HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

Name Dandenong Road Bridge
Address Dandenong Road WINDSOR **Significance Level** A2
Place Type Road Bridge
Citation Date 2013

Dandenong Road Bridge. Source; National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

Recommended Heritage Protection **VHR** No **HI** No **PS** Yes
Designer / Architect Victorian Railways

History and Historical Context

Railways in Stonnington
Rail travel was introduced to Victoria in the 1850s by private companies, including the Melbourne and Suburban Railway Company, who opened a line from the Finders Street to St Kilda in 1857. In 1859-60, this line was extended to Brighton by the St Kilda and Brighton Railway Company, via a loop line to a Windsor (originally known as Chapel Street Station). The loop line was conveyed across St Kilda Road on an overhead bridge.[1]

In 1858, the Melbourne and Suburban Railway Company began work on a line from Princes Bridge Railway Station to Windsor. The first stage from Princes Bridge to a temporary station at Punt Road, Richmond opened for public traffic in February 1859.[2] An extension to Cremorne, on the north bank of the Yarra, was opened in December 1859.

The line was carried across the river on an iron bridge to a station at Gardiner's Creek Road (now South Yarra) in 1860. The line continued south to Greville Street station (now Prahran station) and Chapel Street station (now Windsor). Substantial engineering works altered the landscape for this line, including an embankment constructed across the swamp

at the south of the Yarra River, and a deep cutting through Forrest Hill.

Melbourne's rail network at this time was disjointed, with various private companies operating from three separate city terminals, at Princes Bridge, Flinders Street and Spencer Street. Some of the smaller companies were also becoming financially unviable. In 1862, the Melbourne and Suburban Railway bought out the St Kilda and Brighton Railway Company, closed the loop line from St Kilda and ran their trains directly to Brighton through Windsor. The Melbourne and Suburban Railway was in turn absorbed into the Melbourne and Hobson's Bay Railway Company in 1865 to form the Melbourne & Hobson's Bay United Railway Company. This company operated the Melbourne to Brighton railway until it was taken over by the Victorian government in 1878.

Apart from the extension of lines, one of the biggest projects undertaken by the Victorian Railways in the early twentieth century was the electrification of the suburban network. In May 1919, Melbourne's first electric train service commenced on the Essendon to Sandringham line, passing through South Yarra, Prahran and Windsor station.[3]

Electrification of the rail network roughly coincided with the expansion of the electric tramway network through Prahran and Malvern. The Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust was created in 1907 and began work on its first lines along High Street, Glenferrie Road and Wattletree Road in 1909.[4] Like the railways before them, the tram lines had a major influence on the pattern of development in both municipalities.

Dandenong Road Bridge
In December 1911, the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust opened a new tram line from Wattletree Road to the east side of the railway bridge at Windsor, travelling via Glenferrie Road and Dandenong Roads.[5] This line was extended a short distance from the railway bridge to Chapel Street in March 1912, providing a connection to existing cable car routes.[6]

The construction of the tramway necessitated the demolition of the old Dandenong Road bridge across the railway line. The bridge, built in 1859, had a 40ft (12.19 metre) wide deck resting on a series of timber arches.[7] A more detailed description can be found in an 1881 report to the Minister of Railways:

The abutments and wings are substantially built of bluestone. The bridge is askew, and has a span of about 60ft. The superstructure is carried on five laminated timber arches which spring from, and rest on, right angled revetments, built out from the line of the abutment. We found both of the outside arches much decayed, but the inner arches are in fair repair . The planking and beams of this bridge are in good order, having recently been renewed. Many of the cross-stays and struts have shrunk, and are very slack, and they move about considerably when heavy loads are passing over them. We recommend that this bridge should have a general overhaul.[8]

Completion of the new bridge was delayed when the bluestone abutments of the original structure where found to be structurally inadequate. As a result, all of the stonework had to be renewed and the bridge entirely rebuilt.[10]

The Railway Department agreed to contribute £2518 towards the bridge's total cost of £4348, on the condition that the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust and neighbouring Councils paid the balance of £1830. The Trust agreed to this on the basis that the widening of the bridge was purely for tramway purposes.[11] The newly completed bridge was described in the *Argus* of 19 February 1912:

The new bridge replaces a timber arch structure, which provided only a 40ft traffic surface. The span of the new bridge is 60 ft, and it is 75 ft wide between the parapets. It has been constructed of brick and cement, decorated with bluestone and coloured bricks, surmounted with a stone coping.[12]

The new bridge also provided an additional 24 inches of clearance from the tracks to allow for future electrification of the railway.[13]

Trams crossed the new Dandenong Road bridge for the first time on Friday 16 February, 1912 on route to the junction of Chapel and Fitzroy streets.[14] This short, but important, extension to the Prahran and Malvern Tramway Trust's network allowed Dandenong Road trams to link up with the municipality's other main tram routes.

