Heritage Impact Statement for:

Castlemaine Railway Yard Precinct

This Heritage Impact Statement forms part of a permit application for:

Proposed Locomotive Shed & Carriage Shed Extension

Victorian Heritage Register Number:  H1664

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18th May 2017
Rev: C

Circa 1940s view of Castlemaine Railway Yard looking south, showing locomotive shed at extreme right and shunters cabin middle right. Locomotive servicing facilities can be seen in the distance, to the right of the shunters cabin. Kennedy Street runs along left side of view, with goods shed and railway station in middle distance.
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1.0 Preamble

This report has been prepared based on previous dealings and discussions with Heritage Victoria, and information supplied by the Castlemaine & Maldon Railway Preservation Society, operators of the Victorian Goldfields Railway (VGR), to support the proposed VGR Stage 2 development in the Castlemaine Railway Yard Precinct. The Stage 2 development will enable the VGR to relocate train operations from Maldon to a recreated heritage railway depot in Castlemaine. Operations run from this Castlemaine base will facilitate substantial growth in passenger carrying capability, support increased mainline heritage operations and contribute to long term sustainability of the railway. The Stage 2 development, known as the heritage locomotive depot precinct, includes the construction of a traditional locomotive shed on the mainly cleared site of a post 1880s Victorian Railways locomotive shed, and an extension to the existing carriage shed (constructed in 2011) to bring it to its originally planned operational length. In addition to the proposed building works, security fencing would also be installed.

2.0 Heritage Listings

The Castlemaine Railway Precinct is of State significance and is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register, as place number H1664.

The Statement of Significance by Heritage Victoria for the Castlemaine Railway Precinct is listed in Appendix B, Heritage Impact Statement for Proposed Carriage Shed (Wendy Jacobs, 2011).

The key components of the listing are the decorative brick Castlemaine Station buildings (on both platforms), the goods shed on the east side of the mainline to Bendigo, the signal box, the midland highway railway bridge and the Forest Creek viaduct. These all date from the 1860’s period during or soon after the original construction of the line. The listing also includes the large railway yards extending from the station platforms through to Parker street and have evolved much over the 150 years since originally conceived. They are based on a long and wide expanse of levelled land between Kennedy Street in the East and Barkers Creek / Gingell street in the west.

At the peak of Victorian Railways operations in the late 19th to mid-20th century, there was a typical VR steam depot located on the west side, about the mid point of the yards and around the site of the remaining turntable. It included locomotive shed, coal stage, water tanks, servicing pits and shunters cabin. The structures in this part of the precinct were of much more utilitarian timber and corrugated iron construction and quite different from the decorative brickwork on the 1860’s Station and Goods shed.

3.0 Existing Conditions

The VGR has a lease on the Victrack railway land from Maldon to Castlemaine, through platform 3, and on to Parker Street on the west of the VLine mainline to Bendigo (which bisects the north /south railway corridor). The lease includes the platform 2/3 structures and runs parallel to the mainline all the way to Parker Street.

The area proposed for development is located approximately mid-way between Castlemaine railway station in the south, and Parker Street in the north. The site is between the VLine mainline and Barkers Creek.

The following items of heritage interest have been located on the site:

1. Existing turntable pit. This original Victorian Railways (VR) stone and brick lined pit, was restored by the VGR and is currently in regular use for turning of locomotives. The current 70 foot turntable installed in the pit was relocated to Castlemaine and restored to operation by the VGR in the early 2000s.
2. Existing locomotive inspection pits. These comprise two brick lined pits of approximately 18m length, that formed part of the original VR locomotive shed facility. They had solid timber bearers on top supporting the rails.

3. Base of 2” standpipe. This is located between the two inspection pits and provided a watering point for general use within the original locomotive shed.

4. Shunters cabin. Situated between the turntable pit and site of the post 1880s locomotive shed, the shunters cabin comprises a small timber-constructed building complete with brick chimney. This building was originally used by railway yard shunting staff as a crib-room.

