
HEATHCOTE PRECINCT

Location

Playne, Barrack, Chauncey, Herriot, Jennings, High, Hospital and Wright Streets HEATHCOTE, GREATER BENDIGO CITY

Municipality

GREATER BENDIGO CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO723

Heritage Listing

Greater Bendigo City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 29, 2023

What is significant?

The Heathcote Precinct comprising both sides of High Street (McIvor Highway), between Jennings and Mitchell Streets and including the former Barracks Reserve and the Government Camp is significant. It includes representative groups of houses on one side of Wright Street and in Playne Street. Within the precinct there are a number of key buildings that have individual citations. The trees on Barracks Reserve, believed to be c.1880, including *Ulmus procera x hollandica* (Dutch Elm), *Pinus radiata* (Monterey Pine), *Quercus robusta* (English Oak), *Eucalyptus botrioides* (Southern Mahogany) or *Melliodra* (Yellow Box), *Cedrus deodara* (Deodar Cedar), *Pinus canariensis* (Canary Island Pine), *Cupressus lusitanica* (Mexican White Cedar), *Cedrus libani* (Cedar of Lebanon), and *Arbutus unedo* (Irish Strawberry Tree) are also significant.

How is it significant?

The Heathcote precinct is of local historic, aesthetic, scientific and social significance to the City of Greater Bendigo.

Why is it significant?

The Heathcote precinct includes places associated with the major historic themes including the government camp that initially demonstrates the role of government regulations associated with gold mining, and then later with the establishment of local government. High Street includes places associated with agricultural industries and later

commercial activity derived from agriculture. High Street also contains the key buildings for recreation, education and religious worship, as well as a number of private residences. It also contains a number of contributory residential and commercial buildings that provide a context for the key buildings. The Barracks Reserve trees are historically significant as a reminder of early recreation activities in Heathcote. *Criterion A*

Heathcote contains a number of buildings associated with the establishment and continuation of government activities. The Government Surveyor's office of 1853 by James Crowle is the earliest example of government buildings in Heathcote, and this was continued with the establishment of the Government Camp containing the hospital, police station and the second lock up. The powder magazine provides evidence of government regulation associated with mining as it served the purpose of safely storing explosives necessary for deep lead mining. The further development of government activities is demonstrated by the council offices and courthouse of 1863 for the newly constituted Shire of Mclvor. *Criterion A*

Heathcote contains evidence of gold mining sites and mining technologies that provided the impetus for the growth of the town, initially from the alluvial gold mining along the Mclvor Creek and the later gold sluicing operations at Pink Cliffs immediately to the west of the town in the 1860s. Although not in the Heathcote precinct, Pink Cliffs gold sluicing site and Sawpit Gully gold puddling sites are of scientific significance in understanding different mining technologies as they evolved in trying to extract gold from clay. *Criterion F*

Heathcote contains examples of buildings that demonstrate the town's links with agriculture of the region. This is best demonstrated by the former Christie's flour mill built by James Crowle, and several large stone stores in High Street. High St contains a number of examples of commercial buildings with distinctive in their design with splayed corners, such as 72 and 105 High Street. High Street presents an intact commercial streetscape of the late nineteenth century. The streetscape consists of a line of shops and a group of basically intact nineteenth century public buildings (Heathcote Hall, Mclvor Shire Offices, Court House, Commercial Bank, Wesley Uniting Church and Post Office). Very few streetscapes in Victoria possess such continuity of scale and setback with a number of nineteenth century shopfronts and posted verandahs. The Heathcote precinct also contains examples of a variety of housing styles including small timber and masonry cottages and larger houses from the later nineteenth and early twentieth century. There are representative examples of Victorian, Edwardian and Inter War housing. *Criterion D*

The Heathcote Precinct is associated with Government Surveyor Philip Chauncey and with stonemasons and builders James and John Crowle and with Dr. Alfred Esler, a renowned surgeon who resided at Helenslee. *Criterion H*

Heritage Study/Consultant	Greater Bendigo - Former Shires of Mclvor and Strathfieldsaye Heritage Study, Context P/L, 2008;
Construction dates	1855,
Hermes Number	73458
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

Topography

Heathcote and neighbouring Argyle lie on the Mclvor Highway in a strategic location between the junctions to the Goulburn Valley Highway to Nagambie, and the Northern Highway to Echuca stretches for two kilometres along the Mclvor Highway which was developed primarily along the main road from Melbourne to Echuca on the Murray, or the secondary route from Melbourne to Bendigo.

The town of Heathcote is laid out along the southern bank of the Mclvor Creek which has higher and more open ground, and a narrow strip swampy ground on the north side before rising into the rugged wooded hills of Mclvor Range which is a timbered reserve.

Early development

Some rudimentary facilities were established at Heathcote to service the surrounding pastoral estates and more importantly to provide a stopping place on the Echuca - Melbourne Road. No places from the early phase of pastoral settlement have been found within the town. Development of the town begins in earnest following the discovery of alluvial gold in the Mclvor Creek in 1852, further develops following the mining operations conducted at Pink Cliffs adjacent to the town. By 1854 the layout of the township of Heathcote was laid out for a land sale by the Government Surveyor, Philip Chauncey.

The Government Camp and Herriot Street

The Government Camp was laid out on a small hill to the west of the creek and included a large reserve for the police, gold commissioners etc. On the opposite side of High Street the Barracks Reserve was established between the High Street and the creek. Herriot Street is the continuation of one of the approaches to Heathcote from Kyneton, and enters the township by the Government Camp. It has a different alignment from that shown on the 1854 Chauncey map of Heathcote, today aligning closer to the Pink Cliffs Gold Sluicing site.

