**BELL STREET BRIDGE**

Prepared by: Context Pty Ltd

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address:</th>
<th>Survey Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corner of Bell Street and Nicholson Street</td>
<td>April 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Architect:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bell Street Bridge</td>
<td>Evander McIver</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place Type:</th>
<th>Builder:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choose an item.</td>
<td>Johnson &amp; Co. ironwork, D Walsh Coburg, abutments</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading:</th>
<th>Construction Date:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>1880</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of Overlay:</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please refer to Map</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architectural Style:</th>
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<td>Choose an item.</td>
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</table>
Wrought iron lattice girder bridge over Merri Creek, Charles Nettleton 1826-1902, photographer. View shows men, horses, and steam engine on a bridge, with three men on the banks beside the river. (Source: SLV, Accession no(s) H85.153/2)
**Historical Context**
Moreland’s natural landform and the way it was mapped and organised for subdivision also set a pattern for how its roads and transport routes would emerge and develop in the municipality. Moreland’s roads and bridges, and its overlay of railway and tramlines have been an essential part of the social and economic structure of municipality and its history. Their construction, use, continuing development as well as preservation of their historic features is central to Moreland’s identity (Summerton, 2010:34).

Coburg’s Bell Street emerged as an east-west road along a property boundary, and can be seen on Ham’s map of 1853. The boundary became a road reservation by 1855, as shown on a map of this date published by de Gruchy, and was gazetted in 1857. Originally known as the Heidelberg and Pentridge Road, it was five miles from Melbourne and stretched five miles between the village reserves of Heidelberg and Pentridge. Its name derived from Francis Bell, a local pioneer who lived on a property called Bell Manor. The road initially served little transport purpose, particularly at its western end at the Moonee Ponds Creek escarpment, which it was extended to in 1861 after land was donated by landowner James Robertson. However, it had no connection across the creek until 1960 when it was extended to Pascoe Vale Road. Earlier commuters would turn off Bell Street at its intersection with Melville Road and travel down Reynard Street to cross the creek at La Rose Bridge, a timber bridge erected in 1862 North of Coburg’s Bell Street, the land remained decidedly rural and astonishingly it wasn’t until after 1958 that the majority of unsealed roads in Glenroy, Fawkner, Oak Park and Hadfield were finished, funded by a road scheme initiated by the local council (the former Broadmeadows Council) in 1955 (Summerton, 2010:39).

An early bridge was built over the Merri Creek at Bell Street in 1857, the year that Bell Street was gazetted as a road, and a new iron bridge was constructed in 1880. On the other side of the suburb the Moonee Ponds Creek was crossed in 1862 by two bridges, one known as the La Rose Bridge at Reynard Road and the other at Pascoe Vale, probably on Gaffney Street. A third bridge, known as Loeman’s, was built at Moreland Road in about 1874 (Summerton, 2010:40).

**History**
The Merri Creek is a cultural landscape for its Traditional Owners, the Woiworung. The whole 50-kilometre length of the Merri Creek provided many food resources, camping places and locations for ceremony in the pre-and post-contact period of settlement (Moreland, 2006, 193) Land adjacent to Merri Creek was used extensively for quarrying and for market gardening, and generally has been heavily modified. Aboriginal sites in the form of stone artefact scatters may exist near the Merri Creek and environs, including the vicinity of the Bell Street bridge (Moreland, 2010:24).

The Bell Street Bridge crosses Merri Creek and connects Preston and Coburg. It was completed in 1880 and was officially opened by the Commissioner of Public Works, Hon. G. D. Langbridge, on the 7th of August (Nettleton c.1880; Coburg Historical Society 1996:46; Picture Victoria 2017; *Argus*, 9 August 1880:7). Negotiations between the Coburg and Jika (now Darebin) Councils over the initial construction of the bridge were quite unsuccessful, with Jika agreeing to contribute only 400 pounds towards the total construction cost of 2731 pounds (Broome 2001:88; *Mercury and Weekly Courier* 12 July 1879:2).
The Bell Street Bridge underwent widening and strengthening in 1954 and was further reinforced with concrete on the north side in 1990. Further alterations were made in 1996 (Coburg Historical Society 1996:46; Broome 2001:88). The bridge remains in use today.

Brunswick architect and engineer, Evander McIver was responsible for the design of the bridge (Nettleton c.1880; Picture Victoria 2017). McIver also designed many other buildings, including the Presbyterian Church on Sydney Road, Brunswick, the Union Memorial Church in North Melbourne and the Commercial Bank also in Brunswick (Coburg Leader 14 November 1896:1; North Melbourne Advertiser 23 October 1891:3; North Melbourne Advertiser 19 November 1887:3). The contractor for the bridge's iron work was Johnson & Co., Tyne Foundry, and the contractor for the approaches was D. Walsh of Coburg (Nettleton c.1880). Evander McIver, (1834-1902) served for many years shire secretary and engineer to the Shire of Broadmeadows while he was also consulting engineer to the Brunswick, Essendon, Flemington, Kensington. and North Melbourne councils. (Argus, 24 June 1902)

