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# BRUCE'S CREEK PASTORAL OUTSTATION

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## Location

HARVEY ROAD BANNOCKBURN, GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

## Municipality

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7721-0541

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 4, 2021

The earliest record of the site (Bruce's Creek Pastoral Outstation, Harvey Road, Bannockburn) comes from an 1853 historic plan showing the location of an 'out station', including an outstation 'hut' and several fenced paddocks, located on the banks of Bruce's Creek (see Figure 1, Attachment 1; SGO, 1853). The precise construction date, period(s) of use, and demolition date of the outstation is not known; however, primary and secondary sources suggest a relatively short period of use, dating broadly to the pastoral occupation of the land by James Bruce (c. 1840-1849), George Russel (on behalf of the Clyde Company) (c. 1853-1858) and others during the mid-nineteenth century.

In general terms, pastoral settlers of the 1830s and 1840s constructed home stations and/or outstations and fencing for the purposes of temporarily holding stock, or as horse paddocks, often with building materials sourced from locally available natural resources, such as stone and timber (Dingle 1984, pp. 28-29; Pickard, 2007, p. 145). Basalt is a ubiquitous feature of the landscape, and the nineteenth century practice of using stone for the construction of dwellings in areas where it could be sourced with minimal quarrying (Connah 1993, p. 66) is reflected at the site. Today, the site primarily exists as a low, rectangular mound of earth bordered on two sides by discontinuous but linear alignments of stones (basalt) measuring 6.60m (E-W) x 3.70m (N-S) x 150-600mm (high) - the probable remnants of the outstation hut's original footings (see Plates 1-4, Attachment 1).

The site is clearly associated with the mid-nineteenth century (c.1840-c.1858) pastoral occupation of the property and has historic associations with the earliest period of European settlement in the region, and with the

development of the pastoral industry. In addition, it has strong historic associations with pastoralists and pastoral companies of the period; specifically, James Bruce, George Russell, and the Clyde Company, who played a significant role in the early history of Bannockburn township and the surrounding pastoral landscape.

The site has been assessed as having 'moderate to high' archaeological potential, and 'moderate to high' heritage significance at a local level.

N.B. The site inspection was conducted as part of a Historical Heritage Assessment (HHA) undertaken on behalf of the Victorian Planning Authority during the development of a Precinct Structure Plan (PSP). The study area for the HHA encompasses several farming properties in Bannockburn - this report is currently in preparation. Once completed, a copy of the HHA will be provided to Heritage Victoria, which will provide additional details regarding the history of the study area and survey methodologies. A summary of the site inspection, including photographs of the site, have been provided as Attachment 1. Maps and Figures have been provided as Attachment 2. Analysis of site (interpretation) As a result of the site inspection and background research, the nominated site has been assessed as having 'moderate to high' archaeological potential, as detailed below: Threshold A (archaeology) Background research and the site inspection indicate that: • There is 'moderate to high potential' for archaeological features and deposits to be preserved within the nominated site boundaries; and • Any preserved archaeological features and/or deposits will likely be associated with the c.1840 to c.1858 occupation of the site as a pastoral outstation, and are likely to be in a condition that could contribute to an understanding of the site's historic occupation. All portions of the property (Bruce's Creek Pastoral Outstation, Harvey Road, Bannockburn) subject to a heritage survey and assessed as having more than 'low archaeological potential' have been recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Inventory (see Attachments 1-2). The nominated site extent includes: •

Interpretation  
of Site

The visible footprint of a rectangular structure (basalt/bluestone footings); potentially marking the location of a nineteenth century outstation hut. Historic records indicate that an outstation hut was located at the site by 1853 – georeferenced mapping corallites the location of the identified structure with the 1853 mapped location of an outstation hut (assessed as having 'moderate to high' archaeological potential). • A curtilage of land surrounding the above structure that potentially includes additional features and/or deposits associated with the nineteenth century pastoral occupation of the site (assessed as having 'moderate' archaeological potential); and • An area of Bruce's Creek, including its western and eastern bank, that potentially includes additional features and/or deposits associated with the nineteenth century pastoral occupation of the property; specifically: modifications made to the bank and bed of Bruce's Creek to provide stock and foot access to water and/or to the eastern bank of Bruce's Creek; and remnant fencing along the eastern and possible western bank of the creek (assessed as having 'moderate' archaeological potential). Threshold B (place history) Background research and the site inspection indicate that: • The site is associated with the mid-nineteenth century (c.1840-c.1858) pastoral occupation of the property and has historic associations with the earliest period of European settlement in the region, and with the development of the pastoral industry. • The site has strong historic associations with pastoralists and pastoral companies of the period; specifically, James Bruce, George Russell, and the Clyde Company, who played a significant role in the early history of Bannockburn township and the surrounding pastoral landscape.

Hermes  
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207143

Property  
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## History

The earliest identified record of the site (Bruce's Creek Pastoral Outstation, Harvey Road, Bannockburn) comes from an 1853 historic plan marking the location of an 'out station', including an outstation 'hut' and several fenced paddocks, located on the banks of Bruce's Creek (see Figure 1, Attachment 1; SGO, 1853). The precise construction date of the outstation is not known; however, several large pastoral stations are known to have been established in the vicinity of the site as early as the late 1830s.

Primary and secondary source material indicate that James Bruce - likely a Scottish immigrant - established a pastoral station covering an area of ~11 square miles on Salt Water Creek (now Bruce's Creek) by c. 1840, and that he continued to occupy the property until c.1849 (Billis & Kenyon 1932, p. 26; e.g., *Geelong Advertiser & Squatters Advocate*, Dec. 23, 1846, p. 1). By 1853, the property had been purchased by George Russell (see Figure 1, Attachment 1; SGO, 1853), a local pastoralist that had worked in the region since at least c. 1838. Annotations made on the 1853 historic plan make clear that George Russell managed/occupied the land, including the 'hut', on behalf of the Clyde Company at that time. The Clyde Company ceased to operate in c. 1858. A land sale notice published at the end of Russell's tenure in 1858 indicates that the property was primarily used for sheep grazing during this period (*The Star*, Jan. 2, 1858, p. 3).

By 1864, land encompassing the site had been consolidated into a single farming property under the ownership of George Webster. From this point in time, the property appears in historic records as the 'Burnside Estate' and is variably recorded as including between 5000 to 6000 acres. The land encompassing the Burnside Estate was owned and occupied by a small number of local pastoral families throughout the late nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The Burnside Estate was subdivided and sold as smaller farming allotments in 1913.

The precise construction date, period(s) of use, and demolition date of the outstation is not known. While Russell's association with the structure is clear, it seems likely that the construction and use of the outstation predates his ownership of the land (i.e., c. 1840-1853). Specific details regarding the use or demolition of the site are not available, although it is notable that the outstation is not represented on any available subsequent historic plans (e.g., GBWO, 1912). Whether the outstation existed as a standing structure beyond Russell's tenure, i.e., into the late nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, remains unclear; however, the identified remnant structure and any potential associated material culture can be said to broadly relate to the nineteenth century pastoral occupation of the land, with its primary occupation period likely dating from c. 1840, through to c. 1858.

Today the site survives as a low, rectangular mound of earth bordered on two sides by discontinuous but linear alignments of stones (basalt) measuring 6.60m (E-W) x 3.70m (N-S) x 150-600mm (high) - the probable remnants of the outstation hut's original footings (see Plates 1-4, Attachment 1). The land encompassing the site continues to be used for sheep grazing to this day.

*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/>*