The Government Camp contains a brick police station and stone lock up as well as Heathcote Higher Elementary School (previously the site of Heathcote tent school). The hospital of 1859 is also located in this area and stylistically has much in common with the early public buildings from the 1850s. Many of these were built by James Crowle who was the predominant contractor during the early decades of development in Heathcote. John Crowle is also mentioned as a builder and it may be that together these two brothers provided the requisite building skills to construct a number of the places built during the 1850s and 60s. Described as a stonemason and carpenter, Crowle is responsible for the Surveyor's Office at 178 High Street, the lock up and powder magazine and the original hospital building. All of these buildings display high quality stonemasonry work, reflecting their importance as government buildings.

Powder Magazine.

The Powder Magazine was an important Government Building and is located away from the Government Camp on the opposite side of the township and the creek in case of explosion. It is a stone building of similar design to the lock up built by James Crowle.

The Barracks Reserve

The Barracks Reserve is now a recreation reserve for football and cricket. The Barracks Reserve contains modern sporting facilities. Following its gazetting in 1873, a number of shrubs were planted and in 1877 oaks, elms and other trees were also added. Some mature trees are part of the landscape and are believed to consist of *Ulmus procera x hollandica* (Dutch Elm), *Pinus radiata* (Monterey Pine), *Quercus robusta* (English Oak), *Eucalyptus botrioides* (Southern Mahogany) or *Melliodra* (Yellow Box), *Credus deodara* (Deodar Cedar), *Pinus canariensis* (Canary Island Pine), *Curpessus lusitanica* (Mexican White Cedar), *Cedrus libani* (Cedar of Lebanon), and *Arbutus unedo* (Irish Strawberry Tree). These existing trees have been dated at approximately 1880s, making it highly probable that they are some of the original 1877 plantings. The Reserve also contains an ore crushing machine that was moved from the Redcastle mine and placed on the High Street adjacent to the reserve. Several modern plaques record events in the recent history of the reserve. Just to the east of the Barracks Reserve was the Queens' Meadow which is currently in use as a Caravan Park.

High Street

The layout of High Street is laid out to some extent following the line of the creek, then taking a turn at Herriot Street to diverge from the Mclvor Creek to allow two streets to be laid out between the High Street and the creek. This is balanced by two streets on the south side of High Street. High Street consists of a mixture of commercial and residential properties with a core of shops between Jennings and Chauncey Streets. The south side of the road has a semi continuous shopping street, however the north side has several large areas of vacant land. This may be a response to the favourable aspect of the pavements on the north side of the buildings, or as a result of the land reserved on the north side of the road being later to develop.

High Street is wide, in parts able to accommodate a median strip and/or service road. There are some mature street trees, although there is little consistency in the manner in which they are planted.

Residential buildings are generally of timber construction and commercial buildings are generally of masonry, either face brick or sandstone. Key buildings in High Street include Helenslee at 178, in the core of which is the Government Surveyor's office of 1853 and Innisfail at 188, both of which are unusually large residences set on large allotments in garden settings. The former flour mill at no. 149 is a distinctive three storey structure with an intact chimney. Two former two storey brick banks at 151 and 129 High Street demonstrate different building styles of their period. An earlier bank at 72 High Street is no longer used as such but predates the others.

St John's Anglican church by Vahland and Getzchmann is the most impressive religious building in High Street. The Municipal Offices and Courthouse and the Mechanics Institute are key institutional buildings. Whilst once numerous, the extant hotels include the Commercial, the Heathcote, and the two storey hotel at 171 High Street.

Of the shops there are some good examples of timber framed shopfront windows including nos. 74, 99 and 117 High Street that still retain recessed entries and the glass divided into panes set in timber frames. These shops have the traditional stallboards and verandahs, although most of these have been rebuilt.

High Street has a number of street corners where there are early commercial buildings with splayed corners. These include nos. 105, 72, and 183.

The buildings lining the street are of equal scale and setback and this, together with the line of intact posted verandahs and the presence of very few intrusive elements, produces a streetscape with excellent continuity. The wide street is lined on either side with mature trees which greatly enhance its character.

Playne Street

The area of Playne Street near the intersection of Herriot Street is populated with small cottages of relatively early construction date. This area is close to the Government Camp and appears to have been the nucleus of residential development. One house at 18 Playne Street has unusual chimneys, and another at 41 Playne Street is unusual being built of stone and located very close to the front boundary.

Pohlman Street

The cemetery was laid out in the township plan of 1854 at the southern end of Pohlman Street and remains. A new cemetery has been located on the other side of Pohlman Street. Pohlman Street was also the site of the reserve for a Catholic Church. The cemetery contains a large number of elaborate memorials, a small shelter and a number of cypresses and pines. There is an avenue of exotic street trees along Pohlman Street leading to the cemetery. Another key building in Pohlman Street includes the Presentation Convent.

Wright Street

Wright Street is a residential street that contains a number of weatherboard houses. Most of these are of types found in other locations in the City of Greater Bendigo, especially in the urban area of Bendigo, however Wright Street does have more consistency of nineteenth century houses than other streets within Heathcote.

Hunter Place and Brodie Street

This area at the point where High Street changes alignment at the western end of the town was laid out in a circular layout with Hunter Place as its nucleus. The centre of this area was to be set aside for important buildings such as marketplace and church. A hierarchy of streets and lanes was planned for this area, however all that remains are half of the layout in Hunter Place, Boomerang Place and Brodie Street. The land adjoining these streets has been subdivided and the intention and purpose of this area has never eventuated.

Integrity

Good

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/>