References
Argus, as cited.
Coburg Leader, as cited.
Mercury and Weekly Courier, as cited.
Terra Culture, 2010, Moreland Pre-contact Aboriginal Heritage Study, 2010, prepared for Moreland City Council
Goulding, M., & Menis, M., 2006, Moreland Post-Contact Aboriginal Heritage Study, prepared for Moreland City Council
North Melbourne Advertiser, as cited.
North Melbourne Advertiser, as cited.
Nettleton, Charles c.1880, 'Wrought iron girder bridge over Merri Creek', State Library of Victoria (SLV) photographic collection, accessed online 27 April 2017.
Summerton, M., 2010, City of Moreland Thematic History, prepared for the City of Moreland

Description & Integrity
The Bell Street bridge over the Merri Creek retains six wrought iron lattice girder trusses that were erected in 1880. The approaches on the Darebin and Coburg sides have been replaced with concrete abutments and none of the bluestone abutments remain visible. The widening of the bridge is evident in the additional lanes supported by pre-cast concrete trusses adjacent to the lattice trusses. The deck and all superstructure has been replaced with concrete and modern guardrails. As a bridge crossing dating from 1880 there may be potential for archaeological deposits relating to earlier crossings of the creek or its approaches.

Comparative Analysis
There are several iron lattice girder bridges in metropolitan Melbourne and in regional Victoria, though no others in Moreland. The Chandler Highway bridge at Alphington was added to the VHR in 2016, however this is a more intact example than Moreland. It is described as an outstanding and pivotal example of the lattice truss bridge form.

Chandler Highway Bridge, Chandler Highway, Alphington, 1890, (HO67, VHR H234)
Of State significance, the Chandler Highway Bridge is a lattice truss bridge, a type which is uncommon in Victoria. Apart from some railway footbridges, the lattice truss bridge form is represented in Victoria by three earlier bridge trusses imported from Britain (the Hawthorn Bridge (1861) (VHR H0050), Mia Mia/Redesdale Bridge (1868) (VHR H1419), and the Bell Street Bridge, Coburg (1880). The design of the Chandler Highway Bridge represents a transitional stage between these earlier lattice truss bridges and the more mathematically derived open web trusses at the turn of the twentieth century.

Hawthorn Bridge, Bridge Road Richmond, 1861, (HO461)
Hawthorn Bridge is of architectural and scientific (technological) significance as the outstanding metal road bridge in Victoria, a rare example of mid-nineteenth century British Colonial engineering. The bridge is noted as the first example of the lattice girder bridge. Others following the Hawthorn example include, Glenmona Bridge (Bung Bong), (H1846) (1871), McMillan’s Bridge (H1847) (1889), Cressy Bridge (1880), and the aforementioned Mia Mia Bridge, Redesdale (H1419) (1868).

McLennan Bridge, Lord Clyde Road over Bullarook Creek, Clunes, c.1870, (National Trust B7298)
McLennan Bridge is of technical significance for the rare and distinctive lattice truss design, which reflects British engineering practice of the mid-nineteenth century and its adaptation to colonial conditions. The design of McLennan bridge almost certainly drew on the slightly earlier Glenmona Bridge, which was the prototype for a general road-bridge pattern that would evolve as it became widely used in central Victoria and the Western District during the colonial era.

Angliss stock bridge, near Ballarat Road Footscray, 1941, (HO146)
A lattice girder bridge constructed in riveted, fabricated, wrought iron with double span across Maribyrnong River. Paired top and bottom chords are of made-up metal angle riveted and bolted.

Old Lower Plenty Road bridge, Lower Plenty, 1866-7, (HO106)
Old Lower Plenty Road Bridge is of significance at a local level as one of Victoria’s earliest surviving examples of an iron riveted lattice truss bridge but is of low integrity.

The Bell Street bridge belongs to a select group of wrought iron lattice girder bridges originally derived from British engineering with the technology imported to the colonies during the 1860s. Although not the earliest or most intact of this group, the Bell Street Bridge does demonstrate a relatively early instance of this bridge building technology.
Assessment Against Criteria

Criteria referred to in Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay, Department of Planning and Community Development, revised July 2015, modified for the local context.

CRITERION A: Importance to the course or pattern of the City of Moreland's cultural or natural history (historical significance)

The Merri Creek, which includes the site of the Bell Street, Coburg, bridge, is historically significant to the Traditional Owners, the Woiwurung; as part of the Merri Creek cultural landscape.

The Bell Street bridge crossing the Merri Creek at Coburg is historically significant for the evidence it provides of the 1880 bridge designed by engineer and architect Evander McIver. McIver (1834-1902) provided consulting engineering services to Brunswick and Coburg (amongst other municipalities) whilst continuing to serve as secretary and engineer to the Shire of Broadmeadows.