5. Remains of pedestrian overbridge. Two cut-off timber columns remain at the south-east corner of the Castlemaine Mill development. This location is north of the proposed Locomotive Shed and would not be impacted by the proposed development.

6. Original locomotive ash pit. Located to the west of the existing VGR Carriage Shed, and adjacent to the now demolished coal stage roads, the former VR servicing facility brick lined locomotive ash pit is currently buried by land-fill, but presumed to still exist.

The proposed site for the Carriage Shed Extension is to the immediate south of the existing carriage shed. This area of land, like that for the site of the 2011 stage 1 carriage shed, has a very long history of being utilised only for VR railway sidings and contains railway sidings in use by the VGR today. Historical research including photos shows the area to contain no other items of heritage interest.

The surrounding general area of the proposed new works will be enclosed within a security fence.

It is worth noting the strong desire of the VGR to document and preserve where possible, historically significant items of railway interest – that is what their organisation is about.

4.0 Proposal

To become a sustainable operation the VGR needs to relocate its operations from Maldon to Castlemaine. Patronage originates from Castlemaine where there is the VLine connection and patrons want to visit Maldon as their destination. They need to start and end their services at Castlemaine.

This also enables simpler heritage train operations onto the mainline north to Bendigo and beyond.

To operate from Castlemaine the VGR requires secure undercover storage for its carriages and secure steam locomotive servicing facilities.

The VGR proposes to recreate the functionality and feel of the traditional VR steam depot on the site of the original depot. The recreated locomotive Shed will be on the site of the original Victorian Railways locomotive shed utilising the original brick servicing pits.

See drawing CMR-CME-004 for general site layout.

4.1 Locomotive Shed

The proposed Locomotive Shed (refer drawing CMR-CME-001) is reminiscent of VR design circa 1940s, but designed to conform to current engineering and OH&S standards.

It is a simple industrial building with steel column and structural truss construction complete with corrugated iron wall and roof cladding. The building shall be 42m length x 15m width with a maximum height of 8.56m. A traditional annexe, 4m wide running part length of building, shall be fitted on each side. Three parallel tracks shall enter the shed from the south end via replica timber double doors.
4.2 Locomotive Shed siting
The siting of the shed on the original building site and the utilisation of the restored servicing pits for daily use is the cornerstone in recreating the heritage steam depot, adjacent to the historic turntable and shunters cabin. It will have minimal visual impact on the wider precinct, largely screened by native trees along Barkers Creek on the western side, and set well away (west of the V/Line Bendigo running tracks) when viewed from Kennedy Street.

4.3 Locomotive Shed comparison with existing buildings
The proposed Locomotive Shed shall be located to the north-west of the existing VGR carriage shed. External corrugated iron cladding can match profile and colour of the carriage shed, although straight galvanised grey was historically correct. Design methodology of both buildings is complimentary and they are characteristic of an operating railway environment. The design will help recreate the timber and corrugated iron style of the original depot precinct.

4.4 Locomotive Shed use
The Locomotive Shed is essential to enable to transfer of operations from Maldon to Castlemaine. It will have daily use in providing security, shelter, storage and supporting services for VGR locomotives.

4.5 Carriage Shed Extension and use
The proposed Carriage Shed Extension (refer drawing CMR-CME-006) is an 80m extension of the existing carriage shed to enable the storage of the current full length VGR service train. The Extended Shed is essential to enable to transfer of operations from Maldon to Castlemaine. It will have daily use in providing security, shelter, storage and supporting services for VGR carriages. The existing stage 1 carriage shed design aspects and building profile shall be replicated in the new building.

4.6 Carriage Shed Extension siting
The proposed Carriage Shed Extension shall be constructed immediately south of the existing carriage shed.

