
GOORAMADDA CUSTOMS HOUSE

Location

CHILTERN HOWLONG ROAD, SOUTH OF HOWLONG, MURRAY RIVER

Municipality

INDIGO SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H8225-0007

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Customs house/stock collection point - busy point on river.

Historical Significance

Reputation as a busy customs house.

Used as a stock collection point, 19th century pastoralism.

Contribution to commercial history of Australia.

Interpretation of Site

As noted the site could not be inspected in detail, but given the extent of the fencing it is likely to be in unchanged and/or similar condition to that prior to the nearby VicRoads bridge reconstruction works.

Archaeological Significance

The Gooramadda Customs House remains are one of a few remnants of the 19th century division between NSW and Victoria, south of the Murray River. Being isolated, it is also one of the few such archaeological remnants that is comparatively intact and may retain both sub-surface features and a more complete artefact assemblage which will allow for further analysis of the plan, chronology and function of this place.

Hermes Number 10921

Property Number

History

The customs house in Gooramadda operated from 1885 until 1910 (with the closure of all customs houses on the border after the abolition of duties on goods between the two States). It included an office and customs officer's living quarters (with fencing added in 1886). The first customs officer was likely George Edgar Brown, who took up the position on 28 April 1885 and had previously been the officer of customs at Howlong, until it closed on the same date (*Corowa Free Press*, 7 August 1885:6).

One of the ways that the Commonwealth Government could afford to provide public infrastructure was by levying of tariffs and excise on goods moving between the Colony of Victoria and New South Wales. Initially only applied to alcoholic beverages, tobacco, sugar and sugar products, tea, coffee and chicory, gold was also subject to an export duty. By the 1870s the number of items increased as did the complexity of the tax system. Some duties were based on a percentage of the overall value of an item and other taxes comprised flat rates for specific items. By the second half of the 1870s 'customs and excise was providing about twice the revenue coming from Crown lands' (Peel 1974:143). By 1892, goods were monitored through a number of customs houses at river crossings on the Victorian side of the Murray River (Cobram, Echuca, Koonfrock, Mildura, Narrung, Swan Hill, Tocumwal, Wahgunyah, Gooramadda, Yarrawonga, Wodonga and Tintaldra).

In 1907, it was gazetted that the land was to be transferred from Commonwealth ownership to State. On 29 July 1927, a fire destroyed most of the structure. The property was then sold as freehold land to T. Norman on 9 August 1928 (Parish of Gooramadda, County of Bogong, 1962, Department of Lands and Survey, Melbourne). In 1930 a plan of the allotment titled 'Customs Reserve' was surveyed and the location of the bridge crossing the Murray River shown immediately adjacent the site. The bridge replaced a punt that was used to cross the river.

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/>