

ROCKBANK INN



ROCKBANK INN SOHE 2008



1 rockbank inn archaeological site



Rockbank Wall



Rockbank Olive Tree



Rockbank Photo



Rockbank Plan



Rockbank shed ruin



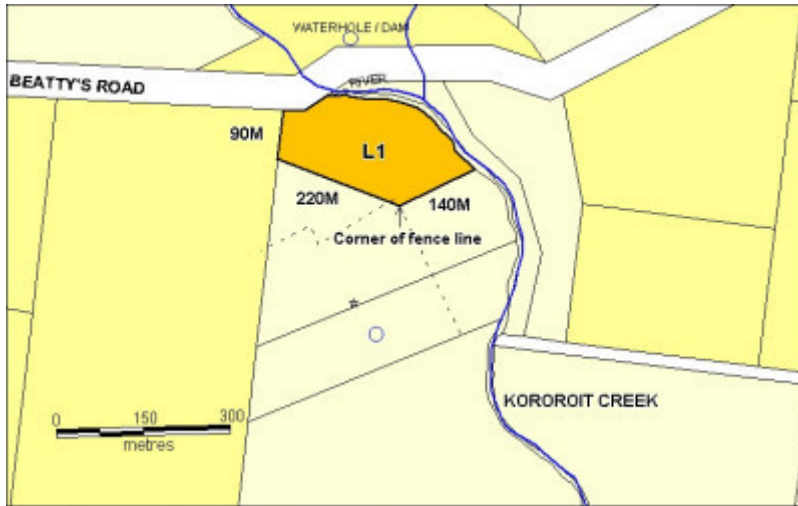
Rockbank Wall Ruin



Rockbank Window



Rockbank



rockbank inn archaeological site extent june 2001

Location

1902-1990 WESTERN HIGHWAY AINTREE, MELTON CITY

Municipality

MELTON CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1933

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO10

VHR Registration

February 6, 2003

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 7, 2021

What is significant?

The remains of the Rockbank Inn comprise three ruinous bluestone structures, believed to have been the hotel, a store building and a stable. These remains are located next to the remains of Beatty's Bridge on Kororoit Creek, and on Beatty's Road, formerly one of the main roads to Ballarat from Melbourne. In the 1850s diggers on their way to the gold fields frequented the Rockbank Inn.

The earliest section was possibly constructed c1853 for Melbourne wine and spirit merchants James Stewart and John 'Como' Brown, when they acquired the land from pastoralist William Cross Yuille. Stewart and Brown owned several hotels in Victoria and Brown was a noted builder in Melbourne in the 1840s. However the earliest section of the inn may have been part of Yuille's improvements when he sold his pre-emptive right to Stewart and Brown in 1853.

The only definite date of construction is 1855, when architect Charles Laing designed bluestone additions to the hotel for John Gray. Gray owned the inn from c1855 until sold by his trustees in 1870.

There are contemporary accounts of visits to Rockbank Inn in c1854 by William Kelly, Irish author and barrister and in the same year a stopover by a troop of soldiers marching along the Ballarat Road to face the Eureka rebels. These were members of the 12th and 40th foot and gun parties for HMS Electra and HMS Fantome.

The inn later became a residence, and was occupied continuously for about 90 years by the Beattie family before being finally abandoned in c1960.

How is it significant?

The Rockbank Inn site is of archaeological and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Rockbank Inn site is archaeologically significant for its demonstrated ability to provide information about the occupation and usage of the inn during the nineteenth century. The site has a high potential to produce artefacts relating to its mid to late nineteenth century occupation. The archaeological process has a potential to produce more information about the method of construction and materials used during the various building phases of the inn.

The Rockbank Inn site is historically significant for its associations with diggers on their way to the gold fields around Ballarat, and with the soldiers involved in the suppression of the Eureka rebels in December 1854.

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.

Exemptions from permits:

Measures to enable:

1. fire suppression
2. public safety
3. land care maintenance
4. erosion and salinity control
5. weed and vermin control

Providing that neither structures nor below ground deposits are disturbed.

Construction dates	1852,
Architect/Designer	Laing, Charles,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered archaeological place,
Hermes Number	4178
Property Number	

History

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

The Rockbank area was settled in the 1840s. In 1841 William Cross Yuille and James Oliphant Denny took up the Rockbank Pre-Emptive Right Run. Yuille sold this property, except for the 20 acre Rockbank Inn property to W.C.T. Clarke in 1853. During the 1860s Beattys Road was a main road between Melbourne and Ballarat, and would have seen much traffic during the period of the goldrushes, being located between these important towns.

HISTORY OF PLACE

The Rockbank Inn consists of two main structures. The older structure was built in 1852-1853 for James Stewart and John 'Como' Brown, who had formerly been a building contractor in Tasmania and Melbourne. The additional building was constructed in 1856 and designed by Charles Laing.

The Old Ballarat Road (Beattys Road), developed in 1851, passed directly in front of the Rockbank Inn. It was also the only road to the only railway station in the area (now Sydenham). There must have been sufficient users of this road to justify the presence of the Inn, and the Inn was frequented in the 1850s by diggers on their way to the goldfields.

There are contemporary accounts of visits to Rockbank Inn in c1854 by William Kelly, Irish Author and Barrister (National Trust F.N. 5137: 4).

The Rockbank Inn is also associated with the movement of troops to quell the Eureka uprising. In 1854 members of the 12th and 40th Foot and gun-parties from H.M. ships Electra and Fantome stopped at the Rockbank Inn on the way to Ballarat and complained about the quality of the beer; "a sour, squashy, disagreeable drink" (National Trust F.N. 5137: 4).

The Inn was in use until the 1870s, after this it was occupied as a homestead until the 1960s. During this time the Rockbank Inn passed into the ownership of the Beattie and Trethowan families.

REFERENCES

National Trust of Australia (Victoria), Research into Former Rockbank Inn, Beatty's Road, Shire of Melton. F.N. 5137.

Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion A

The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object.

The Rockbank Inn is historically important because of its association with the movement of diggers from Melbourne to Ballarat, and also with the movement of troops to suppress the Eureka Rebellion.

Criterion B

The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness.

Criterion C

The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage.

The presence of significant archaeological deposits at Rockbank Inn provides opportunities to enable archaeological investigation, which in turn facilitates education regarding and illustration of Victoria's cultural heritage.

Criterion D

The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects.

The Rockbank Inn is representative of the large number of Inns that were established during the Goldrush along the routes to the diggings.

Criterion E

The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.

Criterion F

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements.

Criterion G

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations.

Rockbank Inn is associated with the movement of diggers to Ballarat and of troops to the Eureka Stockade which shows a relationship to significant events in the social and cultural history of Victoria.

Criterion H

Any other matter which the Council considers relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 1995**, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1933 in the category described as an Archaeological place:

Rockbank Inn, Beattys Road, Rockbank, Melton Shire Council.

EXTENT:

1. All of the land marked L1 on Diagram 1933 held by the Executive Director.
2. All of the structural remains of the Rockbank Inn, together with all associated archaeological relics within land marked L1 on Diagram 1933 held by the Executive Director.

Dated 6 February 2003

RAY TONKIN
Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G 6 6 February 2003 206]

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/>