4.7 Carriage Shed Extension comparison with existing buildings
The proposed Carriage Shed Extension shall match the existing carriage shed in appearance and colour. The carriage shed design and location provides a sympathetic transition from the decorative brickwork of the 1860’s station and goods shed to the utilitarian timber and steel of the heritage steam depot

4.8 Shunters Cabin
The historic Shunters Cabin is in relatively poor condition but is considered highly desirable for restoration and inclusion as a functioning facility in the proposed development. The VGR proposes to restore the structure for conversion to a storage and staff office. Restoration will be sympathetic to the original design and materials.
4.9 Ash Pit
The VGR intends locating and excavating the original locomotive ash pit and conserving it for future incorporation into the heritage steam locomotive depot precinct.

4.10 Security Compound
The VGR intends to install a 2m high cyclone wire security fence around the heritage locomotive depot precinct to provide security for the valuable state assets contained within.
See attached drawing CMR-CME-004 for mark up of proposed fence siting along the boundary of the lease and integrating with the major buildings on the site.
The fence will comprise standard grey coloured cyclone wire typical of the many railway security fences constructed around the state.

5.0 Effect on the Cultural Heritage Significance of the place
The proposed heritage locomotive depot precinct will impact positively on the cultural heritage values of the place. This development ensures ongoing use with construction of facilities in keeping with former structures.
Furthermore it will allow the return of heritage train operations to the same site after an intervening period of over 60 years. The industrial nature of the railway operation is very in keeping and strongly complements the immediate surrounding land use and history – the Castlemaine Woollen Mill complex and Thompsons Foundry.

6.0 Conclusion
The proposed site for the heritage locomotive depot precinct is in an area that traditionally was used for similar purposes. The simple style of the buildings, and their use, will be in keeping with the historical aspects of the area.
As such, it will also be complimentary to that of the existing railway/industrial landscape, which includes the former Castlemaine woollen mill and former Thompsons Foundry.

The proposed Carriage Shed Extension, although of simple architectural design, is nonetheless suitable for a railway environment and matches in exactly with the existing shed. The extension will remain clear of other existing buildings and not block their visual aspect. The simplistic design of this building does not attempt to compete with the design and decorative brickwork of the 1860’s goods shed and railway station buildings. Rather it provides a sympathetic transition from the magnificent goods shed and station to the utilitarian timber and iron structures of a railway siding.

The addition of both Locomotive Shed and Carriage Shed Extension, and the consequent relocation of the VGR operating base to Castlemaine, continues the cultural significance of the area as an operating heritage steam railway precinct. Supporting this proposed development supports the on-going restoration and preservation of the entire Heritage Castlemaine Railway Precinct as a viable, sustainable site of heritage significance.
Appendix ‘A’ – Site Photographs

General view of proposed Locomotive Shed site, taken from northern end. Shunters Cabin is on left (with chimney) and stormwater drain pictured in foreground.
View of existing turntable pit (in use – restored by VGR in 2002).

Original locomotive inspection pits (still existing) to be restored and reused within the recreated Locomotive Shed.

Detail brickwork in existing inspection pit.
Historic Shunters Cabin – to be restored as a centrepiece of the recreated Heritage Railway Steam Depot.

The following is the Heritage impact Statement developed for the initial section of carriage shed constructed in 2011.

Funding at the time limited design and construction to only half of the full length shed required for Castlemaine based VGR operations.
Heritage Impact Statement
Proposed Carriage Shed
Castlemaine Station

Prepared by
Wendy Jacobs: Architect & Heritage Consultant

15 February 2011

1.0 Preamble
Paul McDonald, president of the Victorian Goldfields Railway, engaged Wendy Jacobs, Architect and Heritage Consultant in February 2011 to prepare a Heritage Impact Statement for the proposed construction of a Carriage Shed in the Castlemaine Station Railway area, Castlemaine.

The report has been prepared based on the information provided by the Victorian Goldfields Railway including 4 sheets of drawings from Telfords Building Systems and sketch site plan showing siting of proposed Carriage Shed. The site was not visited as the area is known to Wendy Jacobs. Aerial photographs and street views were used to confirm information.

2.0 Heritage Listings

2.1 State government
The Castlemaine Railway Precinct is of State significance and listed on the Victorian Heritage Register as place Number H1664.