The bridge was widened on its southern side in the late 1960s when Dandenong Road was duplicated through to the rebuilt St Kilda junction.

[1] Context Pty Ltd, *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History*, p.65.
[2] Stonnington Local History Catalogue Reg. No. 17756.
[3] Context Pty Ltd, *op. cit.*, p.66.
[4] *Ibid.*, p.70.
[5] Stonnington Local History Catalogue. Reg. No. MH 14082.
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] Cooper, *The History of Prahran*, p.300.
[8] *Argus*, 23 December 1881, p.7.
[9] MMBW Detail Plan No. 967. State Library of Victoria.
[10] *Malvern Standard*, 6 May 1911, p.3.
[11] *Ibid.*
[12] *Argus*, 19 February, 1912, p.6.
[13] *Malvern Standard*, 15 April 1911, p.3.
[14] *Argus*, 19 February, 1912, p.6.

Description

Physical Description

The Dandenong Road bridge passes over the Sandringham Railway line to the east of Chapel Street. The northern half of the bridge is a single-span brick arch structure dating from 1911-1912. At street level, the bridge has a red-brick balustrade with basalt copings. The north spandrel wall is embellished with a dentillated string course, brick roundels and pilasters with cream brick quoins. The underside of the bridge was not inspected in detail because of restricted safe access but a 1994 photograph provided by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) shows a complex arrangement of skewed brick vaults. This construction method was presumably used because the bridge crosses the railway on a diagonal orientation. The southern half of the bridge is a modern concrete structure, presumably built in the 1960s when Dandenong Road was duplicated.

Comparative Analysis

The Dandenong Road Bridge is distinguished from other road and rail bridges in the municipality by its distinctive skewed brick arch construction. The c1891 bridge over the Gardiner's Creek Road at Glenferrie Road, Kooyongh is a more conventional brick arched design. Various bridges over the railway cutting from South Yarra to Caulfield are reasonably generic Edwardian era-structures with metal decks and plain red-brick abutments. The bridge over the railway at Argo Street, South Yarra is an earlier nineteenth century structure with bluestone abutments. It has a modern concrete deck and modern steel handrails and is less intact than the Dandenong Road Bridge. Outside of the City of Stonnington, no other bridges with a similar skewed brick arch design could be found.

Statement of Significance

Relevant Themes from the Stonnington Environmental History are indicated by TEH.

What is Significant?
The Dandenong Road Bridge, Windsor was built over the Sandringham railway line in 1911-1912 to a design by the Victorian Railways Department. It is a single span red-brick bridge with a ribbed skew arch. This complex form of arched construction was used because the bridge traverses the railway line at an angle.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):
- The early form, materials and detailing of the bridge.
- The unpainted state of the stone and brickwork.
- The absence of signage on the north face of the bridge and the south side of the brick parapet wall.
- To a lesser degree, views to the bridge from Chapel Street.

Modern fabric, including the c1960s bridge duplication, the road surface, footpath and grass nature strip and do not contribute to the significance of the place.

How is it significant?
The Dandenong Road Bridge is of local historical and architectural significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?
The Dandenong Road Bridge is historically significant as evidence of the impact of the extension of the electric tram network through the municipality in the 1910s, having been built specifically to allow for the laying of tramlines by the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust (Criterion A, TEH 4.5.2 Prahran-Malvern Tramways Trust).

The Dandenong Road Bridge is architecturally significant as a rare and distinctive style of bridge using ribbed skew arch brick construction (Criterion B, Criterion F). The bridge is also noteworthy for the fine quality of the brickwork on its north spandrel wall.

Recommendations 2013

External Paint Controls	No
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Fences & Outbuildings	-
Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted	No
Incorporated Plan	-
Aboriginal Heritage Place	No

Other Recommendations

It is recommended that the Dandenong Road Bridge be added to the schedule of the Heritage Overlay under the City of Stonnington Planning Scheme to the extent of its 1911-1912 fabric and a curtilage of 5 metres to its north side. External paint controls, internal alteration controls and tree controls are not recommended. An A2 grading should be assigned to

the bridge.