunnel demonstrate the importance of railway transport in the first half of the 20th century, and the major role of the West Melbourne/Footscray industrial areas.

F1 Importance for their technical, creative, design or artistic excellence, innovation or achievement.

Construction of the bridge and tunnel involved the first such urban cut and fill tunnelling using an arched concrete lining. The transition from tunnel to bridge in a tight urban context stretched the engineering of the time.

Documentation

References

Board of Land and Works 1928.
Footscray Advertiser , 26.10.1918,
Victorian Railways files PRO.
Harrigan, *Victorian Railways to '62.*

Data recording

Assessed By	Gary Vines
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