The Statement of Significance by Heritage Victoria for the Castlemaine Railway Station Precinct is:

What is significant?

The Castlemaine railway precinct forms part of the Murray Valley Railway (Melbourne to Echuca line). Opened in five stages from February 1839 to September 1864, the Murray Valley Railway was the larger of the Colony's first two main trunk lines. The inability of the line's original private promoters - the Melbourne, Mount Alexander and Murray River Company - to raise sufficient funds to construct the line, led to the government purchasing the company and embracing a public railway system. The Government's decision to construct the line in 1856 was accompanied by the formation of the Victorian Railways Department. The building of the line during the early 1860s reflected the strategic economic issues of the day: servicing the important goldfields of Castlemaine and Bendigo, and capturing the Murray River and Riverina trade for the Port of Melbourne. With a labour force of more than 6,000, the Melbourne to Echuca line was the Colony's first true intercolonial trunk line and was the project of its time. The line is still used today for both transport and freight services and comprises a very
large number of structures and facilities of varying ages, conditions and degrees of operational and business significance.

How is it significant?

The Castlemaine railway precinct is of historical and scientific importance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Castlemaine railway precinct (comprising the Midland Highway Rail-over bridge, Forest Creek viaduct, Forest Street rail-overbridge, Castlemaine Railway Station, and embankment) is historically and scientifically significant as an integral part of the railway line and is an important representative sample of one of the earliest and grandest capital works projects in Victorian history. The identified features comprising the precinct are all substantially intact and provide a crucial reminder of the adoption of English engineering and architectural standards and the role of the Victorian Railway Department in developing the Colony’s engineering expertise.

The Castlemaine Station is of architectural significance as an important and intact example of a station complex on the line. The Castlemaine Station is the largest and most important example of the ‘Castlemaine’ style of building. The ‘Castlemaine’ style employs many Italianate features such as heavy rusticated quoining, eaves corbelling and low hipped roofs. The use of timber to the verandahs is a unique feature. The two rail-overbridges, viaduct, and associated embankment are excellent examples of the range of materials, building techniques and design types used on the Kyneton to Bendigo section of the line. The precinct makes an important contribution in defining the character of the Victorian railway network.

2.2 Mount Alexander Planning Scheme

The Castlemaine Railway Station Precinct is shown as Heritage Overlay (HO670) within the Mount Alexander Shire Planning Scheme. There is no Statement of Significance that describes the heritage values of the place.

2.3 Permit Requirements

A permit is required from Heritage Victoria for all works including construction of a new building.

3.0 Existing Conditions.

3.1 Existing Station Precinct

The Castlemaine Railway Precinct is a corridor reinforced by the railway tracks, Kennedy and Gingell Streets, Barkers Creek, avenues of trees and the escarpment to the west of the city. The precinct divides the east and west sides of the city and forms a considerable length (over 2km) forms a significant boundary between the city and the west of the city with Forest Street and...
Parker Street as key crossing points. The precinct has a number of built and landscape elements that contribute to its significance. The railway is a defining feature of Castlemaine and the three main buildings that make up the station complex were all built between 1862 and 1864 and exhibit a coherent architectural approach. The railway station complex includes the station buildings (including the station up and down sides, goods shed, signal box, pedestrian subway, levers and turntable of the station complex itself, and railway engineering works including the Midland Highway railway bridge, Forest Creek viaduct, Forest Street rail overbridge, all associated embankments, and all land 100m south of the Midland Highway bridge, and 2100m north to Parker Street. There are also a number of other elements of railway infrastructure such as brick and stone retaining walls, gutters etc that are dotted throughout the railway station environs. The Castlemaine railway precinct is the largest representative example of the ‘Castlemaine’ style, defined as a period of intense railway building (utilizing decorative brickwork techniques rather than bluestone) between 1862 and 1870. (Adapted from The Castlemaine Goods Shed Heritage Assessment February 2011, Context Pty Ltd).

