

# FORMER WILLIAM RUTLEDGE AND CO. PROPERTIES



Former William Rutledge & Co. Properties



Former William Rutledge & Co. Properties



Former William Rutledge & Co. Properties



Former William Rutledge & Co. Properties



Former William Rutledge & Co. Properties



Former William Rutledge & Co. Properties



Former William Rutledge & Co. Properties



Former William Rutledge & Co. Properties



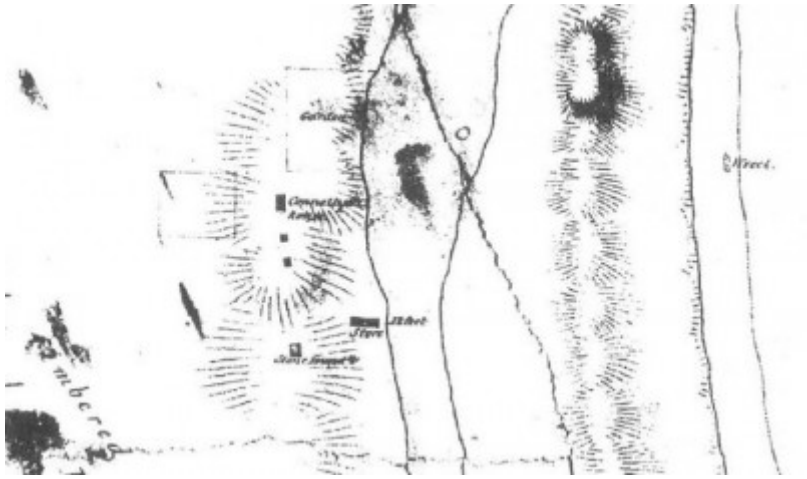
Former William Rutledge & Co. Properties



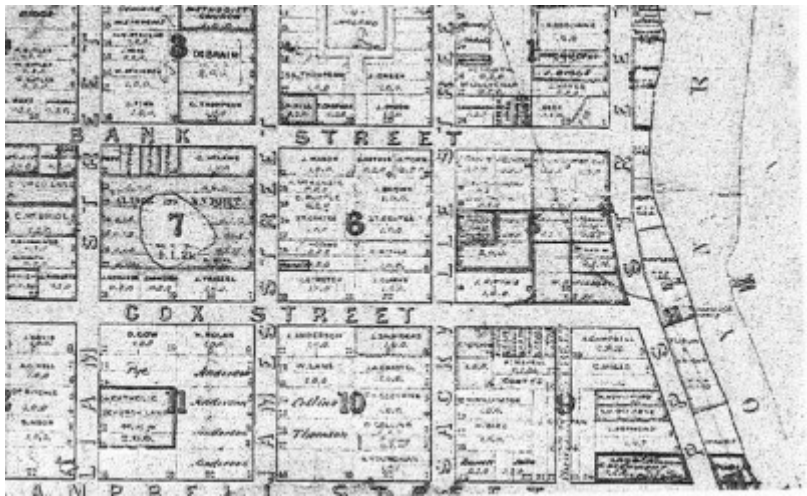
Former William Rutledge & Co. Properties



Former William Rutledge and Co Properties



Former William Rutledge & Co. Properties



Former William Rutledge & Co. Properties



Former William Rutledge & Co. Properties



Former William Rutledge & Co. Properties

---

### **Location**

52-60 GIPPS STREET AND 4-6 COX STREET PORT FAIRY, MOYNE SHIRE

### **Municipality**

MOYNE SHIRE

### **Level of significance**

Heritage Inventory Site

### **Heritage Inventory (HI) Number**

H7321-0094

### **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO13

### **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Inventory

---



This grouping is contained between No.52 to No.60 Gipps Street and No. 4 and No. 6 Cox Street. Each allotment will be discussed individually below.

#### *No.6 Cox Street*

Located at the south western end of the curtilage around this grouping, the property contains a single storey weatherboard house that is set back approximately 15 m from Cox Street. The house is located in the middle of the allotment and contains a shed/garage in the rear northeast corner of the property. The house appears to be constructed on raised piers. A large bluestone wall is located along the front fence that continues across the front of this property to near the corner of Cox and Gipps St. The front of the property been paved and contains a garden, while the rear of the property appears open and grassed.

Moderate archaeological potential exists across the entire allotment. No identified buildings were mapped within the allotment of No.6 Cox Street, however, other structures, such as cesspits, backyard surfaces or drainage features associated with the 1840s dwellings located closer to Gipps Street may be present within this property.

#### *No.4 Cox Street*

This property is located on the corner of Cox and Gipps Street. The property contains a large weatherboard house set back approximately 15 m from the property boundary and occupies the majority of the allotment. The house appears to be built on raised piers. At the front of the property is paved and asphalted, with a double garage located in the southeast corner of the block. The bluestone fence extends across from No.6 Cox Street, across to southeast corner of the allotment.

Moderate archaeological potential exists in the front (southern) end of the allotment between the house and the front fence; as well as, underneath the house.

