

## BLOCK 19



BLOCK 19 SOHE 2008



1 bonegilla migrant camp accommodation huts



h01835 block 19 bonegilla amenities 1 pm1 jun03



h01835 block 19 bonegilla amenities 2 pm1 jun03



h01835 block 19 bonegilla amenities 3 pm1 jun03



h01835 block 19 bonegilla amenities 4 pm1 jun03



h01835 block 19 bonegilla amenities 5 pm1 jun03



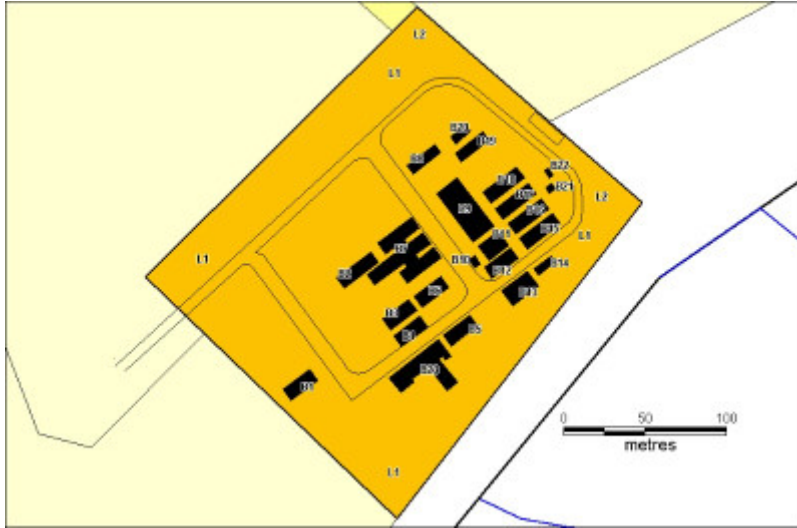
h01835 block 19 bonegilla amenities 6 pm1 jun03



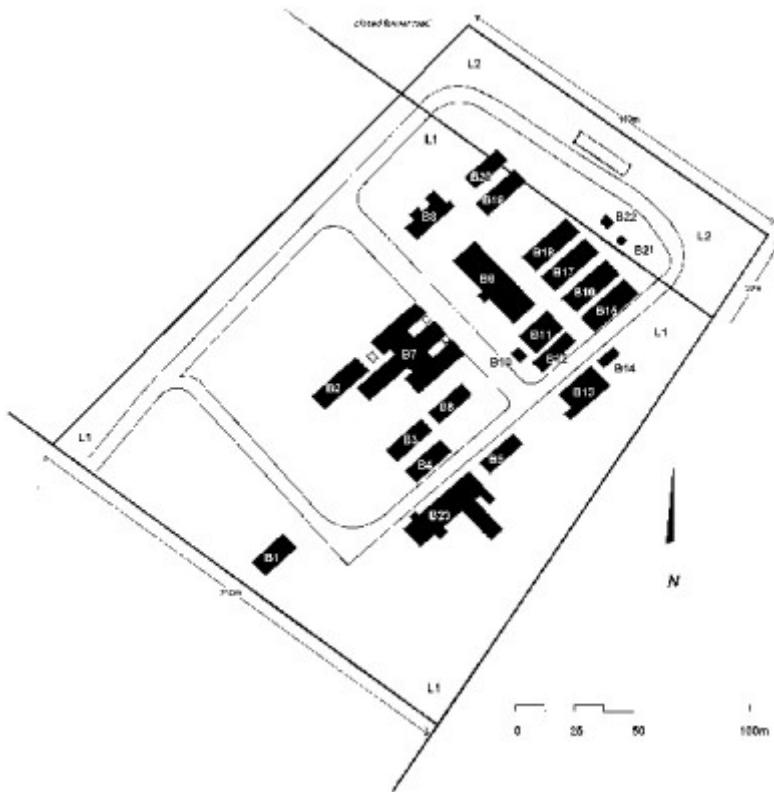
h01835 block 19 bonegilla amenities building pads pm1 jun03



h01835 block 19 bonegilla view up slope to amenities pm1 jun03



h01835 plan



Bonegilla Plan

**Location**

82 BONEGILLA ROAD BONEGILLA, WODONGA CITY

**Municipality**

WODONGA CITY

**Level of significance**

Registered

## **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H1835

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO7

## **VHR Registration**

May 10, 2002

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - May 9, 2002

What is significant?

Block 19, a collection of timber and corrugated iron army huts, is the last remnant of the Bonegilla Army Camp, built by contract labour between July and September 1940, originally as 24 separate blocks and comprising more than 800 buildings. The camp was located on a site chosen for its proximity to the break in the rail gauge between Victoria and New South Wales, its proximity to the regional centre of Albury/Wodonga, and for its nearby water supply. For the rest of the wartime period the camp was altered and enlarged as circumstances required but retained its basic configuration. Block 19 was used during the war as an infantry officers' training school and a small arms school under the direction of Colonel EW Latchford MBE MC.