The wrought iron lattice girder trusses are historically significant as they demonstrate the original width of Bell Street prior to the widening of its lanes in 1954, as indicated by the adjacent pre-cast concrete trusses.

CRITERION B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the City of Moreland's cultural or natural history (rarity)

The Bell Street bridge provides evidence of a bridge building technology that is considered quite rare in Victoria. Derived from British colonial engineering technology, the bridge design was first used in Victoria in 1861 to cross the Yarra at Bridge Road in Hawthorn. Later instances in several locations in regional Victoria including the State -listed Mia Mia bridge at Redesdale. The Chandler Highway bridge, also State-listed, is a later example than the Bell Street bridge but also less intact.

CRITERION C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the City of Moreland's cultural or natural history (research potential)

The Merri Creek environs including the site of the Bell Street bridge has the potential for Aboriginal sites as the Merri Creek was an important food resource, camping place and travelling route. Whilst the approaches to the bridge have been rebuilt in the twentieth century and the ground disturbed, there may still be the potential for sites which are most likely to be artefact scatters.

The site also has the potential to reveal historic archaeological evidence of the former bluestone abutments, although this predictive modelling may be low given the amount of ground disturbance due to later construction.
CRITERION D: *Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).*

NA

CRITERION E: *Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).*

NA

CRITERION F: *Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance).*

The Bell Street bridge is technically significant as it retains evidence of six wrought iron lattice girder trusses, originally derived from British engineering, with the technology imported to the colonies during the 1860s. Whilst other elements of the Bridge are not intact, it is the trusses that illustrate this bridge building technology.

CRITERION G: *Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).*

The Merri Creek corridor is of local significance for its social value as an important Aboriginal cultural landscape. The Merri Creek was a rich source of food as well as a focus for ceremony and camping (Goulding, 2006, 195)

CRITERION H: *Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the City of Moreland's history (associative significance).*

NA

**Statement of Significance**

*What is Significant?*

The site of the Bell Street bridge and the wrought iron lattice girder trusses of the 1880 bridge designed according to British engineering by Evander McIver, is significant. The bridge superstructure, pre-cast concrete trusses and concrete abutments are not significant

*How is it significant?*

Bell Street bridge is of local historic, technical and social significance to the City of Moreland. It also has rarity value and the potential to reveal both historic and Aboriginal archaeological aspects of Moreland’s history.

*Why is it significant?*

The Merri Creek, which includes the site of the Bell Street Coburg bridge, is historically significant to the Traditional Owners, the Woiwurung; as part of the Merri Creek cultural landscape.
The Bell Street bridge crossing the Merri Creek at Coburg is historically significant for the evidence it provides of the 1880 bridge designed by engineer and architect Evander McIver. McIver (1834-1902) provided consulting engineering services to Brunswick and Coburg (amongst other municipalities) whilst continuing to serve as secretary and engineer to the Shire of Broadmeadows. The wrought iron lattice girder trusses are historically significant as they demonstrate the original width of Bell Street prior to the widening of its lanes in 1954, as indicated by the adjacent pre-cast concrete trusses. (Criterion A)

The Bell Street bridge provides evidence of a bridge building technology that is considered quite rare in Victoria. Derived from British colonial engineering technology, the bridge design was first used in Victoria in 1861 to cross the Yarra at Bridge Road in Hawthorn. Later instances in several locations in regional Victoria including the State-listed Mia Mia bridge at Redesdale. The Chandler Highway bridge, also State-listed, is a later example than the Bell Street bridge but also less intact. (Criterion B)

The Merri Creek environs including the site of the Bell Street bridge has the potential for Aboriginal sites, as the Merri Creek was an important food resource, camping place and travelling route. Whilst the approaches to the bridge have been rebuilt in the twentieth century, and the ground disturbed, there is still the potential for sites which are most likely to be artefact scatters. The site also has the potential to reveal historic archaeological evidence of the former bluestone abutments, although this may be low given the amount of ground disturbance due to later construction. (Criterion C)

The Bell Street bridge is technically significant as it retains evidence of six wrought iron lattice girder trusses, originally derived from British engineering with the technology imported to the colonies during the 1860s. Whilst other elements of the Bridge are not intact, it is the trusses that illustrate this bridge building technology. (Criterion F)

The Merri Creek corridor is of local significance for its social value as an important Aboriginal cultural landscape. The Merri Creek was a rich source of food as well as a focus for ceremony and camping (Goulding, 2006, 195) (Criterion G)

Planning Control Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Moreland Planning Scheme as an individually Significant place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Moreland Planning Scheme:

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<th>Is a permit required to paint an already painted surface?</th>
<th>No</th>
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<td>Tree Controls</td>
<td>Is a permit required to remove a tree?</td>
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<td>Victorian Heritage Register</td>
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<td><strong>Outbuildings and fences exemptions</strong></td>
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<td>Are there outbuildings and fences which are not exempt from notice and review?</td>
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<td>Is the place an Aboriginal heritage place which is subject to the requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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**Identified By**

[name of previous heritage study, if applicable, or else Context Pty Ltd]