
HOULAHANS ROAD RUIN

Location

90 HOULAHANS ROAD AXE CREEK, GREATER BENDIGO CITY

Municipality

GREATER BENDIGO CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7724-0629

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Hermes Number 191788

Property Number

History

The following is an extract from City of Greater Bendigo Heritage Study Stage 2: Former Shires of Mcivor and Strathfieldsaye (2009) prepared by Context Pty Ltd. Specific details on the site's history are not known; however it is **likely that the structure is associated with the first crown grantee of the site, L. Landrigan or the neighbouring J. Cahill** (see Parish Plan above). It is possible that the land was purchased by the Cahill family at some date to complement **their existing neighbouring allotments, as it is currently in ownership by the Cahill family.**

History of the Shire of Strathfieldsaye The land around the former Shires of Strathfieldsaye and Mcivor had a long history prior to the arrival of Europeans. The Jaara Jaara people are the original inhabitants of the area. The area around Port Phillip was explored by Sir Thomas Mitchell, the Surveyor General of New South Wales, and a

large party in 1836, on the homeward leg of a journey to Portland Bay. Impressed by what he perceived as the bounty of the land. Mitchell named the area *Australia Felix*.^[1] **The Port Phillip district was opened up for settlement soon thereafter, and much of the land in the Western districts** of Victoria, including the former Shires of Mcivor and Strathfieldsaye, was subsequently dominated by a series of **pastoral runs. Most of the area around the town of Axedale and the numerous small towns in its vicinity was licensed to David Jennings as part of the Campaspe Plains run. The run covered an area of more than 144,900 acres and was populated with an estimated 12,000 sheep.** A portion of Campaspe Plains was licensed to A. Jennings and George Playne in 1840 and the 67,000 acre station became known as Axedale. In the coming decade the holders of the license changed a number of times. By the time the leasehold over the land was cancelled in 1865, the run had greatly reduced in size.^[2]

Following the cancellation of leasehold, land holdings were of a smaller scale and pastoralists were gradually overtaken by farmers. The discovery of gold at Bendigo and the surrounding areas changed the face of the district and brought **about new patterns of settlement and expansion. William John Bulling claimed to be the first man to discover gold at Mcivor, and he was granted a £400 reward for the find.** By 1853, over one hundred prospectors had assembled at Wild Duck Creek in the hopes of striking it rich. This number expanded the following year, and included some 2,000 Chinese immigrants.^[3] The Strathfieldsaye Road District was proclaimed in the Government Gazette on the 12th August 1861, and encompassed within it the parishes of Axedale, Strathfieldsaye, Eppalock, Mandurang, Sedgwick and Lyell.^[4] **The process of election of the board was punctuated by rivalries between Catholic and Protestant faiths, a characteristic of the district which infiltrates much of its history. Strathfieldsaye met the criterion prescribed to become a Shire in 1863, a transition that was officially proclaimed on the 17th September of that year.**^[5] In 1864, Strathfieldsaye Shire was divided into three wards; Mandurang, Strathfieldsaye and Axedale.^[6]

History of Axe Creek

Axe Creek was incorporated into the parish of Strathfieldsaye when it was surveyed in 1854. Much of its development occurred in conjunction with the nearby towns of Strathfieldsaye, Eppalock and Emu Creek, which were all located **within 20 miles of one another. The land provided good soil for cultivation, a fact that was not missed by pastoralists, who continued to move into the region. The proximity of the creek was of added benefit to farmers, and provided a good water source for their crops and animals and providing rich soils that were suitable for the planting of orchards and vineyards.** By the 1880s, there were several major winegrowers operating in the vicinity of Axe Creek.^[7] **Bendigo was a source of stable markets for the produce of Axe Creek, including its wines, fruits and vegetables.** The influx of prospectors during the 1850s and the frequency of travellers along the road to Bendigo prompted the **construction of a number of hotels in and around Axe Creek. One of these was the Axe Creek Bridge Hotel was in operation in 1863, and was also used as a polling place for the district.**^[8] The wine industry developed from the 1860s, **and a number of German immigrants who settled in the region planted successful vineyards. The wine industry was devastated following a *Phylloxera vastatrix* outbreak in the 1890s, and many vineyards were converted to orchards** after that time.

The timber industry was also important to the development of Axe Creek. Construction of the railway from Bendigo to Heathcote in the late 1880s was beneficial to timber cutters, who prior to that time had carted their stocks to and from Bendigo, where they found a stable market in the mining industry. Denominational schooling facilities had been established by the 1860s, and a state school opened in 1876.

[1] Randell, J. O. (1985). *Mcivor: A History of the Shire and the Township of Heathcote*, Shire of Mcivor, p. 1.

[2] Spreadborough, Robert and Anderson, Hugh (1983). *Victorian Squatters*, Red Rooster Press, Ascot Vale, p. 150.

[3] J. O. Randell, *Mcivor: A History of the Shire and the Township of Heathcote*, p. 1.

[4] Hewat, Tim (1983), *Bridge Over Troubled Waters, A History of the Shire of Strathfieldsaye*, Shire of Strathfieldsaye,

Victoria, pp. 11 - 12.

[5] Hewat, Tim (1983), p. 18.

[6] Hewat, Tim (1983), p. 107.

[7] Earth Tech Engineering Pey Ltd (2002), Heathcote - *Strathfieldsaye Thematic History*, City of Greater Bendigo,

Bendigo, p. 26.

[8] Mitchell, Barbara (2005). *On the Creeks: Early Life at Strathfieldsaye in the Val/ey of the Three Creeks - Axe, Emu*

and Sheepwash, Barbara Mitchell, Bendigo, Vic, p. 99.

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/>