

Municipality

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO150

Heritage Listing

Golden Plains Shire

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is Significant?

The former Russell's Bridge State School is situated on allotment J, section C, Parish of Wabdallah in the township of Russell's Bridge. The township takes its name from George Russell, pastoral pioneer and manager of the Clyde Company. The settlement is situated within a curve of the Moorabool River and stands on land originally occupied as the Wabdallah run, a small parcel of the Clyde Company's vast pastoral holdings. A permanent crossing over the Moorabool River and the sale of freehold land became the impetus for the development of the Russell's Bridge township. The Rev. Robert Flemming, a trustee of the Russell's Bridge Presbyterian Church, first petitioned for the establishment of denomination school in 1857 and later that year a teacher's salary was sanctioned. However, following the introduction of free, compulsory and secular education under the Victorian *Education Act* of 1872, provisions were made for the construction a vested common school. It was not until 1878 that a site was purchased from the Presbyterian Church for 50 pounds. Finally, in June 1880, T. Holyoak was awarded the tender for the erection of a new brick school and residence. The red brick school, with a single classroom and attached living quarters is of standard design and is L-shaped in plan. The school opened in 1880 and served the local community until 1969. In 1975, the school reserve was revoked and the site was gazetted as the Russell's Bridge Public Purposes (Pre-School Centre) Reserve, with the Shire of Bannockburn appointed the committee of management. It operated as a pre-school until 2005, when the facility was relocated to Bannockburn. The former school building remains unoccupied. An inspection of the interiors of the school building reveals that the internal wall between the classroom and residence has been removed. The fireplace and chimney have been retained. The school site has mature plantings of *Schinus molle* (Peppercorn trees) and Eucalyptus species, with some smaller native trees and shrubs. The former Russell's Bridge State School is intact, retains a fair degree of integrity and is in good condition.

How is it Significant?

The former Russell's Bridge State School is of historical, social and architectural significance to the township of Russell's Bridge and the Golden Plains Shire.

Why is it significant?

The former Russell's Bridge State School is of historical significance as a small rural school, established under the State School system in 1880. The surviving school building provides a tangible link that illustrates the collective aspirations of the local community, who lobbied for the establishment of a school from 1857.

The school is of social significance as the permanent site for the provision of free and secular education under the innovative Victorian *Education Act 1872*. Its social significance is further enhanced by the school's role as the focus of community life, reflected in the land and buildings being gazetted for the purposes of a pre-school centre in 1975, once the school ceased to educate primary aged children.

The school is of architectural significance as an intact, surviving example of a small rural state school with attached living quarters, dating from the late 19th century.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Golden Plains - Golden Plains Shire Heritage Study Phase 2, Heritage Matters P/L, 2009;
Hermes Number	43453
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The former Russell's Bridge State School is situated on allotment J, section C, Parish of Wabdallah in the township of Russell's Bridge. It is located on high ground overlooking the Moorabool River. The building addresses Clyde Hill Road and as such is situated on a skewed north east orientation. The school is of standard design, constructed of red brick and is L-shaped in plan. It has a corrugated iron roof and two brick chimneys, protruding from a single fireplace in the school room and a shared fireplace in the residence. A small offset brick porch with a gabled corrugated iron roof is located on the facade and once served as the formal entrance into the school building. An introduced timber skillion, which projects from the facade now covers the front window and encloses the porch. Three slim twelve pane double-hung sash windows with basalt sills and segmental arch lintels survive on the eastern elevation. A set of large multi-pane double hung sash windows have been introduced into the fabric of the building at the rear, below the segmental arch of the former single window. The residence projects in a westerly direction from the schoolroom, forming an L-shaped wing. The windows of the front rooms are paired double hung sashes with basalt sills. Set between them is a recessed four panel front door. The corrugated iron roof is of a medium pitch, with a timber verandah. New windows and doors have been introduced into the western elevation of the rear skillion. The brickwork of the western elevation has been painted. An inspection of the interior reveals that the internal wall between the classroom and residence has been demolished, exposing the rear bedroom and front bedrooms of the residence. The fireplace and chimney have been retained. The cove ceiling is lined with timber boards. The school site has mature plantings of *Schinus molle* (Peppercorn trees) and Eucalyptus species, with some smaller native trees and shrubs. The former Russell's Bridge State School is intact, retains a fair degree of integrity and is in good condition.

Integrity

The former Russell's Bridge State School is intact, retains a fair degree of integrity and is in good condition.

Physical Description 2

Extent of Registration: to the extent of the former Russell's Bridge State School and attached residence, including the interiors and the whole of the land, being allotment J, section C, Parish of Wabdallah and the mature plantings of *Schinus molle* (Peppercorn trees).

Historical Australian Themes

The Australian Heritage Commission devised the Australian Historic Themes in 2001. The following themes have influenced the historical development of the former Russell's Bridge State School.

6 Educating

6.1 Forming associations, libraries and institutes for self-education

6.2 Establishing schools

6.5 Educating people in remote places

8 Developing Australia's Cultural Life

8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

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/>