
CONNOLLY'S HOUSE AND MECHANIC'S HOUSE SITE

Location

62-64 GIPPS STREET PORT FAIRY, MOYNE SHIRE

Municipality

MOYNE SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7321-0095

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO13

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Interpretation of Site

It is reported that the extant building has undergone a number of renovations over the decades but there is reason to believe that underfloor deposits associated with the 19th occupation of the house(s) are likely to be present.

Archaeological
Significance

The site contains the remains of two of the earliest buildings constructed in Port Fairy. In those early years it seems to have housed those who worked at the whaling station as well as Connolly himself. The archaeological remains on the site could provide much information on the conditions and standard of living of the earliest European settlers of Port Fairy.

The grassed areas of the site could contain archaeological features and deposits such as former paths, garden beds, post holes for fences and ancillary buildings, possible strip footings or piers for more substantial structures as well as refuse/cess pits,

Historical
Significance

The original residence on this site was built and owned by Michael Connolly who was a Port Fairy pioneer; named by some as "co-founder". he was Griffith's partner in the whaling station from 1835 and importer of large numbers of cattle to Port Fairy. By the 1840s he had ca. 4000 acres of land "fenced in" around Port Fairy. Connolly was also a member of the Port Phillip Association, which sent Batman to find land across Bass Strait. He is buried in Port Fairy "New Cemetery".

Hermes Number 149829

Property
Number

History

A surveyor's plan dating to early 1843 depicts a handful of structures on the western bank of the Moyne River, including one building marked as "Connolly's House" A second surveyor's plan shows additional structures, including a "mechanics house" south of Connolly's House.

Michael Connolly was a prominent figure in early Port Fairy history, being named by some as "co-founder" of the township. Connolly was a prominent mariner, pastoralist and trader, noted as being associated with John Batman. He held several partnerships with John Griffiths and James Henty in shipping and fishing enterprises in Victoria and Tasmania. In 1835, Connolly and Griffiths established the whaling station at Port Fairy and imported large numbers of sheep and cattle. By the early-mid 1840s, Connolly had acquired ca. 4000 acres of land in the area. It appears that Connolly built the house on the Moyne during the late 1830s or early 1840s and resided there with his wife, Rachael Emily Connolly when he was not at sea.

Little is known of the "mechanics house" identified to the south of Connolly's house; some sources suggest that the term "mechanics house" indicates that these structures may have served as housing for whalers and their families.

In 1848, Connolly ordered six Norfolk Pines to be shipped from Sydney and his gardener, James Roberts reported planting two at the rear of Lot 4 in June. That same year it appears that the lease for this allotment was passed in as bank board minutes record a sale of the allotment to John Cox.

Michael Connolly died in 1855 and his wife the following year. It appears the house was rented until from 1856 until the 1870s when it was purchased by Mr JB Holden. It was rented throughout the 1880s by prominent miller Joseph Goble, who named the house 'Moyne House'.

The property subsequently changed hands several times, and may have been renovated in the 1920s. A plaque currently exhibited on the house identifies it as "Moyne House".

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/>