
BEER HOMESTEAD DAIRY COMPLEX REMAINS

Location

170 LANCEFIELD ROAD WILDWOOD, HUME CITY

Municipality

HUME CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7822-0372

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO325

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 6, 2010

Data has been updated as a result of the Outer Western Metro Project, Context, March 2010.

Archaeological Significance The ruins and large volume of artefactual material within the site should provide a great deal of information about early farming practices in the Sunbury district.

Historical Significance The remains of extensive stretches of drystone walls and stone outbuildings dating back to about the mid-1850s or later are of historical significance for their association with the first settlement and use of the land. The remains demonstrate a distinctive way of life and farming activities that date from the mid-nineteenth century.

The site is of high significance due to the variety of features within the compound, the general condition of the site and the rarity of such sites in the area.

The remains of a timber structure lie to the south west of these paddocks, and further to the south west the site comprises the remains of various rubble bluestone buildings and smaller paddocks.

The remains of what appears to be a single bluestone structure is heavily overgrown by a hawthorn hedge. Two distinct rubble bluestone corners are located some distance from each other, to the immediate north of which is a large area of bluestone cobbling (15m x 4m) with a square void, which may have accommodated a stock ramp, and edges delineated by larger stones. A bluestone feature which is probably a drain extends to the south east whilst the hedgerow which continues in this direction is followed by large dense scatter of artefacts, including ceramic and bottle fragments of 19th century date. Various metal components of a boiler were also observed scattered around the ruin, with some components having been moved down the slope towards the building and paddocks to the south, probably by livestock. This building is potentially the main dairy building, although the presence of a boiler and the volume of artefacts also suggest a more domestic function.

Interpretation of Site

Two collections of stones which could represent broken walls or perhaps the footings of wooden buildings are located at the foot of the slope to the south east of the probable dairy building.

The most intact building on the site is the southwesternmost structure, which was potentially a dairy building. This is some 5.5m x 4m in size with the most intact section of wall, on the south-west corner, standing to about 1.5m in height. North of this building is a slight terrace, defined by a row of bluestone rubble, which may have been a small stock yard or building platform, whilst south west of the building is what appears to be large enclosure defined by drystone walls and hawthorn bushes. This enclosure was internally divided by more ephemeral walls and gateways which have since collapsed, and is partly paved with bluestone.

The wider site contains what are probably later remains, including a horse works circle, a ford, walled enclosures and a possible sheep dip which suggest that a either variety of stock was kept, or that farming practices changed over the years.

Other Names BEER H5 - DAIRY COMPLEX REMAINS, O'BRIENS STONE STREAM FARM,

Hermes Number 12758

Property Number

History

The first owner of the land on which these remains are located was Michael Coolahan who by the mid-1850s had an interest in some 790 acres of land to either side of Emu Creek. By 1888 Coolahan was considered one of the pioneer settlers in the district and he is said to have carried out mainly hay growing and some dairy farming on his land.

Coolahan's land to either side of the creek was rated separately in the Shire of Bulla Rate Books because they were situated in different Shire ridings. It would appear that the land on the western side was probably used mainly for the growing of hay, and the only dwelling on this side was apparently a hut with a large hearth (Moloney 2003). A steep slope divides the land to the east of the creek quite distinctly into a main upper flat and a creek flat with only a small acreage. A dwelling is recorded as having been erected on each of these divisions, a bluestone house on the former and a weatherboard house on the creek flat (Moloney 2003). When Coolahan died in April 1895 his property included a 'bluestone cottage with WB skillions, tank, etc.' and a 'WB dwelling with

stabling and outbuildings'. While the bluestone homestead probably dates back to the early to mid-1850s when Coolahan first settled on his property, the construction dates of the structures on the creek flats are more difficult to establish. The drystone fences and the stone outbuildings probably date back to the same era, perhaps a little later, but nothing appears to remain of the weatherboard house.

From about 1896 to about 1901 the Coolahan family leased out the land on both sides of the creek to the Heath family and then to the O'Brien family. These tenants resided in the weatherboard house. From 1907 or 1908, the Coolahans resumed farming the property, but for unknown reasons they sold their land in late 1911. The new owner was a Michael Joseph Caffrey, a well-known Newmarket horse buyer and importer of English and New Zealand horses, although it seems that he mainly used the Bulla land for grazing sheep, and when he died in 1914 an Executors Realisation Sale held registered 2000 cross-bred ewes for sale, as well as 60 horses and 20 dairy cattle. It is probable that the remains on the west side of the creek (H7822-0371), which include a sheep dip date back to Caffrey's ownership of the property, during which time the property was known as Stone Stream Farm.

The new owner of the land, a Robert Shilliday, took up possession of it in February 1915. Shilliday worked the property until he died in January 1930 when the farm was willed to his sons. It has not been established how long they owned the property, but some or all of it was later acquired by a William A. Stoney who apparently did not own the land long before selling it towards the end of 1953 to the Beer family. The Beers currently run cattle and a Clydesdale stud on the property. The Beers recall that the buildings and structures down by the creek as ruinous when they bought the property (Maloney 2003).

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/>