

# PADDLE STEAMER GEM



PADDLE STEAMER GEM  
SOHE 2008



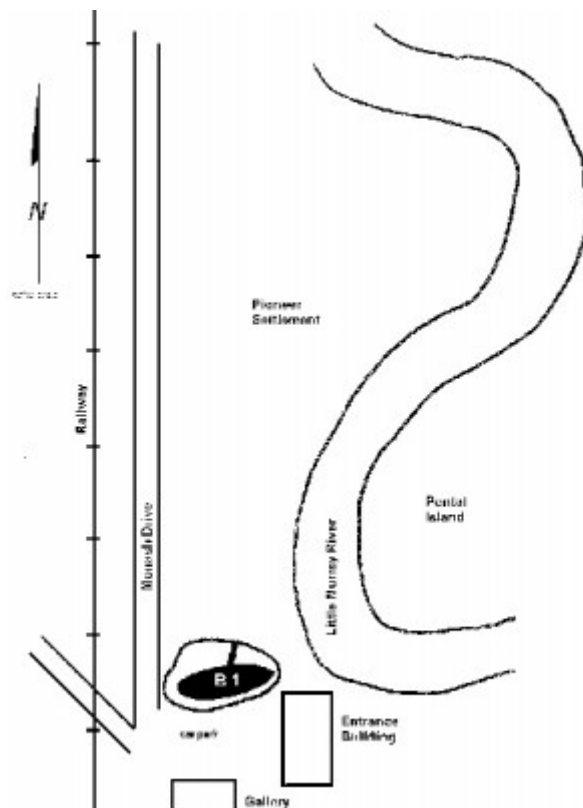
PADDLE STEAMER GEM  
SOHE 2008



PADDLE STEAMER GEM  
SOHE 2008



1 paddle steamer gam swan  
hill pioneer settlement swan  
hill side view may1998



plan

---

## Location

SWAN HILL PIONEER SETTLEMENT, MONASH DRIVE SWAN HILL, SWAN HILL RURAL CITY

## Municipality

SWAN HILL RURAL CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1742

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO151

## VHR Registration

August 20, 1998

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

---

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 28, 1999

What is significant?

The Paddle Steamer Gem was launched in Moama, NSW on 17 June 1876. The vessel is of composite build: red gum planking over iron frames and was built for the Echuca shipowner Elliot Randell by the firm of Air & Westergaard. Gem was originally fitted with a 40 horsepower steam engine and wood fired boilers and carried freight and passengers, mainly in the lower reaches of the Murray below Mildura. In 1882 at Goolwa in South Australia the vessel was lengthened from 28 metres to 40 metres by inserting a section amidships at the same time having its passenger accommodation increased and making it one of the largest steamers to have ever worked the Murray-Darling rivers. Gem passed through several ownerships including the Chaffey brothers at Mildura. Gem was able to keep trading right up until the end of the steam boat era on the Murray in the early 1950s. The vessel, minus its steam engine which had been scrapped then served as a floating residence and boarding house at Mildura until 1962 when it was purchased by the Borough of Swan Hill for use as a floating art gallery and focal point of Australia's first outdoor folk museum. The impetus for this came from Eric Westbrook, the director of the National Gallery of Victoria. The engineless Gem was towed to Swan Hill where it has floated in its own pool since 1963 serving for most of that time as an art gallery and restaurant. In recent years it has been undergoing a complete refit which has involved the removal of all the art gallery and restaurant fittings.

How is it significant?

The Paddle Steamer Gem is of historical and scientific (technological) significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Paddle Steamer Gem is historically important as a rare survivor of the steam boat era of trading along the

Murray-Darling. This nationally significant river trade was vitally important in the economic development of Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia. Gem, which had a long and active career, is one of only a handful of survivors to remain in Victoria. Gem is also significant for its role as the focal point of the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement, the earliest example of its type in Australia.

The Paddle Steamer Gem is scientifically (technologically) important as an example of an iron framed wooden planked vessel designed for river use. Although unfortunately missing its original steam engine and despite several refits, Gem nonetheless retains much of its early fabric which can give insights into nineteenth century river boat building techniques.

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

**Places of worship:** In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must **notify** the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

**Subdivision/consolidation:** Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

#### General Conditions:

1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.
2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.
5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

#### Exterior

- \* Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- \* Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.
- \* Painting of previously painted surfaces provided that preparation or

painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative scheme.

#### Interior

- \* Removal of restaurant fittings and making good.
- \* Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of the original paint or other decorative scheme.
- \* Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves, skirtings and decorative strapping.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted artworks.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors.

Construction dates        1876, 1882,

Heritage Act Categories   Registered place,

Hermes Number            5439

Property Number

---

## Extent of Registration

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1742 in the category described as a Heritage place:

Paddle Steamer Gem, Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement, Monash Drive, Swan Hill, Rural City of Swan Hill.

#### EXTENT:

1. All the structure known as the Paddle Steamer *Gem* marked B1 on Diagram 608356 held by the Executive Director.

Dated 13 August 1998.

RAY TONKIN  
Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G 33 20 August 1998 p.2257]

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*