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# OAKLANDS ROAD CISTERN

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## Location

145 OAKLANDS ROAD BULLA, HUME CITY

## Municipality

HUME CITY

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7822-2310

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 17, 2023

### What is significant?

The circular domed brick cistern and the potential archaeological remains of a house dating to the 1880s.

### How is it significant?

The site has archaeological significance and local historical significance as the former home of a Bulla pioneer William Ryan, blacksmith.

### Why is it significant?

Moloney and Johnson (1998: 13-14) identified several heritage themes and features in the Bulla area that they assessed as being of exceptional significance. The potential for archaeological features in the site of the former Ryan house and circular cistern/well in 145 Oaklands Road, contributes to one of these significant historical themes, 'Post-Gold Rush Farming'. The site is of historical significance as one of the small rural farming residences that were present in Bulla from the 1870s to early 20th century.

The site is also of archaeological significance as there is high potential for archaeological features and deposits to be present in the site, dating from the 1870s. There are few other listed small rural house-type archaeological sites in the Bulla area and the site has potential for archaeological remains to be present from this historically significant period.

Interpretation of Site	The site was part of the “Bulla Common”, reserved for public use initially after European settlement in the Bulla area, and subdivided and made available for public sale in 1873. Allotment 16 of the site was occupied by William Ryan, a blacksmith, from the early 1880s. The allotments were likely cleared and fenced around that time and a house was constructed. Ryan was described as a blacksmith, but it is likely that he practiced some farming on the property in the 1880s – 1890s. The type of farming practiced is unknown, but it seems likely to have involved animals rather than crops. It is unknown exactly when the circular cistern was constructed, but likely in the 1880s-1890s and it appears to have been a domestic water storage for the house. According to the Bulla shire Rate books, the earliest documented date of a house on the site was in 1882-1883 and the building is shown on the 1916 Sunbury map (Figure 7). The house would have been used for the usual core domestic activities of a small rural farmhouse. Since the demolition of the house sometime between 1916 and 1938, the site appears to have been used as paddocks for animals and has not been redeveloped.
Archaeological Significance	The archaeological significance of the site is moderate or low, though it is possible that the cistern contains sealed cultural deposits dating from the time of its construction. It is also possible that sub-surface remains of former structures may be present.
Hermes Number	186017
Property Number	

## History

The site was first part of the ‘Bulla Common’, the government reserve of land to the east of the Bulla Bulla township (Allotment 1 shown on Figure 1). The ‘Bulla Common’ was not subdivided until 1873, when the allotments were made available for sale (see the 1873 plan of subdivision, Figure 2). A Bulla Bulla County of Bourke map drawn in 1901 shows that the cistern and house site were located in Allotment 16, which was bought by W. Ryan (Figure 5); a 1973 version of the map dates Ryan’s ownership of Allotment 16 from 15 April 1896 (Figure 6). William Ryan is described as a blacksmith (or in 1884-1885 is he described as a farmer) and is listed as the owner in the Bulla Shire Rate Books from 1882-1883 until at least 1892-1893. In the 1884-1885 rate book, the owner is listed as ‘The Crown’ and the tenant as ‘William Ryan, farmer’ and the land described as ‘Land, House, Bulla’. In the 1886-1887, 1888-1889 and 1890-1891 rate books, the owner is listed as W. Ryan and the Tenant as ‘William Ryan, blacksmith’ and the property is described as ‘House and land 19 acres, Bulla’. This would suggest that Ryan owned the property from around 1886-1887; however, the 1901 Bulla Bulla County of Bourke parish plan (Figure 5) noted that William Ryan purchased the property in 1896. A building is shown on the property in the location of the circular cistern and house site on the 1916 Sunbury map (Figure 3), which indicates that Ryan’s house was likely still present until that date. The 1938 Sunbury map shows only a cistern present in that location, no building (Figure 4). The historical evidence indicates that the house was present on the site from possibly as early as the 1882-1883, until sometime before 1938, and the cistern is still present and well-preserved on the site.

*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/>