
HORSE DRAWN STONE-CARRYING SLED



Clonard_Epping_stone
sled_KJ_Nov 09



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Location

275 OHERNS ROAD EPPING, WHITTLESEA CITY

Municipality

WHITTLESEA CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2237

VHR Registration

April 8, 2010

Heritage Listing

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - December 19, 2023

What is significant?

The horse-drawn stone-carrying sled found at the Clonard farm was probably made and used to transport the stones used in the construction of the boundary walls of the old Maryfield farm, which are thought to have been built c1858. The land was at that time leased by Frederick (Friedrich) Winter and by the terms of his lease with the land-owner Charles Campbell he was obliged to build a substantial wall or fence around the property boundary. At that time labour was cheap, and dry stone walls could be constructed cheaply, and so are common on Victoria's volcanic plains, where suitable stone is in abundant supply. Sleds such as these are known to have been used on farms in Europe and North America, and have been documented in Australia, to drag across the ground stones too heavy for a man to carry. Stones could be levered onto the platform of the sled, and a horse used to pull it. This however is the only known example to survive in Victoria. It is not certain whether it was used in the initial construction of the walls, c1858, or for later repairs or additions. It has for many years lain on the ground near the southern boundary wall of Clonard.

The vernacular sled is made from a sturdy forked tree or branch, with the forks about 20 cm in diameter. Sections have been cut out of the top surface of the two forks to allow boards to be placed across to form a low platform. A metal chain is attached to the other end by which it could be dragged across the ground, probably by a horse. The wood is now very weathered, and one of the forked ends is broken.

How is it significant?

The Clonard sled is of historical and technical significance to the state of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The sled found at the Clonard farm is of historical and technical significance as the only known example in Victoria of a simple vernacular sled of a type once used to transport large stones used in the construction of the dry stones walls which are common on Victoria's volcanic plains. Such sleds have been documented as having been used in various parts of Australia, but this is the only one known to survive in Victoria. It is a demonstration of the ingenuity of the nineteenth century settlers, in manufacturing simple farm equipment from readily available materials.

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. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works 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 works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan endorsed by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

Construction dates	1850,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered object,
Other Names	CLONARD HOMESTEAD COMPLEX, HORSE SLED, SLED FOR STONES,
Hermes Number	121090
Property Number	

History

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

Dry Stone walling in Victoria

Dry stone walls are known from almost all the country of Europe and Asia, the most common use being for building farm walls. The tradition was brought to Victoria mainly by immigrants from Britain and Germany.

Stone walls in Victoria occur primarily on the volcanic plains which extend from north of Melbourne to the South Australia border. Large parts of the plains are covered in loose surface stone, ranging in size from pebbles to large boulders, which could be used to build fences and other structures. The first dry stone walls were constructed to provide small holding paddocks for stock and define their boundaries. From the mid-1860s stone walls became more common after land sales and the later Selection Acts encouraged private ownership and required improvements to the land, such as fencing. Walls are most likely to be found in areas where early settlement coincided with large quantities of suitable stone. Labour was cheap in the 1860s and dry stone walls, which could use the abundant free stone gathered from the fields, was no more expensive than post and rail fencing. Most of the walls in Victoria were built between the 1850s, when most of the land was opened for sale, and the 1880s when cheap and effective fencing substitutes such as barbed wire became more economical.

The areas best known for their stone walls, which are almost universally of basalt, are the Western District, the Koroit/Port Fairy area and the Yandoit-Daylesford area (Swiss-Italian). North of Melbourne in a small area around what used to be called Westgarthtown (the Thomastown/Epping/Wollert district) a group of German immigrants established a farming community, which replicated the building forms of their homeland. Stone walls in this area are common round small fields and farm yards and their construction mirrors that of the early bluestone buildings

constructed by the German settlers. (Gary Vines, *Built to Last. An historical and archaeological survey of Dry Stone Walls in Melbourne's Western Region*, 1990.)

For the base of the walls larger stones were used, which were heavy and difficult to move. References have been found to the use in several parts of the world of sleds made from a forked tree or branch to move large stones. A flat platform could be placed across the forked section, and the other end attached in some way to a draft animal to pull it across the ground. The stones could be levered onto the platform and pulled to the wall site. Such devices were used for example in Spain well into the first half of the twentieth century. The illustration below shows the tools of a Spanish waller in the early twentieth century, and clearly illustrates a timber sled (or *rosec* in Spanish). [http://www.pierreseche.com/tools_of_dry_stone_builders.htm]

HISTORY OF PLACE

The Clonard boundary walls

The earliest surviving lease contract for the Clonard site (the former Maryfield farm), a seven year lease with Frederick (Friedrich) Winter, dates to 1858. Winter was a German immigrant who had arrived in Victoria in 1850, part of William Westgarth's scheme to promote German immigration, and settled at Westgarthtown at Thomastown. After adding to his original 50 acres at Thomastown, Winter leased this land to a neighbour and had moved to Maryfield by 1858. He was still living there when he died in 1866, aged 55.

A special clause in Winter's lease contract required that he 'erect a good and substantial stone or post and rail fence on one moiety of each of the four principal boundaries of the said land.'. In 1891 a number of statutory declarations were made by Campbell's neighbours which all attested that the 'fences and walls' constituting the boundary of the estate 'were first erected in their present position more than thirty years ago and have remained unaltered except when from time to time repairs have been necessary and which were made on the line of the old fences'. This would mean that these 'fences and walls' were built when Winter took up the lease in 1858. A plan prepared at the time of subdivision of the Epping Village Reserve in 1866 shows the southern east-west part of the Maryfield dry stone wall. This indicates that the Maryfield boundary walls were built soon after the signing of the lease in 1858.

The sled

Near the southern boundary wall are the remains of a weathered forked tree or branch, which is believed to have been used as a sled to drag stones across the ground to the wall site. The ends of the forks have clearly been worked, with sections cut out which would allow boards to be placed across the two ends to form a platform. A metal ring and chain were attached to the other end to serve as an attachment by which it could be pulled. No other examples of this sort of device are known to survive in Victoria.

The date of the sled is not known. It could date from the main period of construction, or have been used at a later date to repair the walls.

Plaque Citation

This is a unique example of the vernacular sleds, made from forked tree branches, once used to move the large stones for the construction of the dry stone walls which are common on Victoria's volcanic plains.

Extent of Registration

The object known as the Horse-drawn Stone-carrying Sled, found at the Clonard estate, 275 O'Herns Road, Epping.

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/>