

---

# Bests Cellars (Bests Concongella Vineyard), 111 Bests Road, GREAT WESTERN



GW 41 - Shire of Northern Grampians - Stage 2 Heritage Study, 2004



GW 41 1 - Stables (built c.1870, relocated to current site - Shire of Northern Grampians - Stage 2 Heritage Study, 2004

---

## Location

111 Bests Road GREAT WESTERN, NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

## Municipality

NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

## Level of significance

Recommended for VHR

## Heritage Listing

Northern Grampians Shire

---

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - July 31, 2004

The Bests Winery (formerly Concongella Vineyard) 111 Bests Road, Great Western, has significance as a substantial winery established in the 19th century with some outstanding surviving buildings, cellars and vines that clearly provide an appreciation of the early evolution of the place. Originally established 1866 by Henry Best, son of David Best and brother of Joseph of the famous Great Western Winery, the Concongella Vineyard progressed and its wines became internationally renowned. The first cottage (now known as the worker's cottage) was built in c.1866 of pise (rammed earth) construction, while the stables were built in 1870 of horizontal slab

construction. The large three-level cellars were built between 1871 and 1874 of pise and timber, with the basement level being below ground.

The Worker's Cottage at Best's Winery is **architecturally** significant at a **STATE** level. It demonstrates original design qualities of a Victorian style. These qualities include the gable roof form and the broad return skillion verandah that projects at the front and side. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the single storey height, pise (rammed earth) wall construction, galvanised corrugated iron roof cladding, rammed earth chimney, central timber framed doorway with four panelled timber door and the flanking timber framed 12 paned double hung windows.

The Stables at Best's Winery is **architecturally** significant at a **STATE** level. They demonstrate original design qualities of a Victorian vernacular style. These qualities include the long simple gable roof and the projecting skillion verandah to one side. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the single storey height, horizontal slab red gum construction, galvanised corrugated iron roof cladding, and the window and door openings.

The Cellars at Best's Winery are **architecturally** significant at a **STATE** level. It demonstrates original design qualities of a Victorian vernacular style. These qualities include the three-levelled composition with below ground basement, and the long gable roof form. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the pise and timber weatherboard wall construction, substantial red gum structural system of beams, posts and planks, galvanised corrugated iron roof cladding with the signage that reads "Best's Cellars", and the large openings with vertical timber doors along one of the gable ends.

The residence at Best's Winery is **architecturally** significant at a **LOCAL** level. It demonstrates original design qualities of a Late Victorian style. These qualities include the hipped roof form, together with the minor hipped roof and convex verandah that project towards the front. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the asymmetrical composition, single storey height, dichromatic brick wall construction (including the quoining about the windows and building corners), galvanised corrugated iron roof cladding, narrow eaves, cast iron verandah columns and elaborate cast iron verandah brackets and valances, dichromatic brick chimney, timber framed doorway with sidelights and highlights and four panelled timber door, and the timber framed double hung windows. The garden setting surrounding the house also contributes to the significance of the place.

The nearby "Old Nursery Block" of vines also contributes to the aesthetic significance of the place.

The Best's Winery (former Concongella Vineyard) is **historically** significant at a **STATE** level. It has associations with the establishment and development of Best's winery from 1866 by Henry Best, son of David Best and brother of Joseph of the famous Great Western Winery. Henry Best built the original cottage (worker's cottage) in c.1866, followed by the first planting of vines in 1867 (Old Nursery Block). The stables were built in 1870, and the cellars were completed between 1871 and 1874. Wine from the Concongella Vineyard (as it was originally called) became internationally renowned in the 19th century, particularly in Britain and Europe. With the death of Henry Best in 1913, the winery passed to his son, Charles. Upon his death in 1920, Best's Winery was sold to Frederick Pincheon Thomson and descendants of the family have continued to operate the winery.

The worker's cottage and cellars are **scientifically** significant at a **LOCAL** level. The pise wall construction represents a known 19th century built technique no longer widely practised. It also reflects mid 19th century attitudes to cottage and vernacular building influenced by British literature and possibly Californian gold diggers. The horizontal slab construction of the stables building also has scientific significance as a representation of a traditional vernacular building method no long practised.