Potential remains of the "stone foundation remains" as noted on the 1840s plan of the area are believed to be located in the southeast corner of the property that extends into the adjacent (No.52 Gipps Street) allotment. The house appears is likely built on raised pier footings, and the front of the allotment has been covered with hard surfaces, indicating that potential archaeological remains of structures, such as cesspits, backyard deposits/surfaces and drainage features may be present within on the property.

#### *No. 52 Gipps Street*

This property is on the corner of Gipps and Cox Street. A recently built rendered brick house is located on the northern boundary of the property, with the remainder of the property consisting of a grass and garden area. The house appears to be constructed on concrete strip footings.

The location of the "stone foundation remains" as noted on the 1840s plan is likely located in the south-western corner of the allotment that extends into the adjacent (No.4 Cox Street) allotment. This area is currently part of a raised garden and grassed area, obscuring any archaeological remains that may be present. The garden and grassed area is considered to have moderate archaeological potential, while low archaeological potential exists below the location of the house.

#### *No.54 Gipps Street*

The archaeological significance of the site lies in the opportunity it provides to inform on the living conditions of those earliest of European settlers in Port Fairy, with respect to the quality of their housing, furnishings, diet and general variety and complexity of their material culture. This site has the potential to exhibit data on the social range of its inhabitants, from the whaling station worker to the merchant king of the region, William Routledge.

6 Cox St: Moderate archaeological potential exists across the entire allotment. No identified buildings were mapped within the allotment of No.6 Cox Street, however, other structures, such as cesspits, backyard surfaces or drainage features associated with the 1840s dwellings located closer to Gipps Street may be present within this property 4 Cox St: Moderate Archaeological potential exists in the front (southern) end of the allotment between the house and the front fence; as well as, underneath the house.

Potential remains of the "stone foundation remains" as noted on the 1840s plan of the area are believed to be located in the southeast corner of the property that extends into the adjacent (No.52 Gipps Street) allotment. The house appears is likely built on raised pier footings, and the front of the allotment has been covered with hard surfaces, indicating that potential archaeological remains of structures, such as cesspits, backyard deposits/surfaces and drainage features may be present within on the property.

#### No. 52 Gipps Street

The location of the "stone foundation remains" as noted on the 1840s plan is likely located in the south-western corner of the allotment that extends into the adjacent (No.4 Cox Street) allotment. This area is currently part of a raised garden and grassed area, obscuring any archaeological remains that may be present. The garden and grassed area is considered to have moderate archaeological potential, while low archaeological potential exists below the location of the house.

#### Archaeological Significance

#### No. 54 Gipps Street

Limited archaeological potential exists on this allotment. Low archaeological potential exists within the shared driveway as service trenches and other disturbances may have occurred in this area. Minimal archaeological potential exists within the footprint of the townhouses on the allotment.

#### No. 56A Gipps Street

Moderate Archaeological potential is likely to exist on the property, especially along the driveway and garden area around the front of the house. This archaeological potential is also expected under the footprint of the two storey house.

#### No. 56 Gipps Street

Moderate Archaeological potential exists on this property, including underneath the house and garage. the potential underneath the garage, however, may have been reduced from the construction of footings for the structure.

#### No. 58 Gipps Street

Moderate archaeological potential exists on this property as the house has been built above the ground level, and the remainder of the property does not appear to have been disturbed.

#### No. 60 Gipps Street

Archaeological remains of the former houses present in the 1840 map of the area are likely to include bluestone strip footings from the main houses, potentially bluestone strip footings and/or post holes for associated structures such as privies and sheds. Surface drains, external paved surfaces and possibly a well may also be present as well as refuse and cess pits.

Historical Significance

This site represents the earliest phase of residential development of Port Fairy from the 1840s prior to the establishment of the town grid and includes the residence of William Rutledge. Rutledge is an omnipresent figure in the early years of the development of Port Fairy as he instigated many of its activities. Arriving in the town in 1843 he immediately formed his trading venture, which shipped wool, tallow and, later, gold to England, and imported a wide variety of goods, using their own ships and wharf. They also issued their own notes and tokens, and by facilitating credit, fostered the early inter-colonial cattle trade. He later bought a considerable portion of land around Koroit to which he encouraged many Irish immigrants to settle there. William Rutledge was also highly active in almost all town affairs in the 1840s-1850s, variously serving not only as magistrate, mayor and alderman. It has been stated that Rutledge was "inextricable entwined with the early history and prosperity of Port Fairy for he instigated many of its activities."

Hermes Number 156814

Property Number

---

## History

The five features within this listing that predate the establishment of the Port Fairy township include four "mechanics" houses and a set of "stone foundations," identified on two 1843 surveyors plans.

Little is known regarding the "mechanics houses"; some sources suggest that the term "mechanics" indicates that these structures may have served as housing for whalers and their families, employed at the Griffith Island whaling station established in the mid 1830s. Broader descriptions of the Port Fairy settlement during the early-mid 1840s describe a number of small, irregularly spaced dwellings along the western bank of the Moyne River, of "economical construction," mostly built of sawn or hewn timber or wattle and daub. It is likely that the "mechanics houses" were of such a construction type.

