

# Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated 07/06/20



## HO114 - Rocklands Homestead and Farm



Homestead



Homestead



Cottage



Dry stone wall stock yard



Dry stone wall dam, with cobbled ramp



Dry Stone Wall B127 - eastern boundary



Dry Stone Wall B128 - southern boundary



Dry Stone Wall B129 - northern boundary



Dry Stone Wall B129 - northern boundary



Dry Stone Wall B28



Dry Stone Wall B28



Dry Stone Wall B74



Dry Stone Wall B74



Dry Stone Wall B74



Dry Stone Wall B75



Dry Stone Wall B75



Dry Stone Wall B75



Dry Stone Wall B75



Dry Stone Wall B76



Dry Stone Wall B76



Dry Stone Wall B44 - Sheep Wash



Dry Stone Wall B44 - Sheep Wash



Dry Stone Wall B44 - Sheep Wash

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## Location

619-653 Hopkins Road TRUGANINA, Melton Shire

## Municipality

MELTON CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO114

## Heritage Listing

Melton City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

*Rocklands* Homestead, 619-653 Hopkins Road, Truganina, is significant for its moderately intact Victorian styled main house and rural setting defined by the nineteenth /early twentieth century dry stone walls, stands of gum and cypress trees and nearby dam that is visually connected to the main house. Although the house has been altered, the early additions at the rear also contribute to the significance of the place as they provide an understanding of the evolution of the house over time. Built in the late 1850s for William Hopkins, and still owned by the Hopkins family, the house is most substantial of the few dwellings that remain as testimony to the small nineteenth century farming community in the Derrimut - Truganina plains area.

The main house at *Rocklands*, 619-653 Hopkins Road, is architecturally significant at a LOCAL level (AHC D.2). Although the verandah has been altered/introduced, the house still demonstrates original and early design qualities of a Victorian style. These qualities include the earliest section of the house with its double hipped (M) roof form clad in slate tiles, bluestone wall construction (but not the overpainting), painted brick chimneys, timber framed entrance doorway with sidelights and highlights, and the timber framed double hung windows. The timber sunroom on the south wall of the house, also contributes to the architectural significance of the house, particularly it's hipped roof form clad in galvanised corrugated steel and the horizontal timber weatherboard wall cladding. The rear cottage, with kitchen and dining room, further contributes to the architectural significance of the place. In particular, the simple gable roof form clad in galvanised corrugated steel, horizontal timber weatherboard wall cladding, timber framed double hung four paned windows with bracketed timber hoods above, painted brick chimney at the side, and the narrow eaves are those early design qualities that contribute to an understanding of the architectural evolution of the main house. The fine complex of dry stone walls near the homestead, outbuildings and farm sheds, stands of gum, garden surrounds and the visual connections to the dam and surrounding farm land also contribute to the significant setting of the place.

Rocklands, 619-653 Hopkins Road, is historically significant at a LOCAL level (AHC A4, B2, H1). It is the most substantial of the few early farming-era dwellings (all built of stone) that remain in that part of the Shire south of the Western Highway and east of the Werribee River. It represents the Hopkins family's ability and fortune in surviving droughts and wretched seasons such as those of the 1860s, and the 1969 Truganina bushfire, which destroyed 45 houses nearby. Its evocative name is accentuated by the extensive complex of substantial all-stone dry-stone walls that comprise paddock fencing and stockyards around the homestead. The low rainfall of the Derrimut - Truganina plains area is expressed in the gaunt homestead garden, in which stunted cypresses, succulents and a thriving saltbush hedge (*Rhagodia spinescens*) are the primary surviving historical plants. The saltbush hedge, brought back from inland Australia in the early twentieth century, is very significant as an example of the use of a drought tolerant native species at a time well before the late twentieth century when these became popular, and in a period when most settlers planted the familiar introduced species, including drought tolerant plants from South Africa. The historical importance of water in the district is also expressed in the small dry-stone wall lined dam situated in front of the homestead. This finely constructed dam is an exceptional representation of the shallow dams, lined and built up with fieldstone (and less commonly roughly squared stone), across shallow drainage lines in the Melton plains areas. The homestead and farm complex is also significant for its ongoing association with the Hopkins family after which Hopkins Road was named. William Hopkins senior, William Hopkins junior, and Robert Duncan Hopkins were all councillors of the Shire of Braybrook, RD Hopkins being President at the time of Federation.