In addition to the Station Buildings, Signal Building and Goods Shed, there is a building facing Kennedy Street near the entrance of the car park. This appears to be an interwar timber building with late twentieth century brick additions. The building and additions appear to have adopted the gable roof forms and pitch of the original station buildings and the brick additions would appear to continue the predominant material in the precinct.

The proposed site for the new Carriage Shed is on a flat area of railway land to the north of the Station Buildings and Goods Shed. The site has been indicated as being from roughly the midpoint of the Campbell to Doveton Street block to the midpoint of the Doveton Street to Berkley Street block. The proposed site is south of the turntable area and is in an alignment west of the existing station site. This area is currently clear of buildings and contains track areas.

4.0 Proposal

The proposal is to erect a new Carriage Shed for the use of the Victorian Goldfields Railway in the rail yards area of the Castlemaine Station.

The proposed shed is a very simple industrial building with a metal post and truss structural system and the walls and roof clad in metal. The rectangular shed is 15.250 metres wide and 80.020 metres long. The building is 6 metres high to the gutter line and 8.755 metres high to the ridge height. The building has a gable roof with a 20 degree pitch. It is proposed to have clear roof sheets for daylight at intervals along the roof. There is to be a continuous vented ridge capping. The building has no eaves and simple square profile gutters along the long sides. There are three large rectangular door openings in each gable end. There are two small access doors in one long side of the building.
The roof and/or side cladding can be either a corrugated profile or a T/Clad ribbed profile. The roof is proposed to be corrugated zincalume and the walls T/Clad Shale Grey. There is a choice of the 20 Standard Bluescope Colours but this is at an extra cost to a zinc finish.

5.0 Discussion

5.1 Use
The Victorian Goldfields Railway operates a tourist steam train from Maldon to Castlemaine.

The use as a railway carriage shed by the Victorian Goldfields Railway is in my opinion appropriate for the site. The on-going use and activity in an historic area prolongs the life and generally ensures maintenance and care of the significant place.

5.2 Siting
The siting of the carriage shed is to the north of the historic railway station and the goods shed. The proposed site is over 150 metres north of the railway station and is 10 metres away from the train turntable. The area appears to be clear of other structures and will not physically impact on the existing buildings or structures.

The building is very long and runs parallel with Kennedy Street. This section of Kennedy Street has an avenue of trees along the western side of the street partially screening the rail yards. The eastern side of Kennedy Street is subdivided into suburban blocks facing the railway. The buildings are predominantly 19th century detached single storey houses with some 20th Century single storey houses. The land slopes down towards the railway area. It appears that the railway land in this area has been rail yards for most of its history. The Carriage Shed will have a significant impact on the outlook over the rail yards for the inhabitants. This view will be somewhat mitigated by the avenue of street trees providing some screening and the setback of the shed some 50 metres from the site boundary.

5.3 Comparison with existing buildings
The existing brick Goods Shed is approximately 80 metres long and 10 to 12 metres wide. The building is approximately 5.5 metres high at eaves height and the 30 degree pitch of the gable roof results in an approximately 8 metre ridge height. The new Carriage Shed will be of a similar size and bulk as the existing Goods Shed.

5.4 Materials and Colours
The main existing buildings are of brick. The Station buildings are of red face brick with cream quoin work and rendered window surrounds. The buildings have slate roofs. The Goods Shed is of red face brick with cream brick arch decorations on the gable ends and decorative cream brick brackets in the panels on the long facades. The Goods Shed has a corrugated steel roof. The signal box is clad in weathered metal sheets and is painted cream.
The proposed shed has been noted to have a zincalume corrugated profile roof and T/Clad profile siding in Shale Grey. The roof profile is appropriate as this is similar to the Goods Shed. I do not support the use of zincalume as the material will be very bright and cause a major impact on the residential buildings in the area. I suggest that the roof is clad in corrugated Colorbond, either “Dune” which gives a similar appearance to slightly weathered galvanised steel or “Shale Grey”. As the predominant colour of the major buildings in the area is face red brick, I suggest that the walls should be clad in vertically hung corrugated Colorbond “Manor Red”. No colours have been advised for the large swing doors in each gable end. These could be of a contrast colour to reflect the panel construction of the Goods Shed. A suggestion is to use “Headland” (an ochre red) as contrast to the main walling.

