
FORMER BERRIBEE SHEARER'S QUARTERS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

Location

BERRIBEE HOMESTEAD TRACK, LINDSAY POINT

Municipality

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7129-0005

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 3, 2022

What is significant?

The Former Shearer's Quarters area at Berribee Homestead Complex comprises a shearers' area associated with Berribee Station. This site represents the archaeological remains of a 1925 shearers' living quarters (including the remains of the overseer's cottage), situated near the extant shearing shed and sheep dip. This place represents the potential for archaeological features and deposits associated with the working and domestic lives of the people who formerly occupied the shearers' quarters. While the quarters themselves are no longer extant, and the date of its demolition remains unknown, the footings and kitchen fireplace are visible, along with a raised area that may comprise a building slab. Surface materials identified comprise broken bottles, ceramic fragments, and metal fragments that may represent door hinges and window closures, which are representative of the sorts of artefacts that may be present in a subsurface context.

How is it significant?

The Former Shearer's Quarters is of local historical and scientific significance.

Why is it significant?

The Former Shearer's Quarters are historically and scientifically important as this site can provide archaeological information on the lives of the shearers who were quartered there. The site is part of the Berribee Homestead Complex, which was continually operated between 1920 and 1976 by members of the Bowden family under the Berribee Pastoral Company, and from 1976 to 1991 by the Amarina Pastoral Company. It contains features that relate to the shearers' quarters, which in turn, are connected to the overall wool industry in the Millewa from 1925 onwards. This would also provide a clearer understanding of the timeperiod in which the shearers lived on

Berribee Station, over that 71-year period, and may also provide additional information as to how the quarters were constructed and maintained, and the approximate date of the demolition of these quarters. Therefore, this archaeological site can shed light on the domestic and working lives of the shearers who worked there, providing an understanding as to the part the shearers played in the early-mid C20th pastoral industry in the Millewa region.

Interpretation of Site

The Former Shearers' Quarters area at Berribee Homestead Complex contains features that relate to grazing and raising livestock as part of the wool industry in the Millewa from 1925 onwards, particularly to how the shearers lived on Berribee Station. The extant corrugated iron wool shed was built in 1925, with the related overseer's cottage and shearers' quarters built shortly afterwards. The quarters themselves are no longer extant, and the date of its demolition remains unknown. The footings and kitchen fireplace are visible, along with a raised area that may comprise a building slab. Broken bottles, which have not been dated, were also identified on the site, along with ceramic fragments, and metal fragments that may represent door hinges and window closures representative of the sorts of artefacts that may be present in a subsurface context. The Berribee Homestead Complex evidences the life of the Millewa shearer from the 1920s, particularly those employed by the Berribee Pastoral Company. This history is significant at a local level, within the framework as part of transforming and managing land and natural resources, in particular, grazing and raising livestock as part of the wool industry. The Former Shearer's Quarters area at Berribee Homestead Complex meets the definition of archaeological site under the Heritage Act. It contains features that relate to the shearers' quarters that are 75 or more years old, provides information of past activity in the State, relating to grazing and raising livestock as part of the wool industry in the Millewa from 1925 onwards, which require archaeological methods to reveal information about the use of these historical items at the site. The site contains features relating to how shearers lived on Berribee Station. While the quarters themselves are no longer extant, and the date of its demolition remains unknown, the footings and kitchen fireplace are visible, along with a raised area that may comprise a building slab. Broken bottles, which have not been dated, were also identified on the site, along with ceramic fragments, and metal fragments that may represent door hinges and window closures representative of the sorts of artefacts that may be present in a subsurface context. Therefore, the Former Shearer's Quarters area at Berribee Homestead Complex site meets Threshold A (archaeology). The Former Shearer's Quarters area at Berribee Homestead Complex evidences the life of the Millewa shearer from the 1920s, particularly those employed by the Berribee Pastoral Company. This history is significant at a local level, within the framework as part of transforming and managing land and natural resources, in particular, grazing and raising livestock as part of the wool industry. The Former Shearer's Quarters area at Berribee Homestead Complex thus meets the Threshold B (place history).

Other Names Berribee Station, Berribee Front Paddock,

Hermes Number 209286

Property Number

History

Berribee Pastoral Company was formed by Harold and Colin Bowden, and Charles R Hunt on 29 July 1920 for £15,000. They gained their Grazing Licence for 58,000 acres of the northern portion of Berribee Front Paddock on 1 June 1920. Hunt left the company in 1921, leaving the Bowden brothers with his shares. While Lindsay Island was originally part of the plan of the licenced land, it was excised from the new Grazing Licence given in 1935 when Harold became the sole manager of the property. Mapping dating to 1912 shows the original property as including much of the west half of Lindsay Island, although no buildings are extant in the vicinity of the homestead in 1916. A 1926 plan confirms that the island had been excised, with Berribee Pastoral Company

operating to the southeast of Lindsay Island. During the 1930s and 1940s, the property was overgrazed, causing sand drifts to accumulate there during the drought. Additionally, there were timber getters operating for wood for the distilleries in Renmark, under the supervision of the State Forests Department (1908-1918) and the Victorian Forestry Commission (1918-1983). Harold's son, Geoff, administered the company after his father's death in 1952, and seems to have utilised land both on and off Lindsay Island during his tenure. By 1966, when Geoff made an application to purchase 41,300 acres of land for Berribee Station, an assessment report by the Forests Commission stated that all merchantable timber has been removed under licence over the past ten years. Aerial imagery shows the homestation, including the shearers' quarters near the woolshed, in 1972. In 1976, the property was taken up the Amarina Pastoral Company until 1991, when it became part of the Murray-Sunset National Park (Ballinger 2005; Bell 2013). The first small homestead, which is still extant, was built by the Bowden brothers in 1920, comprising a two-home house with a slab and corrugated iron kitchen and tank. However, a larger kit home, the second homestead, was built adjacent to the original structure by the brothers in 1922. This is also extant, but has undergone remodelling and renovations between 1927 and 1956. A third homestead was built in 1925 for Colin after his marriage, but it was destroyed in a fire in 1962 (Ballinger 2005). Photography of several of the buildings was taken in c.1926, showing the approximate relationship between the then extant structures. Additional buildings were built across Berribee Station, including a six-stand Murray Pine, Oregon timber and corrugated iron wool shed in 1925, and an overseer's cottage and shearers' quarters shortly thereafter. A garage and an engine shed were added in the 1930s, with a septic tank added in 1946-1947 (Ballinger 2005). Aerial imagery dated to c.1965 shows the portion of the station adjacent the Murray River. Today, the homestead complex comprises two homesteads, a pumphouse, water tank and sheds, along with diesel tank, tank stands, a garage, and a washhouse and fire pit. To the west, former stables and tack shed and a slaughter slab are extant.

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/>