After the war the Australian Government embarked on an extensive immigration program which included for the first time migrants of non-British origin. Army camps across Australia were converted for use as migrant reception centres and Block 19 was one of the first to receive immigrants in 1947. Bonegilla became the central and most important camp in this program and by the time it ceased operation in 1971, about 320,000 immigrants had passed through its tin sheds.

In the late 1960s as emphasis of the immigration programme shifted away from one which required a concentration of accommodation, the Army was going through a period of expansion during the Vietnam War. As a consequence, those Bonegilla buildings no longer required by the Department of Immigration were taken over by the Army. From 1967 to 1985 Block 19 was used as a cookery school and then as a mapping unit. After 1985 the Army only occasionally used the buildings because the construction of the nearby Latchford Barracks rendered them obsolete.

How is it significant?

Block 19 of the former Bonegilla Migrant Reception Centre is of historical and social significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Block 19 is of historical and social significance for its central role as part of the former Bonegilla Migrant Reception Centre in the most far reaching demographic change in Australia after the Gold Rush - the post Second World War immigration programme. It was the first, the last and the largest migrant reception centre in a system of camps in all States. Block 19 has the capacity to demonstrate to all Australians the physical environment faced by the hundreds of thousands of migrants who were accommodated in the former army camps utilised as Reception and Training Centres. With its simple and spartan military buildings, its grid layout and its typical plantings of native and exotic trees, it is crucially significant as the last surviving touchstone of the

immigrant experience at Bonegilla.

The Block 19 Precinct is historically significant as a now rare remnant of the expansionist phase of defence building activity which took place at the commencement of the Second World War. It was one of 24 separate accommodation blocks which formed the Bonegilla Army Camp and the camp itself was part of a wider network of camps which included Enoggera in Queensland, Holsworthy in New South Wales, Puckapunyal in Victoria, Northam in Western Australia and Woodside in South Australia. Block 19 is also significant as a remnant of the logistical and organisational expansion of the Army during the Vietnam War.

## 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.

No permits are required for works which are in accordance with the Conservation Management Plan in four volumes prepared by Freeman Leeson Architects and Ruth Daniell and dated October 1996.

Construction dates	1940,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	BONEGILLA ARMY CAMP, BONEGILLA MIGRANT CAMP, BONEGILLA MIGRANT RECEPTION CENTRE,
Hermes Number	5666
Property Number	

## Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion Source: Freeman Leeson Architects & Ruth Daniel  
Bonegilla Conservation Management Plan 1996

### Criterion A

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

The Block 19 Precinct is significant as a remnant of the expansionist phase of Defence building activity which took place at the commencement of WW2. It was one of 24 separate accommodation blocks which formed the Bonegilla Army Camp. The camp itself was part of a wider network of camps which included Enoggera, Holsworthy, Puckapunyal and Woodside.

Block 19 is significant for its association with the major immigration program commenced after World War 2 and the resultant radical changes in the demographic composition of the Australian population which resulted from this immigration program. The program was made possible because of the former army camps which were available to accommodate large numbers of immigrants. Bonegilla camp was part of a network of former army camps utilised in this way, including Bathurst, Northam and Woodside.

Block 19 is significant as a remnant of the logistical and organisational expansion of the Army during the Vietnam War.

### Criterion B

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

There are few remnant sites where the physical evidence of the post-WW2 immigration program can be seen and there are fewer still where the conditions faced by the hundreds of thousands of migrants who were accommodated in former army camps can be clearly understood. Despite the removal of a number of buildings from the Block 19 precinct the remaining structures, and the evidence of former structures provided by remnant pathways, allow an understanding of the re-use of basic Army accommodation blocks for the reception and processing of migrants.

Block 19 is significant for its capacity to demonstrate to all Australians the physical environment faced by the hundreds of thousands of migrants who were accommodated in the former army camps utilised as Reception and Training Centres or Holding Centres. [Principal Australian Historic Theme 2.4, Migration]

Between 1947 and the early 1950s there at least four major Reception Training Centres, all of which utilised former army camps. Bonegilla was first Centre, had the largest capacity and operated for the longest period of time. The remnant Block 19 at Bonegilla is now one of only two locations where the conditions under which migrants were accommodated can be clearly seen and understood. The second location is at Northam camp however no formal study of the migrant use of this camp, and the remnant significant fabric, has yet been undertaken.

Block 19 is significant as one of only two intact precincts within Australia able to demonstrate the WW2 army camp/migrant accommodation use.