5.5 General

The siting of a new building in a precinct which has been substantially open always creates a challenge. As no Conservation Management Plan of the place has been prepared, there is little to guide new development in the precinct. The Statement of Significance as prepared by Heritage Victoria does not discuss the significance of the track area or give any guidance as to appropriate sites for new buildings.

Operationally the Carriage Shed is required to be large and bulky. These types of large bulky buildings are characteristic of operational railway yards. The building also needs to be sited over railway tracks. The selected site does not impact on any known physical buildings or object. The siting is also at some distance from the existing significant buildings and objects. Each of the significant buildings will be able to be viewed without undue impact of the proposed Carriage Shed.

The design of the Carriage Shed is utilitarian. This is in contrast with the ornate and substantial goods shed and station buildings. This has the advantage of not competing with the design qualities of the existing buildings. It has the disadvantage of not being of the high standard of building design and construction that is exhibited by the existing significant buildings.

The Burra Charter commentary states: Designing and addition or new building in a modern manner is desirable, but not an excuse to make the new work dominate or draw attention away from the existing place. The proposed Carriage Shed meets these guidelines.

In a perfect world, the option of designing a new building of high design content and innovative use of the existing material palette would be the desired outcome. This would be a challenging assignment but could have led to an enhanced mill precinct.

Article 22 of the Burra Charter states:

22.1 New work such as additions to the place may be acceptable where it does not distort or obscure the cultural significance of the place, or its interpretation and appreciation.

Wendy Jacobs, Architect & Heritage Consultant
P.O. Box 193, Ballarat 3350

Robin Nuttall, Chair of the Executive Director
Note: Conditions apply.
New work may be sympathetic if its siting, bulk, form, scale, character, colour, texture and material are similar to the existing fabric, but imitation should be avoided.

22.2 New work should be readily identifiable as such.

The proposed building meets the criteria for new work. The use as a Carriage Shed continues the cultural significance of the place as an operating railway precinct. The siting of the Carriage Shed away from the other buildings and objects, allows for the interpretation of these places. The siting, bulk, general form, and scale are sympathetic to the general building form associated with rail precincts. Corrugated metal cladding to both walls and roof is using one of the materials in the existing palette in the precinct. The colours as proposed above (Manor Red siding and Dune coloured roofing) reflect the general colours of the existing building. The proposed Carriage Shed will be readily identifiable as new work.

6.0 Conclusions

The proposed Carriage Shed is sited so that it has no physical impact and minor visual impact on the significant buildings in the area.

The large bulky building will have an impact on the view across the rail yards from Kennedy Street particularly and the open character of the rail yards generally.

The proposed use of a zincalume roof would, in my opinion, have a major impact on the surrounding areas and make the proposed Carriage Shed a dominant visual object in the railway precinct. I suggest that this be changed to a less reflective finish.

The use of T/Clad profile wall cladding is not compatible with the materials and textures of the existing buildings. I suggest that this be changed to vertically hung corrugated profile metal sheeting. The use of a Manor Red colour would assist to reduce the impact of the bulk of the building and blend with the existing red brown brick colour of the main buildings.

While this utilitarian building is lacking in design content and will not enhance the railway precinct, the continuing use for railway purposes and the simplicity of the structure will not severely impact on the precinct. The major impact will be on the view across the rail yards, especially from Kennedy Street.

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ENDORSED DOCUMENT
Permit No: F16078
22 Feb 2011

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Appendix ‘C’ – Location Plan
Appendix ‘D’ – Locomotive Servicing Shed design
Appendix ‘E’ – Carriage Shed design
Appendix ‘F’ – Depot Site plan with Security fence