Overall, Rocklands Homestead at 619-653 Hopkins Road is of LOCAL significance.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Melton - Shire of Melton Heritage Study phase 2, David Maloney, David Rowe, Pamela Jellie, Sera Jane Peters, 2007;
Construction dates	1850,
Other Names	619-653 Hopkins Road, Truganina (Lot 1 PS 512501), Hopkins Homestead and Farm Complex,
Hermes Number	30264
Property Number	

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## Historical Australian Themes

*Shire of Melton Historical Themes: 'Farming', 'Water', 'Community'.*

## Integrity

Integrity - Main House - moderately intact

## Physical Conditions

Physical Condition - Main House - good

## Physical Description 1

Physical Description -

*Rocklands* Homestead, 619-653 Hopkins Road, Truganina, has a rural farm setting distinguished by the stands of gums and particularly by the dry stone walls and dam that is visually connected to the main house.

The main house at *Rocklands* consists of four single storey sections. The earliest section is the painted bluestone Victorian styled house characterised by a double hipped (M) roof form. These roof forms are clad in early slate tiles. The encircling verandah appears to have replaced an earlier verandah, with the existing verandah forming a broken back profile with the main slate roof, rather than springing from under the narrow eaves. The verandah is supported by timber posts on introduced painted masonry pedestals.

Early features include the painted brick chimneys, timber framed entrance doorway with sidelights and highlights, and the timber framed double hung windows.

At the rear to the side is a small hipped-roof, sunroom addition. It has galvanised corrugated steel roof cladding, horizontal timber weatherboard wall cladding and a bank of introduced timber framed windows.

Attached to the sunroom is a small gabled cottage, which houses the kitchen and dining room. This roof is also clad in galvanised corrugated steel, with the walls constructed in horizontal timber weatherboards. There are narrow eaves. Two symmetrically located timber framed double hung four paned windows with bracketed timber

window hoods above, are an early feature of a side facade. There is an early central doorway with an introduced timber and glazed door and parapeted timber porch.

The farm complex also includes an exceptional complex of substantial and extensive all-stone dry stone wall cattle, sheep and horse yards (c.1.5 metres high), with associated milking shed, stables & farm outbuildings.

In the dry stone walled enclosure behind the house were kept horses and dairy cows. The shed to the north of the enclosure has a stone floor, bails and wooden doors. The dry stone walls enclose the yard and form the wall of one of the sheds, which was a stable. At the front of the house is a dry stone walled sheep enclosure which once had a shearing shed.

Although some of the walls were apparently rebuilt, with lesser skill, after the 1930s depression, they are solidly constructed on original foundations, and some have edged copings. There are some huge stones at the bases of some of the walls. There is a very old peppercorn tree beside a rear wall. Lower dry stone paddock walls beyond the homestead precinct also contribute to an understanding of the nineteenth century farming history of the place.

In front of the house is a very early, finely built and remarkably intact stock dam, c.3 metres deep and c.25 metres long. It has cobbled or pitched stone paving on a gently inclined ramped at the south end. Its embankment includes double tiers of dry stone walling, quite steeply set, on the west and east sides, with lower courses roughly 'squared'. The paved stock entrance is at the south end of the horseshoe shaped structure.

The garden is indicative of the extreme low rainfall of area. Apart from occasional ornamental shrubs, The Hopkins' didn't plant a garden, as it was too dry. There is a cypress near the south wall of the house, and others to the east and the only other mature trees are the shelter planting of eucalypts around the homestead garden fenceline. It is telling that the very old saltbush (*Rhagodia spinescens*) hedge, apparently brought back from an Australia inland trip by a family member in the early years of the twentieth century, is the most successful planting in the garden.

This spare garden is typical of the district, in which peppercorns, succulents and eucalypts are the most successful species; the stunted specimens of old pine trees sometimes encountered along the north side of Boundary Road (presumably planted by the former Braybrook Shire), also underline the dry and gaunt nature of the district.

To the north of the house was a well or underground tank that was filled-in in the 1940s.

*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 data owner.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*