

Heritage Citation



Cabbage Tree Creek railway bridge

Key details

Addresses	Adjacent Sandgate Road, Boondall, Queensland 4034
Type of place	Bridge
Period	Federation 1890-1914
Geolocation	-27.335763 153.060019
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2003 Date of Citation — March 2011
Construction	Structure: Steel
People/associations	Messrs McCormack (Builder)
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity; (D) Representative; (F) Technical

A railway bridge first spanned Cabbage Tree Creek in 1881 linking the Deagon and Boondall sections of the Sandgate railway. The bridge's location determined the site of the railway station servicing Boondall. In 1901, the first rail bridge was rebuilt with cast iron screw pile piers replacing the original timber central piers driven into the floor of the creek. Railway bridges that feature screw pile tiers are very rare in the many lines that comprise the Brisbane suburban rail network.

History

The Sandgate railway was Brisbane's first suburban rail line. Construction began from Bowen Park, Bowen Hills on 3 May 1881. The line was completed and formally opened on 10 May 1882. As part of the project, a railway bridge was to be built across Cabbage Tree Creek. This bridge was described in The Brisbane Courier edition of 12 July 1881. It was a wooden bridge of 130 feet length and with 26 feet openings between each pier that was driven into the creek bed. The location of this railway bridge determined the siting of the uncovered platform that was placed on the southern side of the creek to serve the farming community of Boondall.

The construction contract was awarded to George Bashford & Co. The company decided that the rail bridge spanning Cabbage Tree Creek would use timber central piers rather than the permanent screw-piles that were to be driven into the bottom of Breakfast Creek. The rail crossing of Kedron Brook at Toombul would also use timber for the central piers.

To ensure a speedy construction, iron rails were shipped to the banks of Cabbage Tree Creek during 1881 so that the rail line was laid from the direction of both banks. Thus the rail track was laid in the direction of Sandgate and in the direction of Toombul before the rail bridge over Cabbage Tree Creek was built. An innovation was to lay half a mile of track south of the creek using the new Livesay's patent wrought iron sleepers that had been

imported from Britain. These sleepers were packed underneath the track with gravel ballast, which made a smoother rail journey. But imported iron sleepers were far more expensive than the locally available hardwood, timber sleepers so this experiment was not repeated elsewhere on Brisbane's suburban lines.

The first trains crossed the bridge on the way to Sandgate on 11 May 1882. At the meeting of the Sandgate Municipal Council held on 7 June 1897, it was reported that the 16-year old Cabbage Tree Creek rail bridge was in need of renewal. It was the volume of rail traffic, with seven trains crossing the bridge each day and with annual passenger numbers, particularly tourists increasing (from 2,155 tickets sold in 1885 to 9,214 tickets in 1910), that had put strain on the bridge.

In July 1899, the demands on the Sandgate Line were such that a rail duplication project commenced to allow more trains to run. The line between Northgate and Nudgee Stations was completed by December but beyond Nudgee there were delays relating to the Cabbage Tree Creek rail bridge. There were delays awaiting the steel bridge girders that had to be shipped from Britain. The construction company Messrs McCormack successfully tendered for the contract to reconstruct the bridge as part of the duplication project. The contract was awarded on 7 December 1900.

Because of a steel shortage, the company altered its plans. During 1901-02, day labourers rebuilt the Cabbage Tree Creek rail bridge using cast iron, criss-crossed, screw-pile piers rather than the standard steel piers to replace the 1881 timber piers driven into the creek bed.

Screw-pile piers are quite rare within the Brisbane suburban rail network. The only other rail bridge that features screw-pier piles spans Nudgee Creek. In 1993, prominent railway historian John Kerr identified the Cabbage Tree Creek Rail Bridge as having heritage significance in his *Queensland Rail Heritage Report*.

Statement of significance

Relevant assessment criteria

This is a place of local heritage significance and meets one or more of the local heritage criteria under the Heritage planning scheme policy of the *Brisbane City Plan 2014*. It is significant because:

Historical

CRITERION A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history as one of three rail bridges built for Brisbane's first (1881) suburban rail line.

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage as one of only two screw-pile cast iron pier railway bridges within the Brisbane rail network.

Representative

CRITERION D

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or classes of cultural places

as an example of railway bridge that has screw-pile piers driven into the floor of a major Brisbane waterway.

Technical

CRITERION F

The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technological achievement at a particular period

utilising nineteenth century colonial rail bridge construction techniques.

References

1. Brisbane City Council, aerial photographs 1946 & 2009
2. Bow, Barbara, *Welcome to Boondall*, (Sandgate: Sandgate & Districts Historical Society, 1995)
3. Kerr, John 1988, *Brunswick Street, Bowen Hills and Beyond: The Railways of the Northern Suburbs of Brisbane*, Australian Railway Historical Society
4. John D Kerr, *Queensland Rail Heritage Report* Final report, July 1993. Prepared for DEH and Queensland Rail.
5. http://www.brisbanehistory.com/sandgate_rail.html

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Note: This citation has been prepared on the basis of evidence available at the time including an external examination of the building. The statement of significance is a summary of the most culturally important aspects of the property based on the available evidence, and may be re-assessed if further information becomes available. The purpose of this citation is to provide an informed evaluation for heritage registration and information. This does not negate the necessity for a thorough conservation study by a qualified practitioner, before any action is taken which may affect its heritage significance.

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