
120 AITKEN STREET BURIALS

Location

120 AITKEN STREET GISBORNE, MACEDON RANGES SHIRE

Municipality

MACEDON RANGES SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7823-0085

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 27, 2022

What is significant?

The site was purchased by John Thomas in 1880 and transferred to Anne Bensen in 1895. In 1909, the land was sold to John Bird in and following his death in 1927 the land was transferred to the Higher Elementary School for use as a pine plantation. Historic aerials show the plantation had been harvested at least twice between 1950 and 1968. Higher Elementary School was later absorbed by the Department of Education and is presently Gisborne Secondary College. The land is adjacent to Gisborne Cemetery and historical accounts note that internments occurred in the area prior to the official gazettement of Gisborne Cemetery in 1858. Further a historical newspaper mentions the exhumation of a burial with associated grave goods from the site, however no other reports have been found. Historical investigations undertaken by the Macedon Ranges Shire Council the site entailed extensive research as to the regions of the cemetery. It was suggested that due to inconsistencies relating to the allocation of burial sites in the past, there may be a risk of burials present outside the current gazettement of Gisborne Cemetery, extending south into 120 Aitken Street. Ground penetrating radar has been undertaken in the northern section of property, directly south of Gisborne Cemetery and these investigations identified changes in soil profiles in six areas, which may indicate the presence of human internments. Therefore, the site has moderate potential to contain significant archaeological deposits, features and/ artefacts associated with the neighbouring use of the site as a cemetery from the mid-nineteenth century.

The site is of local historical significance as a substantially intact example of mid-nineteenth century cemetery that is still in use. The cemetery has strong association with Gisborne from its early settlement and development

during the gold rush (a stopping point enroute to Castlemaine) and timber industry in Gisborne and surrounding areas. The graves are important for the information they provide about burial customs and patterns of death in Victoria

How is it significant?

Why is it significant?

Hermes Number 208870

Property Number

History

The land at 120 Aitken Street Gisborne was noted as 'undulating land suitable only for building purposes' in 1856. Records show the land was surveyed and gazette around 1858 with land marked out based on religious denominations.

Historical investigations undertaken by the Macedon Ranges Shire Council relating to the Gisborne Early Years Hub – Pine Planation site did extensive research relating to the cemetery. It was suggested that due to inconsistencies relating to the allocation of burials sites in the past, there may be a risk of burials present outside the current gazetted area of Gisborne Cemetery, extending south into 120 Aitken Street. Maps of the Gisborne Cemetery include 'old graves' and very old trees were present without specific property lines.

The land now known as 120 Aitken Street was taken up to John Thomas in 1880, and transferred to Anne Bensen in 1895. The land was sold to John Bird in 1909, and following his death in 1927 the land was transferred to the Higher Elementary School for use as a pine planation. Historic aerials show the planation had been harvested at least twice between 1950 and 1968.

Higher Elementary School was later absorbed by the Department of Education and is presently known as *Gisborne Secondary College*.

In the Department of Educations initial investigation in selling the property, ground penetrating radar (GPR) was undertaken during the production of a Preliminary Investigation by ERM. The GPR was calibrated by moving over a known grave. ERM identified an area in the north-eastern corner of 120 Aitken (in the area previously market as 'V & OG' on the Gisborne Cemetery plan, and identified two areas of disturbance, a small square consistent with a burial map of Gisborne Cemetery, and another which may indicate a coffin burial.

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/>