The "stone foundations" have variously been interpreted as indicative of early construction of houses for either Charles Mills or Alexander Campbell. Mapping overlays, however, have provided no secure answer as the location of this feature does not convincingly correspond with the specific location of any structures noted on later plans.

In 1848, following the establishment of the Port Fairy town grid and formalisation of many earlier leases and land purchases, the "stone foundations" and the four "mechanics' houses" fall within town allotments purchased by Mr. William Rutledge & his business partner, Mr. Horace Flower, situated on the NW corner of Gipps and Cox Streets.

The "stone foundations" fall near the SE corner of Rutledge's large L-shaped allotment with main frontage to Cox Street. It is quite possible that these foundations represent the footprint of a later building that had simply been modified by the time the buildings on the allotment were next planned by surveyor. The "mechanics houses," likely to have been timber constructions, were most probably dismantled or modified into more substantial buildings when the town allotments were formally transferred.

William Rutledge, land investor and developer associated with James Atkinson, arrived in Port Fairy, acquiring the 5120 acre "Farnham Special Survey" and being appointed as Atkinson's agent for the newly developing town. In ca. late 1843-early 1844, Rutledge purchased the land, store and goodwill of the only mercantile business in the town, belonging to Mr. John Cox, and swiftly set out making improvements and expanding the operation. He originally ran the establishment largely on his own, with some assistance from his brother Mr. Lloyd Rutledge, and some accounts indicate that James Atkinson was involved to some extent.

In 1848, Rutledge took on Lloyd, Mr. William Foster and Mr. Horace Flower as business partners and established the firm of Messrs William Rutledge & Co. Over the following two decades, Rutledge & Co. developed into a substantial multi-faceted mercantile business supplying virtually all the needs of the growing township of Port Fairy and the surrounding agricultural and pastoral district. The company served as shipowners, importers and exporters, goldbuyers, stock and station agents, general merchants, warehouse and bulk-store operators, insurance and commission agents, wine and spirit merchants, wool and produce buyers, mail contractors and merchant bankers. Rutledge & Co.

quickly expanded to one of the greatest commercial concerns in the colony of Victoria, essentially holding a monopoly over local and regional trade and contributing significantly to the growth and development of Port Fairy. T William Rutledge was also highly active in almost all town affairs in the 1840s-1850s, variously serving not only as magistrate, mayor and alderman. It has been stated that Rutledge was "inextricable entwined with the early history and prosperity of Port Fairy for he instigated many of its activities." Rutledge acquired the allotment on the corner of Gipps and Cox Streets partially as an expansion of the Rutledge & Co. holdings, but also as a residential property for himself and his family. Although the purchase notice for the allotment dates to 1848, it is quite likely that Rutledge occupied the property beforehand - for at least one if not a few years.

By the late 1840s - early 1850s, Rutledge had constructed a large basalt residence that soon became colloquially known as the "Big House." Towards the end of the 1850s, rate records and notices to let describe the Rutledge holding in this location as including a five-roomed stone dwelling; which was at that time occupied by Mrs. Polisenia Gottreaux, a second stone dwelling "*with six rooms, pantry, kitchen, detached laundry & store room, garden and every convenience*" which was Rutledge's "Big House" and "five weatherboard cottages situated between" the two stone houses. Early 1860s photographs also a basalt wall along Cox Street and a rear limestone wall with sheds to the north.

In 1862, Rutledge & Co. filed for voluntary insolvency and the Gipps and Cox Street property was resumed by William Young, the Belfast manager of the Bank of Australasia as mortgage; Rutledge moved from the house to live in his homestead at on the Farnham Estate. Together with the abutting allotment owned by Horace Flowers, the whole complex was described as including "*2 or 3 large store, offices, excellent cottage, stables, loose boxes and carriage house, surrounded by stone wall.*" An 1870 surveyor's plan of Port Fairy depicts six-seven structures on Rutledge's allotment and none of Flower's section, which may indicate that the majority, if not all, of the abovementioned buildings advertised in 1862 were within Rutledge's land.

The property failed to sell and throughout the 1860s it was variously leased and used for several purposes including auctioneers office, printing house, produce agents and choir rehearsals. In 1871, the site was finally sold to shipping agents and merchants, Challacombe & Bishop (who also purchased Rutledge's former waterfront premises on the western bank of the Moyne). An advertisement dating to 1880 describes the property as including a "*bluestone building, stone offices, outbuildings, occupied by Messrs Challacombe & Bishop, enclosed on three sides with a stone wall.*" The property was again leased throughout the 1880s, eventually being divided into two lots and later sold.

By the late 1880s, a section of Rutledge's original allotment had been resumed for the Belfast-Koroit railway and structures in the SE corner were demolished. By the end of the 19th century, it appears that the only Rutledge buildings extant were the stables / shed built along the northern and western boundary walls and the two large stone buildings with frontage to Cox Street, the "Big House" and second cottage / office.

Throughout the 20th century the property was gradually subdivided and sold as smaller residential allotments, the buildings gradually falling into disrepair and eventually being demolished.

*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/>*