#### Criterion C

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

Block 19 is the last surviving block, albeit incomplete, of an Army camp that once comprised 24 blocks, ie over 800 buildings in all. The spatial arrangement of Block 19, while not identical to other blocks, is comprised of similar elements to those of all blocks, therefore is able to contribute to a strong perception of army camp/migrant camp physical environment. The location of many of the demolished buildings is clearly evidenced by remnant pathways and concrete slabs.

Each remaining building within Block 19 contributes to an understanding of typical block layouts at Bonegilla Camp and other WW2 camps. The core buildings, the kitchen flanked by mess buildings, are sited opposite the hall. These buildings are located on a central axis, the typical arrangement in each block. The other buildings and remnant pathways [although a number of buildings on the western side have been demolished] mark the typical symmetrical arrangement of each block.

The buildings in Block 19 reflect the modifications to the basic Army buildings during their functional lives. These include the alterations made to the interiors and the site generally such as paths and landscaping however the layout of the precinct and the "basic" nature of accommodation, with its corrugated galvanised iron walls and asbestos of iron roofs, is clearly evidenced.

The remnant structures and pathways of Block 19 illustrate clearly the organisational arrangements of WW2 army establishments, and their subsequent modification as a migrant/displaced persons camp, and provide an understanding of the harsh conditions under which the migrants were accommodated.

#### 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.

The remnant buildings of Block 19 cannot be claimed to exemplify creative or design excellence, however the logistical achievement in constructing a number of camps such as Bonegilla [with over 800 buildings] during the period 1940-41, and the capacity of those 'temporary' buildings to accommodate a variety of uses and occupants for over fifty years is quite extraordinary.

The remnant Block 19 buildings are illustrative of the extraordinary logistical achievements within Australia's WW2 mobilisation program, and particularly its building program.

#### 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.

It is apparent that the remnant Block 19 buildings are considered significant and are valued, both by Army personnel and by former immigrant 'occupants'.

There is considerable sentiment for the retention of Block 19. Recognition of the precinct's importance to the migrant community followed soon after the formation of the Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council in 1981 when it was proposed to locate a memorial plaque on the site. Since then various uses have been promulgated but support for the retention and care of the buildings has come from diverse groups, including other ethnic groups, individuals and politicians. A recent Border Mail editorial reflected a community perception that the buildings ought to be saved.

Block 19 enjoys regular visitation by former migrants and their descendants, as does the Albury Regional Museum which over the last two years has made the Bonegilla migrant experience its primary focus. The Museum receives on average 3-5 visitors per day on weekdays and between 10 and 20 visitors per day on

weekends whose specific aim is to view the Bonegilla display.

Approximately one quarter of these visitors then go on to visit the site. The Museum also receives up to 5 phone enquiries specific to Bonegilla per day.

The remnant Block 19 buildings, the remnant significant plantings identified above, and the Block 19 site as a whole, is clearly valued by former immigrant occupants, and Army personnel.

#### Criterion H

Any other matter which the Council considers relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance  
The site has clear associations with Colonel Latchford, commander of the Allied Land Headquarters Small Arms School which occupied Block 19 during World War II, and the many immigrants to Australia, originally quartered at Bonegilla, who have risen to prominence through their contribution to Australia's scientific, artistic, economic and political life. These include Sir Arvi Parbo, Ms Franca Arena, MP, and Mr Arman Alexander Opitz [1898-1983] who passed through Bonegilla in 1948 and was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science in 1962.

### Extent of Registration

1. All the buildings marked as follows on Diagram 1835 held by the Executive Director:

- B1 Ablutions Block (Building 68)
- B2 Recreation Room (Building 79)
- B3 Accommodation Hut (Building 80)
- B4 Accommodation Hut (Building 81)
- B5 Store (Building 82)
- B6 Accommodation Hut (Building 84)
- B7 Mess (Building 85)
- B8 Staff Flat (Building 91)
- B9 Tudor Hall (Building 93)
- B10 Toilet (Building 94)
- B11 Supervisor's Flat (Building 95)
- B12 Accommodation Hut (Building 96)
- B13 Administrative Offices (Building 97)
- B14 Nurse's Quarters (Building 98)
- B15 Accommodation Hut (Building 99)
- B16 Accommodation Hut (Building 100)
- B17 Accommodation Hut (Building 101)
- B18 Accommodation Hut (Building 102)
- B19 Staff Flat (Building 104)
- B20 Staff Flat (Building 105)
- B21 Boiler House (Building 107)
- B22 Laundry (Building 108)
- B23 Hume Club (Building 176)

2. All the land marked as follows on Diagram 1835 held by the Executive Director:

- L1 part of the land described as Lot 1 on Plan of Subdivision PS428597Y
- L2 part of closed road itself part of Crown Allotment 70A Parish of Bonegilla County of Bogong

3. All of the hard and soft landscaping features and remnants of accommodation or service buildings within the land marked L1 comprising roads, paths, concrete slabs, garden beds and mature native and exotic trees.

*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/>