
CHURCH ROAD FARM COMPLEX

Location

260 CHURCH ROAD, HAZELWOOD 3840

Municipality

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H8121-0062

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 29, 2024

What is significant?

The Church Road Farm Complex comprises the remains of a former livestock farm which existed at the site between the 1870s and 1944. The site comprises the locations of six late 19th to early 20th century farm structures as well as two circular cisterns, one of which survives intact to the present day.

How is it significant?

The Church Road Farm Complex is of local historical and archaeological significance.

Why is it significant?

The Church Road Farm Complex is of historical significance due to its association with one of the earliest farming estates in Hazelwood North, having been established in the immediate wake of the selection of the Traralgon West pastoral run.

The site is of archaeological significance due to the high likelihood of archaeological deposits remaining at the site. Archaeological deposits are likely to remain at the site in varying contexts, including as former subfloor deposits associated with the homestead and other farm buildings, within destruction contexts associated with the 1944 Yallourn bushfire, as well as at the bases of the two cisterns. No substantial development has been undertaken within the site extent since its abandonment in 1944, leading to a high potential for undisturbed deposits to remain onsite. Any archaeological deposits or features are anticipated to shed light on farming activities undertaken by the Gooding and Jones families in the late 19th to early 20th century, as well as assist in more conclusively determining the age of the residence and farm buildings. Additionally, archaeological deposits associated with the residence are likely to shed light on everyday farming life in late 19th to early 20th century Hazelwood North.

Interpretation of Site

Mid-19th century land-use of the area was primarily pastoral. Between 1844 and 1853, the site was located on land within the Traralgon pastoral run. It was subsequently located within the smaller Traralgon West pastoral run between 1853 and 1869. As such, the site was likely specifically used as grazing land for cattle or sheep between 1844 and 1869. Late 19th century land-use of the site was residential and pastoral. The site was occupied by James Gooding and his family between the early 1870s and 1899, who are recorded as having raised cattle, horses and pigs onsite. The use of handmade bricks in the construction of the existing cistern indicates that the homestead was constructed by the Gooding family upon purchasing the site, as bricks manufactured using Hoffman Kilns or mechanical presses become more prevalent in regional areas after the 1870s with the expansion of the rail network (Stuart 1987: 37). Early to mid-20th century land use of the site continued to be residential and pastoral, with the Jones family occupying the site between at least 1916 and 1944. In 1921, the site is recorded as including a stable, cow shed, wool shed and pigsty, indicating that the Jones family also raised livestock onsite, as well as producing secondary products (wool). Residential use of the site ceased on 14 February 1944, with the destruction of the site during the Yallourn bushfire. Mid-20th to early 21st century land use of the site has been purely pastoral. The Jones family built a new homestead elsewhere on the property following the 1944 bushfire, leaving the site as grazing land. The presence of cattle in the most recent satellite imagery (September 2023) indicates a continued use of the site for this function through to the present day.

Hermes
Number

212108

Property
Number

History

The earliest European occupation of the site is represented by its settlement by pastoral squatters, with the Traralgon run being established by Edward and Edmund Hobson in 1844 (Cuthill 1970). In 1853, the Traralgon run was split into two halves ('Traralgon East' and 'Traralgon West') and sold off (Cuthill 1970). An 1863 survey plan reveals that the location of the later Church Road Farm Complex is situated on the western edge of the Traralgon West pastoral run (Figure 12). The various pastoral runs surrounding Traralgon were subsequently opened up for selection in 1869 (Cuthill 1970). The location of the site is next depicted in an 1880 Traralgon parish plan, in which it is situated within a lot owned by James Gooding (Figure 13). The Gooding family are recorded as having settled on 'The Ridge' in Hazelwood North around the early 1870s as part of the land selection process (Legg 1992: 42, Traralgon Record 1899: 2). The Goodings successfully raised a variety of livestock, with a livestock auction held on their farm on 8 May 1883 including the sale of milk cows, heifers, horses (foals, fillies, colts and mares) and pigs (Traralgon Record and Morwell, Mirboo, Toongabbie, Heyfield, Tyers and Callignee Advertiser 1883: 3). The Goodings are also reported to have later managed the local post office (Legg 1992: 42). Mr and Mrs. Gooding resided at the site until their deaths in 1899 (Traralgon Record 1899: 2, The Narracon Shire Advocate 1899: 4). The property encompassing the Church Road Farm Complex was subsequently acquired by the Jones family. In June 1921, Henry James Jones transferred his ownership of allotment 3A to his brother Frank Jones under the Soldier Settlement Scheme. Documentation from the transfer records that in 1920 Henry James Jones had owned the land for the previous four or five years, operating a dairy farm at the site (Case No. 499/86.6 PROV). The transfer document describes the property as comprising a six room, weatherboard and iron dwelling, a weatherboard and iron stable, a cow shed, a wool shed, a pigsty and two iron tanks. Water sources comprised two wells, a dam and a permanent creek. The total valuation of the property was £502 (\$45,161 AUD as of 2022). The farm complex is visible in aerial imagery from 1935 (Figure 14). At least five buildings are evident in this image, with two structures being noticeably larger than the other three structures. It is likely that the northernmost large structure represents the homestead, while the other structure is likely to be the weatherboard and iron stable mentioned in the 1921 transfer document. Likewise, some of the smaller buildings likely correspond with the cow shed, wool shed and pigsty mentioned in the same document. Finally, two cisterns are also visible at the northern end of the site, representing the two "wells" mentioned in the 1921 transfer document. Hazelwood North was severely impacted by the 14 February 1944 Yallourn bushfire, which originated from scrub burning activity on a farm located approximately 3 miles (4.8

km) north-west of Yallourn (State Electricity Commission of Victoria 1944: 8). The fire spread rapidly in a south-easterly direction, aided by a combination of high wind speeds (64 km/h), high temperature (37° Celsius) and low humidity (7%), spreading past Morwell within 40 minutes of the initial ignition (State Electricity Commission of Victoria 1944: 8; Figure 15-Figure 16). The Yallourn Fire ultimately killed eight people and destroyed 80 houses in the Morwell area, while in Traralgon three were killed and 40 houses destroyed (State Electricity Commission of Victoria 1944). A contemporaneous newspaper article confirms that the Jones farm was one of 40 properties destroyed in Traralgon Shire by this fire (The Age 1944: 3). A 1945 aerial image depicts the extent of destruction to the Church Road Farm Complex caused by the Yallourn bushfire (Figure 17). In this image, all five structures visible in the 1935 capture lie in ruins, with debris of each building strewn across the site. An additional ruined building is also visible at the southern end of the site, indicating that this structure was constructed between 1935 and 1944. The Church Road Farm complex was not rebuilt at the location of the site following its destruction, with a new homestead instead being constructed by the Jones family approximately 600 m to the west within the same lot. The abandoned Church Road Farm Complex is depicted in aerial photographs taken in 1964 (Figure 18), 1974 (Figure 19) and 1984 (Figure 20). The layout of the site remains unchanged across this time period, with the foundations of the destroyed structures gradually being concealed by sedimentation and surface vegetation growth. The two cisterns are also visible at the northern end of the site in each photo. The site is next depicted in a 2006 aerial photograph (Figure 21), wherein the south-western cistern is no longer visible, indicating that this feature was demolished and infilled between 1984 and 2006. Finally, the site is depicted in a September 2023 satellite image (Figure 22), in which the layout of the site is unchanged from the 2006 aerial photograph. Cattle are also visible in the southern paddock in which the site is located, attesting to its current use as pastoral grazing land.

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/>