Overall, the Seppelts Great Western Winery is of **STATE** significance.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Northern Grampians - Shire of Northern Grampians - Stage 2 Heritage Study, Wendy Jacobs, Vicki Johnson, David Rowe, Phil Taylor, 2004;
Hermes Number	105092
Property Number	

---

## Physical Description 1

The Best's Winery (former Concongella Vineyard), 111 Bests Road, Great Western, consists of numerous winery buildings with a picturesque setting on gently sloping land comprising hectares of vineyards (including the original vines planted by Henry Best and known as the "Old Nursery Block"). Of the several buildings and structures on the site, those of particular heritage value include the worker's cottage, stables, cellars and residence.

### Worker's Cottage (built c.1866)

The single storey, Victorian styled worker's cottage is characterised by a gable roof form and a broad return skillion verandah that projects at the front and side. These roof forms are clad in unpainted galvanised corrugated iron. An early rammed earth chimney adorns the roofline to one side.

A feature of the design is the return verandah. It is supported by recent square timber columns. Other early features of the design include the central timber framed doorway with four panelled timber door and the flanking timber framed 12 paned double hung windows.

The worker's cottage is built of pise (rammed earth) construction. This type of dry-earth building was not new to Australia or Victoria, and it had first appeared in Tasmania by the 1820s. It is of ancient origin and examples of it are widespread although not particularly numerous in Australia. According to Prof. Miles Lewis in the History of Building Construction, there were two influences on its use in the second half of the 19th century (it is not known whether these influences had directed Best into adopting this construction technique). The first influence was through literary sources, as there had been a revived interest in cottage building techniques. As Lewis states:

"A spate of new works on cottage design and construction appear, such as C.B. Allen's Rudimentary Treatise on Cottage Building. These overlap with books published for the guidance of emigrants to Australia and elsewhere. In fact one book which served both markets was William Wilds's Practical Instructions on the Art of Building Cottages and Houses of the Humbler Classes . for the Use of Emigrants. Wilds's book was published just before the settlement of Adelaide, where pise was used extensively. These books, and many of the emigrant's manuals that follow, contain descriptions of pise construction which derive partly from the usual French sources, and partly from some new experiments in Hertfordshire."

The second line of influence resulted from the gold rush in Victoria in the 1850s. As Lewis explains:

"The Spanish pise tradition was transplanted to Mexico (along with the better known adobe), and hence to California, and from here was brought by Californian gold-diggers to Victoria."

Internally the worker's cottage has been adapted into toilet facilities.

### Stables (built c.1870, relocated to current site)

The single storey, Victorian vernacular styled stables are characterised by a long simple gable roof and projecting skillion verandah. Both roof forms are clad in galvanised corrugated iron. The building features early horizontal slab red gum construction and it appears that wooden pegs have been used to hold the slabs in position. Horizontal timber slab construction was typical in Australia in the 19th century, and the lack of nails was also common, given that they were expensive.

Other early features of the stables design include the window and door openings.

Internally, the building has been adapted into a museum and bottle shop.

### Cellars

The large, single storey, Victorian vernacular styled cellars building is characterised by a long gable roof form, with an introduced pitched roof addition along one side. These roof forms are clad in galvanised corrugated iron, and the original building features early signage that reads: "Best's Cellars". This signage assisted with aircraft navigation in the early years.

Of particular interest is the construction of the cellars. They are divided into three levels, with the basement being excavated below ground level. The two upper levels feature a substantial red gum structural system of beams, posts and planks. The walls are constructed of pise (rammed earth) and horizontal timber weatherboards. The large openings with vertical timber doors along one of the gable ends also appears to be early.

Residence (1892, rear addition 1946)

The asymmetrical, single storey, brick, Late Victorian styled house is characterised by a hipped roof form, together with a minor hipped roof and convex verandah that projects towards the front. These roof forms are clad in galvanised corrugated iron. An early dichromatic brick chimney adorns the roofline. Narrow overhangs are features of the eaves.

An early feature of the design is the front verandah. It is supported by cast iron columns and is decorated with elaborate brackets and valances.

Other early features of the design include the decoration in the dichromatic brick construction (quoining about the windows and building corners), timber framed doorway with sidelights and highlights and four panelled timber door, and the timber framed double hung windows. The garden setting surrounding the house also contributes to the aesthetic amenity of the place.

## COMPARISON

Seppelt's Great Western Winery (See citation GW/10).

*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/>*