

ROSS BRIDGE

Location: Over the Macquarie River at Ross.

Owner: Department of Infrastructure, Energy & Resources.

The plaque is located on a masonry pedestal in the bridge car park.

The bridge

The structure has three 9 metre spans. The arches are circular segments. Curved stairways lead up from the river banks at all four corners.

Stone originally stockpiled for bridge construction gradually disappeared when the start was delayed. When Captain Turner took charge, pilfering stopped and the project was expedited.

While the Midland Highway now bypasses Ross, the bridge remains in service and provides access to the historic town from the highway.

John Lee Archer (1791-1852)

Son of an Irish engineer, Archer trained in London in the offices of Charles Beazley (architect) and John Rennie (well-known engineer). On arrival in Van Diemens Land in 1827, he was appointed Civil Engineer and Colonial Architect.

John Lee Archer's designs were all in the classical mould. They were impressive, aesthetically pleasing, functional and beautifully engineered. He insisted on a high standard of workmanship and knew how to achieve it.



Ross Bridge and two 'heritage' engineers

HISTORIC ENGINEERING MARKER

Ross Bridge

This bridge on the former Hobart to Launceston Road was designed by civil engineer and colonial architect John Lee Archer. The bridge was constructed by two convict stonemasons, Daniel Herbert and James Colbeck, with a gang of convict labour under the direction of Captain William Turner, Commandant of Ross. Herbert created the unique ornamentation of the arches. Both stonemasons were emancipated on completion of the bridge which was officially opened by Lt Governor Arthur on 21 October 1836.

Dedicated by The Institution of Engineers, Australia 2003

His works in Hobart include: Parliament House, Ordnance Stores in Salamanca Place, Public Offices in Murray Street, Old Trinity Church Court House and St George's Church nave in Battery Point.

The meaning of the ornamental carvings remains a mystery. They are deteriorating and a satisfactory method of preserving or restoring them has not been found. Their present detail has been recorded using 3D precise survey methods.